



Recruitment

Director of Sustainable Development

Candidate Pack | January 2026



Luton

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Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Sustainable Development at Luton Council. I'm delighted you are considering joining us at such a pivotal and exciting time for our town.

Luton is a place of ambition and transformation. Our vision, Luton 2040, commits us to creating a healthy, fair, and sustainable town where everyone can thrive. Sustainable development is at the heart of this mission shaping how we grow, regenerate, and respond to the climate emergency while driving inclusive economic prosperity.

This role offers a unique opportunity to lead on some of the most significant projects in Luton's history. From the airport expansion and associated infrastructure improvements to town centre regeneration, major housing and transport schemes, and the delivery of our Local Plan, your leadership will influence how we balance growth with environmental responsibility. You will also play a critical role in delivering our net zero carbon by 2040 commitment, embedding sustainability across planning, highways, fleet, and transport strategies.

Highways and transport are central to this agenda. We are investing in modern, sustainable transport solutions, advancing our Bus Service Improvement Plan, and working to create accessible, universal transport networks that connect communities and reduce reliance on private cars. These initiatives will transform mobility across Luton, supporting economic growth while improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions.

We are already making bold strides working with partners to secure inward investment that supports both economic growth and climate resilience. These projects are once in a generation opportunities to reshape Luton for decades to come.

This position calls for visionary leadership, strategic thinking, and the ability to navigate complex partnerships across government, business, and communities. Above all, it requires a passion for creating a sustainable future for Luton's residents and businesses. I look forward to hearing how you can help us deliver on this ambition.

Warm regards,

Gerard McLeave

Corporate Director – Inclusive Growth
Luton Council



The Opportunity

Luton Borough Council
Director of Sustainable Development
Salary: £100,873 - £106,919 + £3,990 car benefit

Are you ready to shape the future of one of the UK's most ambitious towns?

Luton Council is seeking a visionary Director of Sustainable Development to steer a bold transformation and guide the delivery of our Luton 2040 vision, a healthy, fair, and sustainable town where everyone thrives.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to shape and influence major projects that will define Luton for decades. From airport expansion and inward investment to town centre regeneration, housing growth, and green transport solutions, you'll navigate the strategic direction that balances economic prosperity with environmental responsibility.

Your portfolio spans planning policy, development management, highways and transport, fleet transformation, and building control all underpinned by our commitment to net zero carbon by 2040. You will champion universal accessibility and sustainable infrastructure, ensuring our transport networks and public spaces work for everyone.

We are investing in Bus Service Improvement Plans, active travel routes, and innovative approaches to reduce car dependency. You will work with government, businesses, and communities to deliver integrated solutions that tackle climate change, improve air quality, and create a greener, more connected Luton.

To succeed, you will be a corporate player who understands system working, able to collaborate across the Council and with partners to deliver shared goals. You will also build a high performing team culture and ethic, inspiring colleagues to innovate and deliver at pace.

If you're a strategic leader with the vision, influence, and drive to deliver complex programmes and inspire change, we want to hear from you.

For a confidential discussion contact:



Pete John
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ali.tasker@penna.com

Closing Date: 2 March 2026



Job Description

Job Title:
Director, Sustainable Development

Grade:
SD2

Department:
Inclusive Growth

Responsible to:
Corporate Director

Mission:
To Reduce Carbon Emissions through alternative technologies and sustainable development;
Creating accessible Public Transport Infrastructure;
Improving earnings through homes and employment provision;
Approving Developments that enhance and regenerate the Town.

