JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Solutions Architect (SA)
Directorate:	CIO
Reports To:	Director of Data and Applications
Direct Reports:	None
Purpose of the role:	**Role Overview:** Lead as a Solutions Architect (SA) to design and implement standards, technical thought leadership and joined up working practices that enable the successful, efficient delivery of our digital modernisation programme. **The SA defines the solutions architecture and provides architectural governance and SDLC process leadership to delivery teams, bringing together enterprise architecture (EA) viewpoints such as business, application, information and technology architecture to design solutions that deliver business value and enable Platform to deliver high quality digital products for customers and colleagues.** You will work closely with our wider CIO Leadership Team and our EA working on the CIO Senior Management Team. Where the EA is primarily focused on medium to long term roadmap development (futures), the SA is focused on shorter to medium term execution (delivery/enablement) of those roadmaps consistent with standards, best practice and agreed design criteria/quality controls. The EA is a strategic design role whereas the SA is a strategic and hands on design and delivery role which is aligned to delivery and setting and managing development standards, workflows and end-to-end development processes that accelerate and oversee the delivery and execution of the agreed architectural and to-be design blueprints set out by the EA. Working with the wider team, the SA also directly contributes to the long-term digital information strategy, helping to inform our plans based on what is technically possible, future horizons, innovation opportunities, ease of execution v reward and risk and benefits assessments - ie a reality check for future plans to ensure they are indeed deliverable and sequenced in the right order to achieve clearly defined technical and non-technical benefits while managing the technical risks of transformation and change. Our CIO team of 80+ digital professionals enjoy exceptional levels of colleague engagement and job satisfaction, we celebrate our successes, we are an award-winning team, and we trust and empower our colleagues to make their own decisions and do what's right for our customers and colleagues. We set out the vision then

enable and fully empower you to bring your skills, your experience and your thought leadership to help us realise our vision and achieve our objectives. We are looking for someone with initiative, drive, energy, skills, exceptional team working and communication abilities. Someone who understands the business context, the tech landscape but someone who can deliver and get things done, working with others, at pace, with momentum and with velocity. We aspire to deliver impactful, tangible outcomes and functional benefits for our customers and colleagues. We want to make a difference to people's lives and to colleague's views of what is like to work at Platform through the development of a best-in-class digital platform.

Key Responsibilities	Key Tasks
People Management	- Inspire and encourage a culture which reflects and embeds our values. - Demonstrate behaviours that set a positive example to all employees. - Support colleagues to embrace change and be brave to try something new. - Play an active hands-on role in supporting teams in problems solving. - Indirectly provide detailed support to the application development team and the technology directorate.
Operational Lead	**Solutions Architecture** - Lead the architecture, standards, design, and implementation of robust, scalable, open and secure digital components, platforms and products. - Remain up to date (horizon scanning) with best practice, new developments and trends digital, ICT and architecture industry / communities and reflect this into our ecosystem where appropriate. - Communicate and promote professional standards to lead and educate, inspire and innovate, and deliver intelligently. - Manage, and collaborate with, external suppliers to ensure that their system architectures meet our requirements, including overall system design, user experience, and integration points/APIs.

	- Understand and articulate Platform's technical estate, technical debt, and its inter-dependencies, ensuring quality and integrity of new solutions. - Design end-to-end fully integrated solutions to meet user and business needs that align with our strategies, policies, procedures and standards. Assure and ensure the integrity and solutions architecture of the full D365 solution and also quality control and change leadership across the entire application and data ecosystem. - Development of D365/M365/Power Platform design and development standards and advise and lead appropriately to empower all teams to apply them. Working closely with the EA, review and set Platform's technical deliverables to support agreed architectural principles. Participate and support the embedding of strong project governance methods across the full SDLC. - Lead delivery teams upon receipt of a new requirement or change request to create a high-level solution (HLD) design that supports best practice in line with business strategy and the established technology roadmap. - Work as the lead across all pre-project discovery activity and control and manage the inbound demand and sequencing of all development activity. Work across internal teams and external business partners to allocate and monitor the delivery of the agreed work packages ensuring they are on track, escalations are dealt with and communicated while ensuring standards and ways of working are adhered to. - Provide quality assurance throughout the SDLC. - Modernise working practices based on Agile/Product teams based on Epics and User Stories baking DevSecOps in from the outset working in close collaboration with Platform's Cyber Security Team. - Guide projects in making the correct technology decisions,

promoting reuse, sustainability and scalability to achieve value for money and customer/colleague centric outcomes.

