

Job Description

Department: LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Division/Section: CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES / DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Job Title: SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

Post No:

Grade: 10

Reports to: DEMOCRATIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES MANAGER

**Organisation
Chart:**

**Show immediate
manager and any
jobs reporting to
this post,
including grades.**

**CRB Check
applicable?**

**Is post exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
1974 in respect of declaration of spent convictions?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**Line Management
responsibility for:**

**No. of direct reports: 0
No. of indirect reports: 0**

Size of budget:

None

Job Purpose

1. To work on own initiative as part of a team of Senior Democratic Services Officers and other staff managing either:

- a. the Police and Crime Panel,
- b. the servicing of Council meetings,

on behalf of the Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager, Head of Constitutional Services, and Monitoring Officer in one or more service areas, working closely with the Senior Officers and Committee Chairmen.

2. To assist the Director of Law and Governance in discharging their role of Monitoring Officer in respect of the ethical framework, the governance practice areas of the service and the formal Council decision-making process.

3. To maintain a strong overview of the governance of the Council and ensure effective democratic governance arrangements are in place, including the constitutional propriety of the decision making process.
4. To effectively organise, monitor and/or update key governance areas including the Constitution and other relevant governance protocols and guidance.
5. To provide specialist input and support to the Council and its directorates by the provision of an efficient, effective, and comprehensive service. This will include responsibility for essential Committee and Governance Services, providing governance support, advice, agenda planning, convening meetings, issuing agendas, recording proceedings and decision, and compiling minutes.
6. Liaising with Councillors, Directors and report authors to ensure timetables are met and relevant legislation followed.

Duties and responsibilities:

Main Responsibilities

1. To support the Police and Crime Panel to deliver its functions through preparing and providing policy advice and democratic support to the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and other Police and Crime Panel Members.
 - a. To comply with legal requirement, constitutional provisions, corporate protocols and business practices in respect of agenda planning, recording of recommendations and the reporting of these to the Police and Crime Panel, minute writing and document publication.
 - b. To take responsibility for the provision of information on new developments in legislation and guidance related to democratic processes, including reading and researching on best practices in other local authorities and external organisations.
 - c. To liaise with the Police and Crime panel members and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner as required.
 - d. Management of complaints process in relation to the Police and Crime Panel and the operation of the Police and Crime Panel.
 - e. To support and manage the schedule of the Police and Crime Panel meetings, any task and finish groups and manage training programmes and requirements.
 - f. To provide proactive support to the Police and Crime Panel.
 - g. To establish a work programme for the Police and Crime Panel taking into account Panel preferences and practicalities ensuring appropriate timing of meetings.
 - h. To manage the Councils petition scheme in line with the Councils constitution. Manage the emotional demands of the Lead Petition which may be a member of the public or an elected member in supporting and facilitating the required responses.
 - i. To undertake the role of clerk to hearings. Advising Senior Officers of the process of hearings, taking detailed minutes from the hearings and writing up the decision notices. To ensure external stakeholders are made aware of the processes and advise accordingly.
2. To support and maintain key relationships with:
 - a. Elected Members
 - b. Director for Law and Governance
 - c. Head of Constitutional Services
 - d. Corporate Management Team
 - e. Teams in other directorates and service areas
 - f. Professional bodies
 - g. Police and Crime Commissioners Office
 - h. External & internal partners, customers and stakeholders

3. To liaise with the Police and Crime Commissioners Officer to ensure that Police and Crime Panels decisions and recommendations are communicated to them for action; to brief the Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager and Monitoring Officer as appropriate.
4. Facilitating discussion between Chairmen, Panel Members and the Police and Crime Commissioner and to act as a negotiator to provide diplomatic challenge to all parties.
5. To assist Members in order that they are better able to carry out their role as elected representatives efficiently and effectively. To act as a conduit between Elected Members and officers to ensure the business of the Police and Crime Panel is conducted in an efficient and effective manner.
6. To promote effective inter-relationships between Members of the Police and Crime Panel and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
7. Providing a quality check of all briefing and information provided to Chairmen, including drafting briefing documents for Chairmen based on information supplied by other officers or with specific research input.
8. To produce reports regarding various democratic, governance and constitutional matters for formal consideration by Members and Senior Officers and present to Panel as necessary, interpreting varied and complex information and statutory legislation. This will included co-ordinating high quality briefings, providing research input where necessary and to gather and assess evidence on behalf of Members.
9. To have in-depth knowledge of and to be able to advise on and implement the Constitution, the Code of Conduct, other internal procedures, relevant legislation and Best Practice Guides, etc. and to keep informed of new developments.
10. To provide high quality advice to staff across the Council on governance working practices and arrangements arising out of changes in legislation, policies and initiatives affecting local authorities and to arrange and discharge training as necessary. To support the Director of Law and Governance, the Head of Constitutional Services, and the Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager in the task of raising organisational awareness of the Panel's Governance.
11. To ensure full compliance with all Statutory and Constitutional requirements, to promote and ensure that the correct decision making process is followed and, therefore, that decisions are sound.
12. To be responsible for providing clear, in-depth and accurate advice to elected members on governance, legal constitutional and politically sensitive matters in respect of their executive, representational and community leadership roles, either as individuals or in meetings or other bodies. so as to ensure full compliance with these and thus the smooth handling of the political function of the Panel. In addition, provide similar guidance and advice to senior officers in relation to the democratic processes to which they are expected to contribute and to ensure that the correct constitutional processes are used effectively.
13. To assist the Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager, the Head of Constitutional Services, and the Director of Law and Governance in the on-going development and monitoring of corporate standards and best practice and in maintaining high standards of governance throughout the organisation