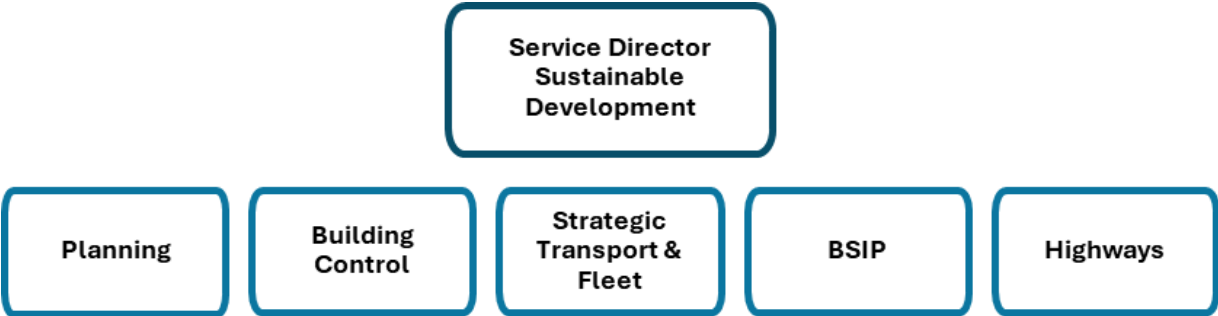
Job Purpose

Lead, manage, deliver and develop the Division’s services and resources in a manner consistent with the Council's aims and policies and the professional standards falling within the scope of the Division. Lead the Sustainable Development senior management team to deliver the overall aims, objectives, statutory obligations and targets of the service

Lead the strategic management of a range of functions and provide specialist advice to the corporate management team on policy strategy and regulation within the remit of the role. Given the portfolio of responsibilities the post also plays a pivotal role in the delivery of the Council’s corporate vision, Luton 2040, in relation to the town centre regeneration, airport growth, inward investment and sustainable transport.

Portfolio

- Development Management
- Strategic Flood Authority
- Local Plan and Planning Policy and Strategy
- Transport Planning
- Building Control including building safety and health and safety at grounds
- Fleet Management
- Highways
- Bus Service Improvement Plan



Luton - a council that CARES
Our values are a key driver of everything we do.

Collaborative - we work as one team, producing great results for Luton.
Ambitious - we're determined to improve lives every day.
Respectful - we are open, honest and embrace difference.
Empowering - we trust our own decisions and those of others.
Supportive - we help each other to reach our full potential.

Our Vision – Luton 2020 - 2040

Luton will be a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty. This will be delivered through strong place-based leadership, effective partnerships, an inclusive and high performing workforce and a genuine focus on putting residents at the heart of decision-making

The residents of Luton will live happy and healthy lives and businesses will profit from a thriving economy. Everyone in the council will play a role in achieving this ambition and all corporate plans, service plans and team plans will contain objectives to meet this ambition. The role of Corporate Directors and Directors is to drive the resources of the Council and one Council approach to deliver our vision.

In addition there are two strategic partnership boards and one Council led Board– the Inclusive Economy Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board and Climate Change Advisory Board. Each of these boards are responsible for driving the delivery of the vision in relation to their own key areas.

KEY ROLE OF LUTON DIRECTORS

Leader:

As a member of Luton Council's Senior Management Team you are responsible for the visible leadership of the Council's staff, and on behalf of the community, attending and promoting civic events where appropriate and with particular focus on those areas under your direct control. You will contribute to the delivery of the Council's objectives through your systems and through leadership, acting at all times in an exemplary fashion consistent with the Council's core values and ethos.

Management:

As a member of Luton Council's Senior Management Team you are responsible for the active management of resources assigned to you, ensuring that at all times you manage the people, finance, external contracts and assets under your control consistent with the expeditious delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, and with delivery of best value for the residents of Luton.

Performance:

As a member of Luton Council's Senior Management Team, you will build trust and commitment to drive performance within the areas under your direct control, to deliver optimum balance between performance, quality, cost and productivity consistent with the Council's agreed performance standards and Corporate Plan. You will ensure strong contract management and support the Council's Social Value aspirations.

CORPORATE KEY OBJECTIVES

To support the Corporate Management Team and the Council in formulating and delivering the Council's strategic policy agenda for fulfilling its Community leadership role.

To provide the leadership and vision for the activities as defined in that attached portfolio and deliver service outcomes. Motivate staff to deliver high levels of performance and to develop their full potential.

