

Job Description

Department:	Law and Governance
Division/Section:	Legal Services
Job Title:	Principal Lawyer (of designated team)
Post No:	015337
Grade:	15
Reports to:	Head of Service: Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Organisation Chart: Show immediate manager and any jobs reporting to this post.	
DBS Check applicable?	Basic <input type="checkbox"/> Standard <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced <input type="checkbox"/> None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Is post exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in respect of declaration of spent convictions? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Line Management responsibility for:	No. of direct reports: Between 6-9 No. of indirect reports: Between 8-11
Size of budget: (Per annum)	Accounting for between £50k to £300k. The work involves contributing and monitoring the budget spend of Legal Services
Job Purpose:	To be the lead expert lawyer for a particular area specialism and take

	<p>responsibility within the service for one or more of the following specialist areas of law:</p> <p>Child Protection Commercial Contracts and Procurement Adults Litigation Education Employment Litigation, Regulatory and Criminal Planning, Highways and or Property Land Charges team</p> <p>Advanced theoretical, practical, and procedural knowledge needed across their areas of specialism and provide high quality, timely advice, and support to all parts of the Council, its departments and external customers, including matters of a more strategic or sensitive nature. Each area of specialism is multi disciplined in itself.</p>
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Main Duties and Responsibilities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To personally carry an extensive caseload of more complex and sensitive matters and to manage cases that would be considered to be highly complex or organisationally high profile • To be responsible for representing the interest of the team within the wider council and with external clients • To deputise for the Head of Service: Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer and or the Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer, requiring detailed knowledge of the whole specialist area of Legal Services • To assist the Head of Service with management of the staffing budget in the service • To support complex strategic projects across multi-functional teams assisting to ensure that an innovative and commercial solutions focus is adopted across projects • To work some evenings, weekend, and occasional public holidays in order to meet the service requirements of clients' legal matters • Provide leadership and clarity and support to the team to ensure that agreed service plans, aims and objectives are robustly implemented, embedded, and delivered across the service. Positively support, personally and through the post holder's team, the drive for continuous improvement, to deliver a quality legal service which is effective, efficient, consistent, and accountable • To engage with the Council's commercial vision and undertake client meetings for the promotion of the Council's legal services • To provide robust legal advice and assistance to other Local Authorities on complex matters under agreed arrangements • To personally handle a caseload of more complex legal matters, to all parts of the Council, its Departments, its Councillors, and external customers, as appropriate, in a timely, accurate, solution-based way (including into shared service partner) • To assist the Head of Service in the corporate governance of the Council to include advising on reports, attending committees where required, corporate client and service meetings with Senior Management • To work and supervise across other Local Authorities as and when required to provide management support • To attend corporate meetings • Provide advice on significant projects with financial risks and input
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- To comply and ensure compliance within performance standards and targets for the designated team as set out by the Head of Service or Director Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer
- To utilise negotiation skills in maintaining the Council's objective to secure best value and probity in adherence to financial and procurement obligations
- Anticipate and proactively determine the effect of new legislation, case law, regulations, and government policy etc. and provide clear, timely advice to Members, officers, and external customers, as appropriate. Clearly set out the impact of any changes on the business aims and objectives of the Council or external customers, as appropriate, to ensure a corporate approach to legal support
- Prepare and present reports, legal advice and / or documentation for the Executive, Members, Chief Officers, committees, sub-committees, and external customers in respect of the post holder's area of legal responsibility
- Manage and supervise a team of legal staff in compliance with agreed Council policy and acknowledged systems of good practice
- To work proactively to improve productivity and quality within the team
- To be responsible for the direct line management of the lawyers within the team (and in relation to the Principal Lawyer Litigation and Land Charges to include the two members of Land Charges team), supporting staff in their development, providing performance management, and ensuring the work that they are delivering is appropriate and conducting Our Conversations and Annual Conversations
- With the Head of Service to develop the service's business and improvement plans, its vision, aims, objectives and priorities, based on a clear understanding of the business and performance aims of the Council, the service, and its customers, to ensure proper planning of the legal service
- Be responsible for ensuring that agreed changes resulting from new or revised service plans etc. are delivered by the post holder and their team members in a planned, performance managed way. Take appropriate corrective action to ensure agreed outcomes are achieved on time and within budget
- To be the primary contact for delivery of service level agreements with Councils internal Departments agreed and external customers and responsible for performance management within the team
- To be responsible for effective risk management of files within the team
- Pro-actively support and embed within the post holder's service area a positive "will-do" solution-based culture which ensures that the changing service needs of customers is consistently met
- To support the Head of Service in developing ways of maximising and improving income generation and identifying savings
- Understand, value, and actively promote the benefit of strong teamwork and partnerships (both internally and externally)
- Lead and develop, for the post holder's service area, robust systems of engagement with internal and external customers and partners to improve the services understanding of their current and to better anticipate their future service needs. As required, act as a "point of first contact" in pro-actively developing those collaborative partnership working relationships
- Be responsible for ensuring within the service area that there is a local process of planned, continuous improvement in the quality, efficiency, effectiveness, and timeliness of the legal service, clearly based on engagement with team members, customers, and partners (internal and external) as appropriate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an environment for ideas and innovation to be explored, work practices and procedures to be challenged and personal achievement attained to help maximise the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of service delivery to customers and partners 	
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> <p>The council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.</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 Head of Service and or Director of Legal and Governance in consultation with the postholder.</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>

