

## Wirral Council: Job Role Descriptor

<b>Job Role:</b>	<b>Senior Lawyer</b>
<b>Service:</b>	<b>Legal and Member Services</b>
<b>Reports to:</b>	<b>Group Solicitor (Corporate)</b>
<b>No. of Subordinates:</b>	<b>2 / 3</b>
<b>HR USE ONLY</b>	
<b>Job Role Ref:</b>	<b>CSUP0099P</b>
<b>Job Family:</b>	<b>CSUP</b>
<b>Proposed Grade:</b>	<b>EPO6</b>

### JOB ROLE PURPOSE

To lead the provision of professional legal advice for a specialist area. Support Senior Leaders and Members of the Council on legal matters in relation to the areas of legal practice assigned. Specialist areas include Safeguarding, Litigation and Governance, Property and Planning or Contracts and Commercial.

### KEY TASKS

1. To lead the provision of legal advice and support to the Council's functions. Taking responsibility for the conduct of contractual matters, drafting, litigation or proceedings arising from the duties and functions for a specialist area.
2. Represent or arrange representation of the Council as may be necessary in the Courts, Tribunals, inquiries and other bodies in relation to significant and complex matters as required including advocacy and the drafting of pleadings, orders, claims and defences.
3. Attend and give legal advice to the Senior Leadership team, Cabinet, committees, panels or other meetings as required whatsoever as may be directed (including those held in the evening).
4. Participate in project teams to ensure the achievement of the Council's objectives and the delivery of high quality legal advice and services to client Services and Departments.
5. Identify, research and anticipate the effects on service provision of new developments in the law to ensure that clients are able to adopt best practice in the delivery of timely and responsive services.
6. Draft, prepare and comment on committee reports, policy documents and other briefing papers for the Director, Head of Legal Services, Head of Democratic and Members Services and other officers. This will include the provision of wider local government and regulatory, procedural and administrative law advice for the

Council and its services and for that purpose inform oneself of all material matters in addition to the areas of the practice normally assigned.

7. Carry out all work using the Legal Services' Case Management system, to time-record, work and adopt modern working practices and make use of technologies provided by the Department.
8. Ensure compliance with the Governance and Assurance Directorate's and the Team Business Plan(s), the Legal Services' Practice Manual and quality assurance requirements.
9. Represent the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services at meetings with Members, committees, sub-committees, panels, working groups, including public meetings, public agencies and external professional representatives.
10. Contribute to the effective working relationships within the Governance and Assurance Directorate and between the Legal Services Department and client departments, external solicitors, counsel, public agencies and members of the public.
11. Supervise colleagues in the Service as appropriate to ensure the effective delivery of legal services to client.
12. Conduct file reviews and specialist quality assurance supervision of colleagues as directed and as per the Legal Services' Practice Manual.

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **People**

- Manage a team of lawyers / legal assistants within a specialist area.
- Lead and facilitate performance management and proactively embed a strong team ethic; ensuring compliance on legal issues across the Council.
- Establish and maintain good working relationships both with functions, members and colleagues.
- Ensure professional standards are maintained and aligned to the Council's of behaviour when dealing with both internal and external clients.
- Liaise with internal colleagues, legal advisors, external partners and third parties on a regular basis on legal matters. Negotiating on behalf of the Council within the appropriate legal framework.
- Represent Governance and Assurance at appropriate internal and external meetings or working groups and utilise networks and peers to improve knowledge and maximise resources and opportunities.
- Liaise with other Council Departments, Schools, Councillors, external agencies and partnership organisations as required, at all levels including top management.

## **Financial**

- Provide a cost effective and efficient service to the Council in particular by ensuring that external lawyers, solicitors, barristers and experts who provide a service to the Council ensuring value for money.
- Ensure that the costs of external advisers are contained within the allocated budget.

## **Strategic**

- Provide strategic legal constitutional, procedural and administrative advice for the Council in relation to the functions allocated.
- Advise on the legal implications of new legislation or existing policies of the Council.
- Lead on the design and delivery of new legal advice; ensuring that practice and policy within the Council is lawful.
- Lead the procurement of external legal advice as required by the needs of the Council, ensuring procurement rules are adhered to.

## **Resources**

- Lead on the development and continuous improvement of legal documents, systems and resources.
- To lead and enable CIVICA case management solutions.
- Support the Principal Lawyer on key allocated Governance and Assurance projects to deliver Department priorities/initiatives from commencement to finalisation utilising project management methodology.
- Lead on the delivery of Governance and Assurance specific Council wide initiatives, projects or programmes.