- Translate technical concepts between systems engineering, delivery management and service management, as well as developing and documenting the proposed technical design for the integration and implementation of any solution.

- Work with the wider pool of Heads of, business architects and business analysts across the CIO team to maintain architectural principles, standards, blueprints, roadmaps and transitions states that underpin all technical design and delivery.

Translate Business Strategy & Enterprise Architecture into Solutions Architecture

- Understand our business drivers and our EA roadmaps to set out key SA artifacts. Document the current state SA, the future state SA and develop a fully costed and scheduled roadmap for the transition from where we are now to where we need to be.

- Design optimal SDLC, devops, devsecops and end-to-end ways of working. Introduce Agile processes to enhance the current methodologies and ensure that these ways of working a complied with and improved through CSI.

- Analyse the IT environment to detect critical deficiencies, legacy issues, performance issues and technical debt and communicate this to the EA for treatment, mitigation or retirement. Reduce and control the debt over an agreed timescale.

- Work with the EA and Platform's Cyber Security Manager to identify and mitigate the security risks across the technical estate. ie identify and introduce devsecops concepts.

- Understand and document the data flows and integration touchpoints between systems.

- Understands and recommend emerging technology trends and the practical application of new technologies to support the delivery of our business goals and objectives.

Leads Solutions Design and Analysis

- Evaluate, design and implement the Microsoft business architecture based on target state using Microsoft apps, Power Platform, third party apps, point solutions and

	custom developed apps inc middleware, logic apps, and Azure functions.
	• Lead the SA development across the app estate and the D365 environment specifically D365 entities, Dataverse and the Power Platform environment. You will ensure that our D365 deployment takes a service driven, process driven enterprise perspective that places business benefits, self-service and CRM at the heart of design principles.
	• Embed strong customer centric codesign, co-creation, dex digital experience working practices into the devops processes to monitor and improve adoption rates of digital products..
	• Be the lead technical authority and ultimate decision maker at CAB to ensure compliance and alignment with agreed standards and to manage the risk of change requests coming in via CAB.
	• Support in EOL (end of life) product decisions to maintain, refresh or retire products, services or systems (including applications, technologies, processes and information).
Communication	• To represent the Information function and Group at external meetings as required. • Develop and maintain excellent relationships with other sector organisations, regulatory bodies, legal professionals and any other appropriate governance and compliance professionals. • To liaise as a key contact with suppliers to ensure solution design adheres to our standards.
Budget responsibilities	• Local developed budgets associated with SA • Wider project and programme budgets to ensure solutions architecture works within agree financial parameters • Leadership on technical costs, support and maintenance, determining capex and opex profiles within the scope of SA activity • Support the Infrastructure Teams to accurately forecast and controlcloud consumption and the agreed costs during design, build and maintain phases of the end-to-end life cycle • Value for money – identify cost saving opportunities and see through to implementation recording the savings achieved on the vfm register for complete transparency
Innovation	• Research, develop and make recommendations in relation to improving the performance and service for the Group.

	• Promote the use of technology within the team and the wider Group, including encouraging a paperless environment and best use of relevant systems. • Develop mechanisms to promote new features and user adoption • Embrace emerging technologies and evaluate for group use.

The duties and responsibilities detailed above are not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any other duties appropriate to the post as necessary or as directed.