Advise the Corporate Director, Executive and Council on all aspects of the services the post holder is responsible for and support the administration in the delivery of its priorities.

Be able to use intelligence to anticipate and plan future developments. Ensure that the strategic outlook, advice and guidance given considers not only internal factors but the impact of external forces, including planning for and responding to the impacts of significant events in the rest of the country/world.

Luton leaders will discover new ways to reduce the cost of services to taxpayers; and their overall productivity and value for money to service users through a range of approaches, including: digital and the strategic re-design of services and their costs; the use of business and operational process improvements; the smarter use of supply (through out-sourcing, co-sourcing and insourcing where appropriate); the better use of demand management; and improved asset management.

From time to time, the areas under your direct control may vary on a temporary or permanent basis. When this occurs, the relative job size will remain within the parameters of the grade for your role, as assessed through the Council's job evaluation scheme for Service Directors/Directors/Corporate Directors. Any changes will be subject to consultation with you, in the usual way and in line with the Council's constitution for appointment to Director/Corporate Director roles. In addition any changes must comply with statutory requirements for the role.

Luton leaders will ensure they make an active contribution to the council's commitment to fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities.

To commission the delivery of integrated, accessible, high quality services to local people and to bring about continuous improvement year on year.

To act as a champion and lead on one or more specified themes within the Council's Corporate Plan, to ensure their development across all aspects of the Council's services, working closely with the Luton 2040 team.

As required, to work in partnership with Elected Members and a variety of stakeholders to secure joined up working and look after local interests.

To act as an ambassador for and to promote the Council locally, regionally and nationally.

To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations and that the highest standards of probity and good conduct are maintained at all times.

CORPORATE KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Strategic Management

To make an active and positive contribution to the Council's strategic plans and policies, as well as to the process of implementing cultural change through the transformation workstreams. To facilitate the creation of a common purpose across the organisation, by working across cross cutting areas collaboratively as a member of the Senior Management team embedding the "one council" ethos.

To take collective and strategic responsibility for ensuring that the Council's decisions and policies are implemented.

To implement the Council's modernisation and transformation agenda, by providing support at all levels and by promoting the active participation of local people in the Council's affairs.

To seek innovative and creative solutions to meeting the Council's need to bring about change and improvement within finite resources.

To communicate the Borough's vision, the Council's mission, priorities, objectives, and processes effectively, both internally to staff and externally to partners, agencies and the public.

To promote equality of opportunity and access in service delivery and in the employment of staff.

Luton leaders will oversee and ensure that all services/functions are delivered within and to budget, and that effective, proactive medium term financial and service strategy is in place to increase impact, reduce net costs and achieve outcomes to the overall council and community.

To consider and implement good practice relating to the three underlying commitments set out in the Luton 2040 vision:

- Tackling inequality – A town built on fairness ensuring that everyone in Luton has the opportunity to thrive by achieving more equitable outcomes for all of our residents and staff.
- The future of our young population – A child-friendly town where we have a clear focus on giving our young people the best start in life so that our future adult population are able to reach their full potential.
- Delivering the Council's Climate change roadmap to meet our net zero carbon by 2040 commitment. The future prosperity of our town and its residents relies on all of us taking bold and decisive action to ensure that Luton is a sustainable place for years to come. With this commitment at the heart of the vision we will work in partnership to ensure that our homes, our infrastructure, our businesses and our airport are all sustainable.
- To lead by example by promoting at all times the Council's ethos and values.

Service, Quality and Performance Management

To ensure a strong vision and human-centric leadership for the service areas under your control which delivers ambitious, innovative and forward thinking approaches which encompass problem solving and overcomes complex challenges. Ensure the work of services is high quality and achieves its objectives, by effective performance and risk management, and strong operational and strategic financial management.

To ensure the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evidence based evaluation of statutory and non-statutory service and business plans for each of your service areas, developing innovative strategies that will ensure the achievement of planned outcomes. Identify, analyse and respond to changing trends, patterns of demand and performance issues, as required.

To ensure that service delivery and planning takes account of, and is benchmarked against, national and local performance indicators and contributes to the objectives and targets set out in the Council's Performance Management Framework, the Corporate Plan and your Service Plan.

Ensure the embedding of a digital focus applied across the whole of the way we work, in service plans and outcomes.

To put in place effective arrangements for agreeing personal targets for all staff within your service area and for regularly appraising and reporting on their performance as required by the Council's Check In scheme.

Contribute to the leadership of the organisation, ensuring a high calibre, motivated and effective and empowered workforce, and one that is nurturing the leaders of the future. Acknowledge good performance and tackle poor performance positively and effectively.

To identify and provide opportunities for meeting the professional development needs of all staff within the Directorate.

To be accountable for personal performance, through meeting agreed personal targets and through undertaking planned programmes of professional development.

To be accountable for ensuring the highest standards of health and safety across the Council and, more specifically, within areas under your direct control.

Resource Management

To regularly review and evaluate the resource requirements of your services, in terms of both maintaining essential service delivery and proactively bringing about improvement, development and efficiency.

To ensure the efficient and imaginative management of all resources within budget (staff, finance, property and information), in support of the Council's agreed targets for service delivery, outcomes and improvement for cost reduction and service efficiency, including contract management. You must ensure your teams are fully aware of the Council's current Contract Management eLearning Toolkit.

To demonstrate an entrepreneurial approach to identifying and pursuing as appropriate, all additional sources of funding or other resources, which could be used to augment those provided by the Council, ensuring that any special accounting or evaluation requirements involved are complied with, and are fully compliant with the Council's financial regulations.

To work closely with other agencies and partners to improve the impact of the way in which budgets are spent and resources are allocated.

Represent the Council by promoting its image and reputation on a National and Regional stage, helping to influence national and regional policies and strategies in the post holders' area and across the Council areas.

Lead by example in championing and furthering equality and diversity within the workplace and in the delivery of service outcomes.

Partnership Working and Communication

Luton leaders create a culture of working with and through delivery partners to achieve outcomes, building strategic partnerships with clients and stakeholders to negotiate deliverables and commission the delivery of integrated, accessible, high quality services to local people and to bring about continuous improvement year on year to the borough. They actively shape the external environment for success of the Borough, whilst balancing the needs and expectations on such a diverse community.

To develop and maintain the wider networks and partnerships the Council needs to deliver its community leadership.

To actively foster and develop positive relationships with all local agencies and partners, including the voluntary sector and local business, as well as with other statutory bodies at regional and national levels.

To develop and implement effective arrangements for formal consultation, with local agencies and partners and with the public, on service planning and delivery issues to put residents at the heart of decision making by ensuring a strong and effective voice for residents and service users in the shaping and improvement of services and strategies.

To contribute to the Council's Corporate Communication Strategy, which includes maintaining positive relationships with the media, dealing with and responding to enquiries and taking advantage of public relations and media opportunities as appropriate.

PRINCIPAL SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Development Management
- Strategic Flood Authority
- Local Plan and Planning Policy and Strategy
- Transport Planning
- Building Control including building safety and health and safety at grounds
- Fleet Management and Maintenance
- Highways
- BSIP

Regional

Represent the Council and the Chief Executive at a regional and sub-regional level working with partnerships to influence Government Departments, respond to strategic issues furthering Luton's aims and objectives. Work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders and partners such as the Local Government Association, Sub National Transport body (EEH), Chilterns Conservation Board and Local Nature Partnership, Government Departments and Agencies, local authorities and other bodies as appropriate.. Lead on planning and transport devolution within the emerging devolution framework for the area.

Strategic/System wide

Provide Strategic Leadership in line with the 2040 aspirations of the Council and town playing an important role in achieving net zero carbon emissions. Demonstrate the leadership required to influence the whole Luton system and manage the transition to low carbon be it through, goods, services, contracts, the Council's assets, greener transport. Devise strategies, policies or plans that are in line with the Council's vision and legal requirements. Wherever feasible leverage new funding and partnership support, shaping Luton's response to a changing climate and create opportunities to drive forward the transformation needed.