DATE:

April 2024

**COMPLETED
BY:**

Interim Director Legal & Governance

Person Specification

Job title:	Principal Lawyer	Directorate:	Law and Governance
Grade:	15	Service / Team:	Legal Services
Date:	April 2024	Completed by:	Interim Director Legal & Governance

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	DESIRABLE CRITERIA
KNOWLEDGE	<p>Advanced Legal knowledge in the area of specialism</p> <p>A good understanding of the concepts underpinning administrative and corporate law as it relates to local government</p> <p>A sound understanding of the workings of local government and the challenges set by the local government agenda along with the financial, legal, and political context of local government</p> <p>Ability to contribute towards setting the strategic direction of Legal Services, supporting the Service Director – Legal Services in developing the overarching strategy for the service and the necessary supporting plans for delivery</p> <p>Knowledge of local government powers and duties</p> <p>Specific knowledge of the law relating to one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial, Contracts and Procurement • Social Care (children and/or adult) • Education • Public health • Employment/ Litigation 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education 	
SKILLS & ABILITIES	<p>Ability to provide high quality legal services, which are responsive to the needs of clients and provide timely and constructive solutions to customer requirements.</p> <p>Ability to balance competing priorities and deliver within tight timescales</p> <p>Ability to influence and negotiate effectively along with the ability to lead, motivate, inspire confidence and enthusiasm</p> <p>To actively promote and champion a commercial operation to the operation of Legal Services</p> <p>Leading by example in modelling the conduct, behaviour and values expected of the Council's employees and establish a working environment within the designated legal team where individuals can excel</p> <p>Demonstrate high levels of interpersonal skills and the ability to contribute to multi-disciplinary teams within the Council.</p> <p>Excellent oral and written communication skills and the ability to present to diverse range of audiences including elected Members, senior officers, staff, and external agencies.</p> <p>Proven ability to analyse, use and present complex data in a clear and informative way.</p> <p>Proven ability to think and act strategically and to contribute to the corporate plan.</p> <p>Experience of drafting and analysing complex documents and using own judgement to reach the desired solution</p> <p>Able to operate effectively as an individual and as part of a group.</p>	

EXPERIENCE	<p>Experience as a legal advisor in one of the following legal fields: Contracts and Procurement • Social Care (children and/or adult) • Education • Public health • Litigation</p> <p>A proven track record of providing good quality legal advice and assistance.</p> <p>Success in working within an effective team and sustaining effective relationships with staff, clients, and elected members</p> <p>An experienced lawyer and manager</p>	
QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Solicitor, either with a current practising certificate or eligible to apply for a practising certificate, or a qualified Barrister or a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives</p> <p>Evidence of continuing professional development</p>	
PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	<p>Must be willing to work outside office hours during the week as dictated by the requirements of the service</p> <p>While the jobholder may work flexible hours, it is expected that colleagues in the Legal Services Practice will cooperate with one another and coordinate their absences so that between 9.00am and 5.00pm on each working day there are always sufficient staff available to deal with emergency legal work</p>	
EQUALITY	<p>Candidates must demonstrate understanding of acceptance and commitment to the principals underlying equal opportunities</p>	
CUSTOMER CARE	<p>Knowledge and understanding of effective customer care</p>	