Solutions Architect

Person Specification

Qualifications	E/D*
Degree in related discipline or equivalent qualification / work experience.	E
Professional certification qualifications or experience relevant to the role of an SA or similar eg TOGAF, SABSA.	D
Professional training or equivalent experience related to Solutions Architecture.	E
Vendor based certifications relevant to the role and the technology stack	D
Experience	
Demonstrable experience in this position. Min 5 years.	E
Extensive enterprise grade technical experience across app, data and integration workloads inc no code and pro code platforms	E
Extensive experience of performing an SA leadership role across D365 CE, F&O and D365 first party applications, M365 and Power Platform	E
Housing Sector knowledge or experience across the entire app and data stack with a detailed understanding of the vendor space and capabilities across build v buy scenarios inc a strong knowledge of the pros and cons of each	D
Knowledge of business ecosystems, SaaS, infrastructure as a service (IaaS), platform as a service (PaaS), service-oriented architecture (SOA), APIs, open data, microservices, event-driven IT and predictive analytics.	E
Knowledge of Microsoft platforms inc D365, M365, Power Platform and Dataverse, PBI, Dataverse. Inc LAs, Azure functions.	E
Knowledge of various aspects of an enterprise technology architecture, Experience of modern IT paradigms including event-based architecture design, containerisation, microservices and loose coupling.	D
A expert knowledge of cloud technologies, cloud hosting, container, serverless, and networking design patterns, tools and best practice (e.g. Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure).	E
Understanding and knowledge of system development life cycle methodologies (such as waterfall, spiral, agile software development, rapid prototyping, incremental, synchronize and stabilize, and DevOps, DevSecOps).	E
Understanding and knowledge of Sabsa, TOGAF or Zachman frameworks	D
Knowledge of business models, operating models, financial models, cost-benefit analysis, budgeting and risk management.	D
Expert in orchestrating, owning and managing SDLC and quality control whilst managing Product resources within a matrix line management structure	E
Balances the long-term ("big picture") and short-term implications of individual decisions and organization goals.	E
Understanding and knowledge of IT standards and controls.	E
Excellent understanding of application development methodologies and infrastructure and network architecture.	E
Strong experience of forming solution design and the ability to accurately explain the design to business stakeholders.	E

MS SQL Server skills.	D
Experience of chairing or leading a technical design authority	D
A proven track record of delivering results in a fast paced and changing environment	E
Experience of working across a multi-site environment	D
Personal Skills/Qualities/Knowledge	E
Excellent interpersonal skills – ability to listen, reflect and influence key decisions	E
Trusted and respected as a thought leader who can influence and persuade business and IT leaders.	E
Expert problem solver: apply logical thinking, gather and analyse information	E
Well-rounded communication skills for technical and non-technical audiences	E
Excellent organisational and time management skills	E
Understanding of responsibilities in relation to GDPR and data security	D
Highly innovative with aptitude for foresight, systems thinking and design thinking.	D
Active interest in technological advances	E
A thorough and up to date knowledge of business improvement initiatives and the ability to apply this with a pragmatic and common-sense approach	E
Prioritises and plans effectively, being able to manage multiple projects at one time	E
Evidence of continuing professional and personal development and awareness of latest thinking, developments and best practice in the field of governance and compliance	D
A natural leader of people with excellent communication and motivational skills	E
Ability to establish strong, sustained working relationships based on respect and effective negotiation and influencing skills	E
Advanced problem solving and decision-making skills	E
Ability to convey thoughts and express ideas effectively verbally or written in individual or group situations	E
Ability to think differently and challenge the norm	E
Other Requirements	E
Ability to travel between Group offices and to other locations as required (SMT meeting are in person once a month from either the Worcester or Birmingham office) where attendance is required. In addition, these offices are used for mandatory training from time to time and attendance will be required as needed. Expenses and overnight accommodation is included within the expenses policy for this purpose.	E
Flexibility to work outside of core hours as necessary	D

* E = Essential criteria / D = Desirable criteria