The post has a clear focus on delivering sustainable growth and plays a pivotal role in a number of the Luton 2040 objectives within inclusive economy such as town centre regeneration, airport growth and inward investment through an ambitious place shaping agenda.

The post holder will provide the strategic leadership for the Council's new Local Plan, environmental sustainability obligations, mineral and waste function, heritage, conservation, archaeology, listed buildings and integrated highway functions and transport policies to achieve better local outcomes. Act as the Council's lead on Planning policy and strategy, environmental sustainability and transport planning matters.. Advise on the emerging planning reforms as they effect the Local Plan and the UK Environment Act (2021) obligations and shape policies and strategy to implement, at the local level to achieve overall beneficial development for the Borough.

Lead a culture shift to replace the car as the main mode of transport with more sustainable forms of transport working with key partners externally to navigate the pathway. Oversee a range of significant and complex planning applications which are central to the Luton economy and the delivery of homes as well as other large national scale infrastructure projects which are once in a generation schemes vital to regeneration.

Oversee the delivery of an effective and efficient development and building control system which is proactive and customer orientated that fully discharges all of its regulatory and statutory duties including structural and stadia safety. Implement policy and legislation changes taking place through the Building Safety Act and ensure that the performance and standards of building control meet the higher requirements being imposed on building safety.

Operational

Manage the Council's Highway Service and Term contract to deliver high quality road infrastructure and improvements. Work collaboratively on enforcement to achieve better outcomes and an improved place for the benefit of Luton's residents putting safety first.

Oversee the in house Fleet maintenance and procurement service, for a large range of vehicles and other equipment using budgets wisely and with discretion to keep the Council's operations functioning effectively. Manage demand whilst looking for the opportunities to transform to low carbon options in line with air quality and climate change objectives.

DIMENSIONS:

Supervisory Management: 5 fte approx.

Total staff: 250 approx.

Financial Resources: : £16.1m net revenue and £16.2 Capital

Physical Resources: Road Safety and Surveying equipment.

Fleet Transport vehicles/specialist equipment

Other: N/A

Person Specification

(including key competencies)

ANNEX B

This acts as selection criteria and gives an outline of the types of person and the characteristics required to do the job.

Essential (E):- without which candidate would be rejected
Desirable (D):- useful for choosing between two good candidates

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give clear examples of how you meet the essential and desirable criteria.				
Attributes	Essential Criteria and Competencies	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Experience	Successful track record and background of consistent achievement as a senior manager including strategic management of transformation programmes, operational performance and financial budgets.	1,2	Substantial experience of working within local government with demonstrable knowledge of and empathy with the legislative impact of government policy, professional disciplines and of taking responsibility for upholding practices and standards	1, 2
	Substantial experience of effective working with a broad range of partners and stakeholders from the community, government and businesses.	1,2		
	Extensive experience of developing strategic and local policies and their delivery in respect to sustainable, integrated land use, transport and environmental proposals	1,2	Substantial experience of developing and managing multi-disciplinary projects in partnership with others	1, 2
			Experience of developing and engaging the community in consultation on strategy and project development	1, 2
			Experience of liaison with developers, land agents, companies and consultants in progressing physical infrastructure projects	1,2

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give clear examples of how you meet the essential and desirable criteria.

Attributes	Essential Criteria and Competencies	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Skills/Abilities	Partnership & Community Working Able to work positively with partners and the community demonstrating drive and passion to understand and achieve joint goals and objectives, sharing information and valuing others experience and expertise.	2	Understanding of political perspectives, the ability to work with members. Demonstrate a national and local political awareness and knowledge.	1,2
	People Management Able to manage and develop individuals and teams to create a positive working environment maximising performance through motivational leadership. Able to undertake effective recruitment and selection, work planning, work allocation, appraisal and development.	2		
	Visible Leadership Able to provide visible and visionary leadership that inspires employee’s to meet organisational challenges and maximises employee’s personal potential.	2		
	Problem Solving & Decision Making Able to grasp and comprehend a situation, it’s component parts and implications, and find and organise practical and effective resolutions by making and acting on sound decisions.	2		

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give clear examples of how you meet the essential and desirable criteria.

