

Legal and Democratic Services Manager



Job description

Responsible to: Director of Corporate Services

Responsible for: See structure chart

Grade: 13

1. Main purpose of the job

- 1.1 To provide strategic leadership and management of the services provided (Legal Services / Democratic Services / Electoral Services / Information Governance) to ensure the Council meets its statutory and legal obligations and its policy objectives and that the services provided demonstrate their cost-effectiveness.
- 1.2 Ensure that Members, senior officers, Services and external partners receive appropriate advice and support in order to secure the Council's interests and to help achieve its key strategic objectives.
- 1.3 To discharge the statutory duties of the Monitoring Officer

2. Duties and responsibilities

- 2.1 Manage and lead in accordance with agreed standards and within allocated resources, to ensure that the legal obligations and interests of the Council are protected, high governance standards are achieved and the political/management interface operates effectively.
- 2.2 Demonstrate on a continuous basis the efficiency and value of the services for which the post is responsible and secure a cost-effective balance between internally provided and externally procured services.
- 2.3 Act as the 'Proper Officer' in relation to the Local Government Access to Information requirements. Also ensure that decisions, together for the reason of these decisions and relevant reports and background papers, are made available as appropriate.
- 2.4 Lead the development of Council strategies in relation to Freedom of Information and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers and take decisions to apply exemptions to disclosure and to authorise surveillance under the relevant legislation.

- 2.5 As Monitoring Officer contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct for Members through the provision of support to the Standards Committee, including investigating.
- 2.6 Provide confident leadership, management and a clear sense of direction and purpose that will enable Legal & Democratic Services to deliver its vision, values, priorities and policies.
- 2.7 Review, develop and implement the Council's Legal and Democratic Services' policies and service plans, to ensure that services are provided in accordance with Council objectives and priorities and statutory responsibilities and are fit for purpose and provide value for money.
- 2.8 Provide robust and timely legal support and advice on a wide range of projects, issues and developments, to ensure that the legal obligations and the interests of the Council are met.
- 2.9 Develop, support and train staff within the services to provide a professional base and development opportunities, so as to achieve and maintain the highest possible professional standards.
- 2.10 Monitor and evaluate the achievements of objectives and provide regular reports on budgets and performance, ensuring that opportunities for continuous improvements are identified and resourced. Also identify opportunities for improved value for money.
- 2.11 Manage all service budgets to ensure that targets for savings and income generation are met, that resources are well monitored and controlled and are deployed to the best possible effect.
- 2.12 Attend and provide expert advice to the Council, Executive, Committees, Steering Groups, and such other meetings, as required.
- 2.13 Appoint and manage all aspects of the relationship between the Council and any external solicitors and barristers lawyers engaged on Council work.
- 2.14 Undertake legal work in relation to major, sensitive or complex projects and advise on matters affecting the legal position of the Council, as necessary.
- 2.15 Keep up to date with developments in Legal & Democratic Services and to provide appropriate briefings and training to Members and staff, across the Council's organisation.
- 2.16 Represent the Council at National and Regional levels in dealings with central government, other local authorities, agencies, the local community, the private sector, academic institutions and other appropriate organisations, in order to promote and to protect the interests and priorities of the Council.
- 2.17 To act as the Council's corporate complaints officer and liaise directly with the Ombudsman, identifying and championing any areas where improvement action can be taken.

3. Work location

You will normally be based at the **Civic Centre**, Chelmsford, but may be required to work from any other location within the City should circumstances make it necessary.

4. General conditions

- A. This Job Description is subject to your conditions of Employment, which, in the event of conflict, shall take precedence. The post holder will carry out the duties specified above and

such other duties as may be required from time to time. The Job Description may be reviewed and amended in the light of any changes that are made.

- B. It may be necessary, from time to time, for you to work hours in excess of, or differing from, your normal working hours.
- C. It may be necessary for you to be trained in, and use, new technology as it is introduced into the Council's activities.
- D. It is a condition of employment that you may be required to assist in the organisation and running of elections or referenda that take place in the City, relating to Parish Councils, the City Council, the County Council, Parliament and the European Parliament, or other similar bodies. You will normally only be required to carry out election and referenda duties when there are insufficient experienced volunteers from within the Council's service who are available for and able to carry out such duties.
- E. You will carry out your responsibilities with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- F. You will be made aware and undertake training as required in line with your responsibilities set out in the Council's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy.