



HAY Job description

JOB TITLE:	Chief Legal & Democratic Services Officer
DIRECTORATE:	ACE - People and Organisation
SERVICE:	Legal & Democratic Services
GRADE:	AD 1.2 (£74,560 - £83,154)
DATE PREPARED:	February 2013

REPORTS TO:	Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
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JOB PURPOSE

1. To lead the Legal & Democratic Services functions to deliver added value at strategic and operational level for the Council, contributing as appropriate to the Council's Medium Term Plan.
2. To be the Council's designated Monitoring Officer under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
3. To lead on Council Governance, providing a critical interface with and support for Members and officers including overseeing the democratic process, the constitutional arrangements and the workings of the Council, providing value added services through support and challenge.

MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

Generic Accountabilities

1. To provide effective and visible leadership and innovatively managing services, to secure and sustain the necessary changes in culture and practice, to ensure that services perform well in line with corporate aims, goals and objectives.
2. To be a specialist/expert adviser on all aspects of the service areas for which responsibility is held, ensuring that appropriate professional advice is given to Elected Members, the Chief Executive and Senior Managers.
3. To ensure that services are delivered in a way that is responsive to the needs of customers, be they other colleagues across the Council or residents and businesses, and that staff in the directorate possess the skills, aptitude and knowledge to provide high standards of customer service and are focussed on delivering the Council's objectives and programmes of change.
4. To determine the most cost effective use and deployment of resources in order to achieve corporate and departmental objectives. To produce and manage the budgets in the assigned service areas for which the post holder is responsible, to ensure that expenditure and income is effectively managed and monitored and that budgets are transparent and fully accounted for.

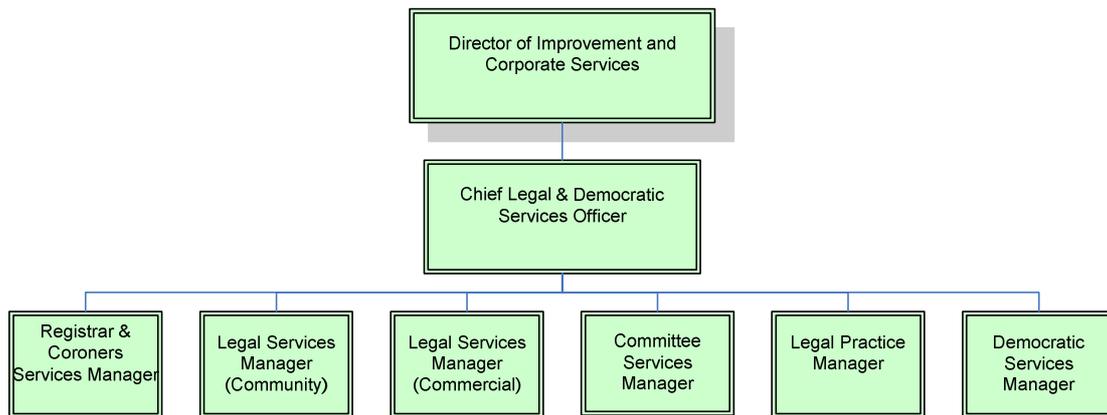
5. To lead and manage the performance and development of the service management and leadership team, ensuring that in their planning and performance, the services they provide meet agreed Council policies and desired outcomes including those identified in service and budget plans.
6. To work in partnership with other senior managers to ensure that services operate co-operatively across organisational boundaries to achieve Council objectives.
7. To build positive, constructive and productive relationships between the Council's Elected Members, strategic partners, stakeholders and local communities.
8. To put in place and maintain effective practices and processes to monitor and improve performance against agreed outcomes.
9. To establish and maintain effective means of communication and engagement with all staff and maintain good relationships to promote a climate of positive industrial relations through regular consultation and the timely resolution of issues.
10. To ensure that corporate policies and processes are known and acted upon by all employees
11. To promote equality and inclusion across all service provision and in employment practices, through best practice, personal example and appropriate policy initiatives.
12. To ensure that the Council is able to demonstrate compliance with its statutory obligations, including meeting health and safety legislation.
13. To exemplify through personal behaviour the Council's values and appropriately challenge behaviour in others that does not reflect those values.