Attributes	Essential Criteria and Competencies	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Skills/Abilities	Vision setting Strategic thinking and planning Able to stand back and consider the strategic ‘bigger picture’ including setting the long term plan and delivering the vision for the way forward.	2		
	Leading Change and Driving Performance Able to lead and manage change through all levels of the organisation to achieve improved performance.	2		
	Commissioning Procurement Able to procure and commission products, equipment, services, systems and facilities.	2		
	Financial Management Able to undertake (non-professional) financial/budget/cost centre management including, at the highest level, divisional/departmental/strategic financial management.	2		
	Commercial Awareness Able to understand and apply business and commercial principles to the service, considering costs, profits, markets and added value.	2		

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give clear examples of how you meet the essential and desirable criteria.

Attributes	Essential Criteria and Competencies	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Equality Issues	Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of equality issues and legislation and, in particular, how they impact on work with communities - able to integrate equality policies into business plans, strategies, service delivery and employment practices.	1, 2		
Attributes	Essential Criteria and Competencies	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Specialist Knowledge	Professional qualification in a relevant discipline land use planning, transportation or environment Membership of a relevant professional body, RTPI, CIHT, CILT or similar	1, 2		
Attributes	Essential Criteria and Competencies	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Education and Training	Understanding of current relevant legislation and statutory requirements associated with the respective service delivery portfolio	1,2	Evidence of continued professional managerial and personal development	1,2,4

(1 = Application Form 2 = Interview 3 = Test 4 = Proof of Qualification 5 = Practical Exercise)

We will consider any reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

The Job-holder will ensure that Luton Borough Council's policies are reflected in all aspects of his/her work, in particular those relating to:

- (i) Equal Opportunities
- (ii) Health and Safety
- (iii) Data Protection Act (2018) & General Data Protection Regulation (2018)

Further Information

Links to:

[Economic Growth Strategy](#)

[Luton Economic Growth Strategy 2025 – 2032](#)

[Town Centre Delivery Plan](#)

[Local Transport Plan](#)

[Local Plan 2011 to 2031](#)

**STEP
FORWARD
LUTON**

ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

TOWN CENTRE DELIVERY PLAN

Further Information - Luton Strategy Film Update 2025



How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

Please apply by submitting a CV and Cover Letter (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.

Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications please make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.

Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.

Please share with us in your Supporting Statement the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details via our website.

Please upload your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.

Following long-listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.

Asking for adjustments: we’re committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to consider doing anything differently during the application, interview, or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us.

To apply for this role, please visit the following link to upload your CV and Cover Letter: <https://penna.com/jobs>

Date	Stage
2 Mar	Application Deadline
5 & 6 Mar	Longlist Meeting (candidates are not required to attend)
w/c 16 Mar	Technical Interviews (virtual)
w/c 23 Mar	Shortlist Meeting (candidates are not required to attend)
w/c 31 Mar	Assessment Centre & Final Interviews

For questions or an informal discussion, please contact:



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ali.tasker@penna.com



Pete John
on 07701 305617 or
pete.john@penna.com

Penna Executive Search

Inclusive Leadership ...Redefined!

At Penna, we specialise in connecting outstanding professionals to senior leadership roles that shape the future of local government.

Our decades of experience working with local authorities set us apart. We understand the demands of political leadership, the importance of corporate plans, and the skills needed to navigate complex, challenging environments.

We work with integrity, imagination, and determination to ensure every placement is the right fit. Whether you are looking for leaders who can deliver major change initiatives, champion high performance cultures, or build stronger partnerships with communities and stakeholders, our specialist team will help you find the talent who can turn vision into reality.

At Penna, we want to build leadership that delivers stronger, fairer, and more sustainable communities.

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