

Principal Solicitor

Job Description

Post	Principal Property Solicitor/Legal Executive/ Barrister
Department	Legal
Salary Grade	Grade M4
Salary Range	£18,246-£19,873(14 hours), £27,369-£29,810 (21 hours), £48,223 - £52,5248 FTE per annum
Location	Hybrid: Pippbrook, Dorking x 2 days pw pro rata and working from home for the remainder
Reports to	Legal Services Manager & Solicitor to the Council

Post Objectives

- To work as a Principal Solicitor/ Barrister/ Legal Executive in the Legal Services Team where team members work together to provide a comprehensive legal service to colleagues throughout the Council, covering and supporting each other.
- To be responsible for their own work (both advisory and drafting) as delegated to them by the Legal Services Manager who is also the Solicitor to the Council (**Legal Services Manager**), working with the other Solicitors and other members of the Team and assist the Team generally.

Main Duties

M4

- As one of the members of the Legal Services Team to provide cover for other solicitors during his/her/their absence as appropriate.
- To assist the Legal Services Manager/ Deputy Legal Services Manager in ensuring that the Council complies with all legislative requirements and providing a pro-active as well as reactive legal service.
- To conduct all aspects of legal work on the range of District Council legal work, as allocated by the Legal Services Manager, and working with minimal supervision whenever possible and keeping colleagues informed about one's own work. The post holder will have experience in the following area:
 - Property (for the x2 day pw role, and
 - Planning (if interested in the additional x1 day pw role)
- To provide pro-active solution focussed legal advice;
- To adopt best practice in the management of individual matters through the appropriate use of the Legal Services case management system and good legal practice management standards.

- Where authorised, instruct Counsel or external law firms to advise the Council. This may include drafting instructions to Counsel or client briefs (as the case may be), reviewing proposals, negotiating fees and managing the delivery of such outsourced services against agreed timescales, scope and budget.
- To conduct all aspects of complex and/or politically sensitive legal matters relevant to the postholder's area(s) of experience, having regard to ensuring that good governance arrangements are in place to support effective decision making;
- To contribute to the management and strategy of the Legal Services Team;
- To assist and/or contribute to the delivery of Legal Service and corporate projects.
- To be aware of the Council's policy on Risk Management and to escalate any new, emerging or potential risks to the post holder's line manager.
- Carry out such duties as may be required by your manager as appropriate to the post
- To ensure that all necessary data is provided in an accurate, reliable and timely manner, and is fit for purpose in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policies.
- Health and Safety – to work in accordance with the Council's commitment to provide a healthy and safe working environment including the promotion and implementation of health and safety policies and procedures
- This is a politically restricted post as defined by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- To support and mentor colleagues where required by the Legal Services Manager/Solicitor to the Council or Deputy Legal Services Manager;
- To deputise for the Legal Services Manager/Solicitor to the Council, the Deputy Legal Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer, including providing cover for other fee earners within the same specialism(s) during their absence and advising members in public and private meetings (as required), and reviewing and clearing officer reports and briefing notes to the Senior Leadership Team, the Executive, Committees/Sub-Committees and Council;
- To contribute to ensuring that colleagues within the Legal Services team, members and officers in other areas of the Council are trained in relevant developments in law and policy and receive guidance on their implementation in a timely manner, including delivering training.
- Carry out such additional duties as may be required by your manager as appropriate to the post

Person Specification

Essential Experience and Knowledge

- Solicitor of England and Wales with or entitled to a Practising Certificate without conditions (or otherwise qualified to practise as a barrister or chartered legal executive in England and Wales)
- Evidence of and commitment to continuous professional development.
- Capable of drafting legal documentation and advice often under time pressure.
- Experience of drafting and negotiating legal documentation and providing advice under time pressure with limited supervision, including assistance with pro-active and reactive communications.
- Ability to work on own initiative.
- Unquestionable probity.
- The ability to prioritise own workload when experiencing conflicting demands to ensure deadlines and targets are met.
- Substantial post qualification experience which would enable the post holder to carry out complex, high value and politically sensitive legal work in the following area(s) under time pressure and with minimal supervision;
 - Property (x2 days per week), and
 - Planning, (for x1 day a week position);

Desirable Experience and Knowledge

- Some knowledge or experience of laws, practices and procedures of administration and local government
- A willingness and aptitude to train and develop in the role as the post holder will be expected to provide support across all areas of legal work which the Council could reasonably be expected to encounter, within their capability.
- Demonstrable experience of effective team working.
- The ability to present effectively to different audiences, including officers at different levels within the Council, members, and external partners to give advice and assistance or to deliver training or briefings on particular corporate projects or legal matters.
- Willingness to supervise and/or provide mentoring to non fee earning staff.
- Experience of advising public bodies
- Ability to supervise and/or provide mentoring to both fee earning and non fee earning staff

Education and Qualifications

- Solicitor admitted to the roll in England and Wales without conditions (or such other qualification to enable the post holder to practise as a barrister or chartered legal executive in England and Wales)

Skills

- Able to demonstrate an innovative approach to solving legal problems coupled with effective research skills.
- Excellent verbal, written and comprehension skills – e.g. the ability review and provide the legal implications of officer reports and recommendations in plain English and give clear and concise advice on legal issues allocated by the Legal Services Manager.
- Ability to research and advise on legal areas outside own area of specialism
- Good communication skills with the ability to effectively develop and maintain strong working relationships with officers, Members, the Senior Leadership team, other senior staff across the organisation and external partners (e.g service providers and residents) – such skills to include good interpersonal skills of tact and diplomacy, persuading, influencing and negotiating.
- Ability to interpret and communicate the law, policies and procedures clearly and concisely, and to plan and assist in delivery of training or briefings as appropriate to elected Members, officers, colleagues in the Legal Services team and customers.
- Competent in the use of Microsoft Office and able to produce documents in hard and electronic versions.

Special Aptitudes

- Flexible approach to changing work demands and proven ability to progress developments and improvements in working practices.
- Willingness to engage positively with corporate initiatives and opportunities.
- Ability to demonstrate commitment to equality and diversity in both delivery of services and in relationships with colleagues.
- Able to demonstrate a good level of political awareness.

Job Requirements

- The role will require travel from time to time within Surrey, and to London and within the South-East for the purposes of meetings, partnership working and professional development (no more than x1 per month where further attendance is impractical).
- Available to work outside normal working hours and attend evening meetings as necessary (if practical) – to provide cover for colleagues – the frequency will depend on the post holder's area of law.(unlikely to be in excess of 5 occurrences per annum).
- Representation of the Council at Court and hearings may also be occasionally required.

Employee Signature

Date

Manager's Signature

Date

Job Description Template updated September 2019