



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Principal Lawyer	
Directorate	Resources, Strategy and Transformation	
Reporting to	Strategic Manager - County Solicitor	
Grade	7	
Evaluation ref:	NOM0157	Job Family ref:
Role Purpose		
<p>Provide expertise and strong management to drive performance and to commission and/or deliver the Council's priorities and meet service targets, as a member of the Council's Senior Management Group.</p> <p>Provide clarity, management and motivation in delivering the New Operating Model, the County Plan and other Council transformation programmes as required.</p> <p>Ensure the effective understanding and operation of any specific statutory or regulatory duty contained within the role.</p> <p>Advise Members and Directors in respect of operational planning and commissioning, policy matters and service delivery issues and engage with partners in the promotion, communication and delivery of services.</p>		
Accountabilities		
<p>Determine or support the determination of the strategic direction of SCC and partners agencies in relation to their specialist expertise.</p> <p>Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council and partners both to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.</p> <p>Advise SC on their obligations and duties arising from the statutory/regulatory framework covering their specialist subject.</p> <p>Shape and/or recommend Council policy concerning their specialist areas of activity.</p> <p>Create, monitor and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services in their area of expertise.</p> <p>Commission and/or act as the Council's Lead Client in relation to services in their specialist areas.</p> <p>Drive and operate partnership and co-operative working with other agencies/bodies to ensure the effective commissioning and/or delivery of services in their specialist areas.</p> <p>Manage major programmes within their area of expertise or where their specialism is predominant.</p>		



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Deliver major projects and resolve complex casework where required by the Director.

Specify and mentor the Continuous Professional Development of other professionals in their field.

Organises and directs and reviews the work of Assistant Solicitors, Legal Executives, Legal Assistants and support staff to meet departmental and corporate objectives, deciding priorities and managing resources effectively within own area of responsibility resolving competing demands for scarce resources to support the County Solicitor in the overall management and performance of Legal Services.

Provides an advanced level of legal support over a range of legal specialities to enable the Council or external clients to achieve their service objectives.

Continually develops the legal service in their area to meet legislative changes, Government policy changes and County council requirements.

Acts in a pro-active manner in the development of Council strategies and policies where legal advice and requirement is a key motivator for change and to lead and/or participate in corporate activities leading to such changes.

Identifies and analyses legal issues in complex transactions and cases and to influence clients in order to achieve an optimum solution. To appraise alternative approaches and to exercise judgement in the pursuit of such solutions.

Works in partnership with a wide range of clients (some external) often assisting the client in defining the issues that need to be resolved by analysis and diagnosis and thereafter providing comprehensive legal, procedural and administrative advice on the optimum approach to resolve the matter. Will operate over a range of specialisms and will resolve/balance complex interests.

As appropriate, prepares complex and advanced cases for hearings or inquiries, including instructing Counsel where necessary. Cases may involve the analysis, assessment and consideration of high volumes of information in a diverse range of fields. Represents the Council in conducting cases in Courts, Tribunals and Public Inquiries as required.

Has a key participative and influencing role in groups and bodies throughout the Council.

Agrees with a range of clients, the legal objectives of matters assigned to the jobholder and that team, and prepares the documents needed (contracts, court applications, etc) to effectively progress and conclude a range of transactions or activities. Will need to accommodate/balance a wide range of factors which are often lengthy and complex.

Negotiates with third parties often involving opposing solicitors, in settling disputes and issues on a range of advanced or complex matters. Uses judgement to conclude agreements and settlements on the best terms available. Will advise and influence a range of clients on the nature and limits of their instructions often in significantly complex matters.



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Demonstrates a high level of commitment to continuous professional development in a range of functional as well as general legislative fields. Uses this knowledge to assist the Council in the development of appropriate strategies and practices as well as ensuring the development and mentoring of colleagues within Legal Services and leads partners across the Council where awareness of legislative developments is crucial, e.g. Human Rights and Freedom of Information legislation.

Supports the County Solicitor in the overall management and performance of Legal Services. In particular, this will involve in coming up with and/or leading initiatives in developing their area of the service, marketing that area, as well as instituting and appraising performance measurements and service targets.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of the statutory, policy and strategic commissioning framework within which specialist services operate and their context within local government as a whole.	X	
Knowledge and understanding of implementing equality and diversity in commissioning and reviewing service delivery.	X	
An understanding and commitment to effective customer and community engagement leading to service redesign and change management.	X	
Good understanding and ability to develop and implement effective performance management and quality assurance frameworks.	X	
Experience		
Significant experience of working successfully with Members and Directors on complex issues and the development of strategic direction.	X	
Track record of operating corporate projects and providing clear advice on policy options and policy development.	X	
Experience of developing and delivering representational and communication activities that successfully deliver key messages to the public and internally.	X	



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Demonstrable experience of partnership working, including the ability to influence and, where required, lead multi-agency projects and initiatives with particular reference to standard setting and whole service commissioning.	X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Relevant Degree or Professional Qualification.	X	
Evidence of work related continuing professional development in their specialist field.	X	
Skills		
Promotes the need for change and acts as a role model for change.	X	
Positive, committed, adaptable, thorough and confident approach.	X	
Ability to work to deadlines and to motivate others to work effectively and demonstrate a duty of care.	X	
Committed to diversity in service delivery and employment.	X	
Innovative and creative approach to service improvement and value.	X	
Customer - and Communities - focussed.	X	
Personal Integrity	X	
Drive and self-motivation - "can do" attitude.	X	
Sound analysis and decision making in dealing with complex service delivery and/or policy development matters.	X	
Working Conditions		
Dimensions of the role		
Working Arrangements		
Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.		



Corporate Accountabilities

- Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.
- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues.
- Lead teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.
- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Create, monitor, and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Children's, Families & Education service teams.
- Ensure that Children's, Families & Education services place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customers, communities, and businesses.
- Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across all services.
- Support Corporate and Directorate and service specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.
- Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.