## **Planning and Organising**

- Lead the allocation of work in line with organisational requirements and legal timeframes; including the planning, organisation and prioritisation of duties and key responsibilities.
- Escalate complex queries to the Principal Lawyer.
- Adhere to deadlines imposed by the Courts or Tribunals and all contractual and other requirements, including those from internal customers.
- Plan and prioritise own workload and that of your team.
- Ensure case management information is accurate, responds to the needs of the organisation and aligns to performance indicators.
- Produce reports and present to relevant Committees as required.

## **Decision Making**

- Responsible for all decisions relating to the legal aspects of litigation and proceedings arising for specialist area of responsibility.
- Be aware of and inform the Principal Lawyer of decisions pending that could result in major consequences for the Council prior to decisions being made.
- Resolve subsequent issues arising from own work and that of others, point of escalation for more serious and complex queries from team members.
- Ensure that issues escalated are recorded, managed and resolved by according to agreed performance targets.
- Work autonomously, applying knowledge and understanding of the specialist area in order to determine an appropriate course of action that produces a consistent, accurate and positive outcome.

## **EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

### **Essential Criteria**

#### **Qualifications:**

- Qualified and practising barrister, lawyer or solicitor.

#### **Knowledge & Skills:**

- Sound grasp of local government legislation and guidance relevant to role and keen awareness of current local government issues.
- An understanding of Local Authority governance arrangements, decision making and corporate governance.
- Excellent written and verbal presentation skills – able to convey wide ranging complex and contentious information to a range of audiences, including non-specialist, in a clear and concise manner.
- Excellent analytical, problem solving and research skills in order to produce options / outcomes.
- Excellent listening and interviewing skills.
- Ability to successfully work within broad guidelines, using discretion and initiative over a range of activity with limited escalation to senior managers, alongside a sound knowledge, awareness and application of ethical, professional and capability standards and requirements.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills: Tact, diplomacy, empathy and politically awareness.
- Able to prioritise varying workloads to tight deadlines and deal with high volumes of work whilst maintaining a high quality service.
- IT Literate; Able to effectively maintain manual and computerised administrative systems.
- Commitment to consistently delivering high standards of customer care.

- Have organisational and time management skills; Resilience in dealing with competing and demanding pressures and potentially emotionally difficult situations and information.
- Able to work with colleagues as a team.
- Flexible and co-operative attitude to work, able to multi-skill.
- Understand need for political sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Ability to effectively lead and manage a team including mentoring and supporting other legal staff.
- Ability to lead major projects.
- Ability to assist the Principal Lawyer and Senior Leaders in internal investigations and other projects.
- Effective skills in managing and addressing sensitive situations.
- Able to successfully apply emotional intelligence to complex, challenging situations.

### **Experience:**

- Experience of working at a senior level dealing with complex matters in the specialist area of Safeguarding, Litigation and Governance, Property and Planning or Contracts and Commercial.
- Knowledge and experience of procurement law in an internal or external setting.
- Experience of leading major contracts.
- Experience of producing and presenting reports to Committees, Senior leaders and other meetings.
- Self – motivation and ability to work on your own initiative.

<b>Desirable Criteria</b>
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### **Qualifications**

- N/A

### **Knowledge & Skills:**

- Experience of working in a political environment.
- Ability to innovate in dealing with major projects.
- Ability to solve problems in dealing with major projects.
- Ability to give appropriate and timely legal advice in response to tight deadlines/emergency situations.
- Self-motivated and able to work on their own initiative on major projects.
- Ability to adapt to meet the demands of the service.
- Ability to mentor and support other legal staff.
- Sound understanding of Local Authority governance arrangements, decision making and corporate governance.
- Knowledge and experience of working in local government.

- Good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Able to innovate and problem solve.
- Able to work successfully as part of a team, assisting in management of risks and opportunities to deliver expected project outcomes.

**Experience (for specific areas of practice):**

- Experience of major property transactions and / or
- Extensive recent experience of advising upon the procurement of major contracts and / or;
- Extensive recent experience of drafting major contracts.

<b>ADDITIONAL WORK ELEMENTS</b>
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- Ability to travel around the Borough in private or public transport.
- Ability to work of an evening and weekend as required.
- This post would be classed as a sensitive politically restricted post

**NOTE:**

**The job role holder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the job role descriptor grade as directed by the Head of Service.**

This job role descriptor will be reviewed regularly and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post holder. It is not a definitive statement of procedures and tasks, but sets out the main expectations of the Service in relation to the post holder's responsibilities and duties.

Elements of this job role descriptor and changes to it may be amended in light of organisational and service requirements.

**Signed Head of Service**

**Date**

Vikki Shaw

29/08/2019