Role Specific Accountabilities

14. To act as the lead Solicitor, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Returning Officer and provide strategic advice to Council members and management on all matters relating to legislation, constitutional affairs, democratic processes, standards & ethics.
15. To ensure the provision of expertise and advice to Council Members and Officers on the implications of current emerging legislation and with specialist, high level legal support in certain key areas of law (eg Local Government Law and Administrative Law, Corporate Governance, Employment Law, Commercial Law and PFI, Standards etc.) to secure the Council's best advantage in these important aspects of the it's business.
16. To lead on the development and oversee the relationships between Officers and Members to ensure effective decision making. To identify the future requirements for the Member role, given the changing political and economic environment, and ensure their effective development to meet the changing agenda.
17. To lead on the provision of legal services to the Council, managing a team of legal specialists to ensure the Council's interests are effectively protected and all legal processes are undertaken in accordance with the highest standards.
18. To lead the management of the democratic process in Central Bedfordshire, ensuring all aspects including member support and elections management are carried out efficiently and in line with constitutional and statutory requirements.
19. Plan, direct and manage the provision of timely and effective Legal Services to external public sector bodies in accordance with contracts/partnerships entered into between the Council and those bodies, thus ensuring that the Council can maintain a comprehensive support service for its own statutory functions.

20. Design, develop and implement the Legal & Democratic division's Business Plan and monitor the Division's performance against agreed performance and quality standards to ensure that the Division operates effectively in accordance with its own business objectives and the requirements of the Council and its external clients.
21. Lead, direct and guide the staff employed in the Legal and Democratic Services Groups to ensure that they contribute fully to the achieving the Council's and Group's objectives. This will involve motivating staff and securing their commitment to a business ethos that will enable the Group to meet its targets and survive in an increasingly competitive environment.
22. On a personal basis to provide high-level legal support to the Council and external clients especially in relation to complex, sensitive and controversial issues where the Council/client requires authoritative legal advice. To represent the Council in Courts, before Tribunals and at Public Inquiries to secure balanced and favourable judgements in the best interests of the Council and the Public.
23. To review, maintain and update the Council's constitution to ensure that it meets statutory requirements; to act as a principal source of expertise and strategic advice to Members and officers on constitutional matters and democratic processes and procedures; by deploying an advanced knowledge of local political issues and constitutional law, to lead on the formulation of innovative solutions to complex and/or contentious issues.
24. To lead on the provision of high quality and professional support to meetings of the Council, the Executive and Committees and to ensure the notification to all Directorates of responsibility for action arising from Council, Executive or Committee etc decisions.
25. To ensure the delivery of high quality electoral services and, in consultation with the Returning Officer, to conduct Parliamentary, European and Local elections and referenda and post electoral reviews, adjusting processes and procedures, as appropriate. This includes advising and directing electoral staff on electoral law and administration.
26. To ensure the delivery of high quality support services to the Council's elected Members, including the Leader and Portfolio holders, the Chairman of the Council and to the Lord Lieutenant for Bedfordshire.
27. To be accountable for a number of statutory Registers (eg Land Charges).
28. Act as the Council's Proper officer for the Registration Service and exercise overall management accountability within the organisation for the delivery of the Coroner's Service.

ORGANISATION CHART:



PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
1. Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Solicitor or Barrister. • Educated to degree level or equivalent experience. • Professional management qualification. • Evidence of continuous professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBA or equivalent
2. Relevant Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable experience of successfully sustaining improvement in performance over a significant period. • Considerable experience of managing legal and democratic service services functions. • Considerable experience of working with and participating in the 'top team'. • Experience in diagnosing key issues and proactively identifying the need for change and key levers to achieve tangible results in the context of the organisation's strategic plan. • Experience of working collaboratively and successfully with Elected Members. • Experience in delivering management, statutory and technical reports relating to Registration and Coroner Services. 	

3. Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspires confidence and has gravitas – is a credible voice within the top team.• Takes a pragmatic approach to change, always focused on adding value and achieving results.• Is able to help others to think strategically and work with strategy development in a credible way.• Ability to communicate in a compelling way either verbally or in writing; an engaging presenter.• Excellent technical knowledge across the range of 'Legal & Democratic Services'.• Ability to manage risk effectively. <p>High personal standards of integrity and probity – willingness to hold self and others to account.</p>	
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