

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Democratic Services Officer			
Directorate	Strategy, Workforce & Localities			
Reporting to	Head of Governance & Democratic Services or Service Manager or Governance Specialist - Democratic Services			
Grade	12			
Evaluation ref:	AG0123	Job ref:	Family	
Role purpose				
As one of the administrative officers in the Governance & Democratic Services Team, reporting either to a Service Manager or Governance Specialist in Governance & Democratic Services. Responsibilities supporting the delivery of one or more of the following service functions, as detailed in the Responsibilities section below.				
Responsibilities				
Governance				
<p>Arrange and administer '2nd tier' member, officer and partnership meetings including high profile meetings and/or sensitive meetings, e.g. plan forward work programmes in consultation with members/officers/independent members, all pre-meeting arrangements including briefings, drafting and agreeing agendas, collate agenda items, circulate papers/reports including background papers, attend meetings - on occasion as the sole representative of Governance & Democratic Services - or in support of the Head of Service/Service Managers, provide advice and guidance on procedural matters to members and officers, arrange the webcasting of assigned committee meetings, draft minutes, prepare reports and initiate any follow up action required. Provide as required similar roles in support of a senior officer at a 'first tier' member level meeting such as Full Council, Executive, Scrutiny Committee, etc.</p> <p>Provide administrative support for officer decision-making, e.g., collect information, co-ordinate the various processes, input data and information into templates, databases and/or software systems and draft reports for senior officers.</p> <p>Provide cover for absent colleagues in the administration of 'first-tier' member bodies and other meetings, carry out as necessary the range of tasks identified above.</p> <p>Organise and plan meetings/events, the Council meetings calendar, arrange and confirm dates, book venues, equipment and refreshments.</p> <p>Deal with enquiries from the public and council members, provide advice and information on all aspects of the democratic functions of the council. Refer enquiries or complaints to a senior member of staff as required.</p> <p>Maintain and update filing and record systems in paper and electronic format for the team and maintain the team's archiving requirements and systems. Develop and</p>				

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maintain paper based and IT based information systems as required, e.g., tracking outcomes from meetings.

Provide advice and support services to members and to officers on issues relating to the Council's democratic arrangements, including the conduct of business, and legal/ procedural requirements.

Provide advice to senior staff and elected members in resolving ICT/SAP/MSDynamics queries of a routine nature, e.g., help with their use of information technology, processing orders, etc.

Design and layout documentation using a computer, e.g., committee work programmes. Create and design spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations for Senior and Service Managers.

Open and despatch all incoming hard copy mail and email for the Head of Service and Service Managers and respond on their behalf or pass to an appropriate member of staff for response.

Appeals

Administer school admission appeal panel hearings or other types of appeal hearings, including attending meetings, giving procedural advice and undertaking all follow-up action including confirming decisions to the parents, the school admissions team and schools accordingly.

Support to the Head of Service and Service Managers

Provide support to the Head of Service and Service Managers within the Governance & Democratic Services, e.g., diary management, deal with correspondence on their behalf, organise meetings and attend meetings for and with them to provide administrative support.

Deal with all visitors and incoming calls for the Strategic and Service Managers and other colleagues, answer enquiries and refer others to an appropriate member of staff.

Member, Support, Development and Training

Maintain the Elected Members SharePoint site and maintain a master diary of meetings, briefings, training and events.

Provide administrative support to Members to enable them to effectively undertake their roles, including processing travel and subsistence claims. Support as necessary their personal development, training and general needs, e.g., arrange hotel accommodation and travel arrangements as necessary.

Support the administration of the Members' and Officers' Registers of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality.

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Support the delivery of a project or specific activities on behalf of the service.

Impact

Contacts & Relationships

The 110 elected members of Council, including group leaders, Lead Members, committee chairs both within this Council and other authorities and non-elected members/co-opted members of committees, in private, public meetings and on a one-to-one basis and on both policy and operational matters to direct, persuade, influence, innovate, provide advice and guidance, consult, give and receive information.

Directors, Senior Officers, professional and administrative staff across the Council, other local authorities and organisations, in private, public meetings and on a one-to-one basis on both policy and operational matters to direct, persuade, influence, provide advice and guidance, consult, give and receive information.

Regular contact with the Head of Governance & Democratic Services, Service Managers and Governance Specialists and all members of the team, to exchange advice and information.

Regular contact with the public, in particular parents (education admission appeals, the general public (at meetings or those making general enquiries), to give advice and guidance and exchange information.

Solicitors in Legal Services, or occasionally in private practice, to consult/seek advice or respond on particular issues arising at committee meetings or appeal hearings.

School admission appeal panel members, who may be drawn from school governors, ex-headteachers, Justices of the Peace and parents who may have been governors.

Training providers, both internal and external, to exchange communication and arrange training events.

Resources

The Governance & Democratic Services Team collectively: -

Administers in excess of 350 formal member level meetings per year in a variety of locations and times across Somerset, including full Council, the Executive, the Scrutiny Committees, the Planning Committees, the Standards Committee, other committees, other member/officer meetings and informal briefings.

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Administers approximately 800 education appeals per annum resulting in a requirement to administer approximately 500 school admission appeal hearings. This involves 90/100 days of hearings per year. Hearings are held on almost all weekdays during the summer term and thereafter on average one day a week.

Provides Civic Office support to the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, the High Sheriff and the Chair of Council. This includes the co-ordination and organisation of events on behalf of those roles.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
<p>Knowledge/experience of operating democratic structures and processes.</p> <p>Knowledge of current social and political issues relating to the work of the public sector and their impact on the democratic process.</p> <p>Knowledge of the politically sensitive environment in which members/officers are required to work.</p> <p>Knowledge of the legal background to the democratic structures and processes including joint working with other agencies.</p> <p>Knowledge of training and development techniques / able to apply innovative ways of working.</p>		D	
Experience			
<p>Experience of interpreting and presenting material in a variety of media for a range of audiences and stakeholders.</p> <p>Ability to prepare reports, documents, sometimes of a complex nature, involving research, analysis and report writing skills as well as detailed knowledge of the subject matter.</p>	E		
<p>Experience of working with elected members.</p> <p>Experience of corporate and partnership working.</p> <p>Appropriate experience in a local authority.</p>		D	

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Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
Relevant secondary level education qualifications such as 5 GCSEs including English and Mathematics.	E		
Relevant higher-level qualifications such as A Levels or a degree and/or equivalent professional or management qualification.		D	
Continuing managerial and professional development.			
Skills			
Must have a range of IT skills ranging from basic word-processing including text/letter creation through to knowledge of / ability to use corporate software and systems e.g., Outlook.	E		
Able to conduct research without support.			
Ability to speak fluent English as stated in Part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016).			
Working Conditions			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			
Understand, uphold, and promote the aims of the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and organisational values in everything you do. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.			

Date: 22nd July 2024