and to deliver any training associated with these tasks, including maintaining corporate guidance documents, the Best Practice Guide to Report Writing, etc.

14. To maintain and take responsibility for work programmes for the Panel and working groups supported, in consultation with Senior Officers, to ensure coordination between Panel and groups and arrange the attendance of appropriate witnesses and advisers. This will include the promotion of effective scrutiny to Members and Senior officers, to ensure a robust decision making process.
15. To demonstrate communication skills across a wide range of settings including managing meetings, facilitating communications between key individuals and groups involved in projects and producing reports to clearly and succinctly reflect Members views and review findings.
16. To be responsible for the care, accuracy, confidentiality, security and maintenance of highly sensitive political information, in line with relevant data protection and governance legislation. including the security of offices and service related stock. This includes understanding how and when to share politically sensitive information, being aware of the confidential nature of information and the reputational risks to the Council.
17. To liaise as necessary with the public, external organisations, other local authorities, officers at all levels and Members of the Panel on a variety of governance related matters and to deal effectively with telephone calls and letters.
18. To maintain appropriate records, files and databases relating to the Panel's activities and decisions, including confidential files. This may include working with new technology and to contribute to the development of new ways of working, using ICT.
19. To be responsible for managing the Police and Crime Panel budget within its overall cash limits and submitting quarterly returns
20. To be responsible for ensuring delivery of service within allocated budget and to monitor and report on budget expenditure for the Police and Crime Panel budget.
21. Raising and processing invoices in line with organisational policy.
22. To maintain an awareness of the issues affecting other Democratic Services colleagues and of the responsibilities of other areas in order to provide cover for, or transfer to, other areas within the team.
23. To research, advise and report on democratic governance issues as required including presenting reports.
24. To ensure that referrals to other bodies are properly communicated from the Panel.
25. To contribute to the delivery of accessible, effective and efficient Democratic Services and compliance with corporate and departmental procedures relating to service planning, quality control, and performance monitoring and employee relations.
26. To undertake other tasks in the democratic remit, including Members' ICT and Members' Training and Development, appointment of the Council's

Representatives on Outside Bodies in liaison with Group Leaders and Secretaries, organisation of the Council's Annual Programme of Meetings.

27. Planning and support of aspects of major events including Local Government and Parliamentary Elections, Referenda, Civic and Ceremonial and activities during Local Democracy Week.
28. To assist with the work of the Council, Cabinet, Regulatory, Scrutiny and Sub-Committee meetings if required.

In addition, the post holder will be expected to participate and support to special areas of responsibility and project work allocated by the Head of Constitutional Services and Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager to enhance personal development of the post holder and manage change within business.

Note: This is designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Generic Responsibilities:	<p>To carry out all responsibilities with regard to the Council's Equalities Policy and Procedures and Customer Care Policy.</p> <p>To comply with all Health & Safety at work requirements as laid down by the employer.</p>
Flexibility Clause:	<p>Other duties and responsibilities express and implied which arise from the nature and character of the post within the department (or section) mentioned above or in a comparable post in any of the Organisation's other sections or departments.</p>
Variation Clause:	<p>This is a description of the job as it is constituted at the date shown. It is the practice of this Authority to periodically examine job descriptions, update them and ensure that they relate to the job performed, or to incorporate any proposed changes. This procedure will be conducted by the appropriate manager in consultation with the post holder.</p> <p>In these circumstances it will be the aim to reach agreement on reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible the Head of Service reserves the right to make changes to your job description following consultation.</p>