

Wirral Council: Job Role Descriptor

Job Role:	Assistant Lawyer
Service:	Legal and Member Services
Reports to:	Group Solicitor (Corporate)
No. of Subordinates:	0
HR USE ONLY	
Job Role Ref:	CSUP0100P
Job Family:	Corporate Support
Grade:	PO9

JOB ROLE PURPOSE

As a part of the Governance and Assurance Directorate of the Council, to provide the local authority and its client bodies, services and functions with legal, procedural and business services and advice to:

- Ensure that policy is formulated and operational decisions are taken on a sound legal basis;
- Support the proper exercise of the Authority's functions and powers; and
- Protect and further the interests and objectives of the Council in the most effective and efficient manner available.

KEY TASKS

1. To provide legal advice and services to the Council's Members, officers and external bodies, including (as directed):
 - a) the drafting and presentation of advice, including to committees, panels or other meetings of the Council and associated bodies;
 - b) drafting contracts and legal agreements;
 - c) undertaking negotiations;
 - d) management of litigation; and
 - e) undertaking advocacy in the Courts, Tribunals and at statutory appeals and inquiries.
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Ensure compliance with the Governance and Assurance Directorate's and the Team Business Plan(s), the Legal Services' Practice Manual and quality assurance requirements.
7. Represent the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services, as required, at meetings with Members, committees, sub-committees, panels, working groups, including public meetings, public agencies and external professional representatives.
8. 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.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

People

Establish and maintain good working relationships both with client departments and other members of staff.

A focus on delivering a high standard of customer service and an emphasis on the development of effective customer relationships.

Maintain professional standards of behaviour when dealing with both internal and external clients.

Collaborative working, acting creatively and responsibly as one team, showing respect for the work needs of others.

Mentor and support Legal colleagues, including overseeing others work.

Financial

Work within the Corporate Group, so as to provide a cost effective and efficient service to the Council in particular by ensuring that external solicitors, barristers and experts who provide a service to the Council do so having regard to value for money.

Ensure that the costs of external advisers are contained within the allocated budget.

Strategic

Provide and obtain legal constitutional, procedural and administrative advice for the Council in relation to the functions of the client areas assigned.

Advise on the legal implications of new legislation or existing policies of the Council.

Investing in own performance and an improving knowledge and skillset.

Adherence to professional and officer codes of conduct, including but not limited to:

- a) upholding the rule of law and the proper administration of justice;
- b) acting with integrity;
- c) not allowing your independence to be compromised;
- d) acting in the best interests of each client;
- e) providing a proper standard of service to your clients;

behaving in a way that maintains the trust the public places in you as a provider of legal services* and of a public function. (*1-6 of the 10 SRA mandatory principles)

Resources

Instruction and costs approval for external Solicitors and Counsel in respect of seeking advice or representation at tribunals, inquiries or court proceedings.

CIVICA case management solution.

Seeking to deliver increasing efficiency and effectiveness with an awareness of the need to use tax payers' money wisely to deliver the highest quality services.

Participation in a culture of learning, sharing knowledge and excellence to build a culture of high performance, which inspires and supports the delivery of the Council's priorities and plan.

Planning and Organising

Plan, organise and prioritise cases under the supervision of the Principal Solicitor and or the Senior Solicitor within the relevant Group.

Work at all times to deadlines imposed by the Courts or Tribunals and all contractual and other requirements (including those imposed by client departments).

Decision Making

Work under the supervision of the Principal Lawyer and Senior Lawyer or Lawyer but subject thereto take responsibility for all decisions relating to the legal aspects of litigation and proceedings arising from the functions of the client areas assigned.

Notify the Principal Solicitor and Senior Solicitor of decisions which are to be taken that may have consequences for the Council and which merit their attention before those major decisions are taken.

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Essential Criteria

Qualifications:

- Qualified barrister, solicitor, legal executive (Fellow) or equivalent (subject to or awaiting QLTS).

Knowledge and 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.
- Developed 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.
- Developed analytical problem solving and research skills.
- Developed listening and interviewing skills.
- Ability to successfully work within broad guidelines, using discretion and initiative over a range of activity under appropriate supervision and guidance from senior managers, alongside a sound knowledge, awareness and application of ethical, professional and capability standards and requirements.
- Tact, diplomacy, empathy and politically awareness.
- Organisational and time management skills; 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
- 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.

Experience:

- Experience of dealing with relevant areas of law, having provided advice, guidance and support in a variety of cases.
- Commitment to obtaining, and maintaining, up to date knowledge of case law, regulation and best practice relevant to role.

Desirable Criteria

Qualifications:

- N/A

Knowledge and Skills:

- 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 give appropriate & timely legal advice in emergency situations.
- 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:

- Experience of working in a political environment.

ADDITIONAL WORK ELEMENTS

- Ability to travel around the Borough using private or public transport.
- Able to work of an evening and weekend as required.
- To attend meeting on behalf of Head of Legal Services and Director of Governance and Assurance.

- This post is classed as a politically sensitive 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