

Principal Property Lawyer

Department	Legal and Democratic Services
Pay Grade	CG9-10
Responsible to	Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Role Purpose

To assist the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in providing an efficient, effective, and economic legal service to the Council in relation to all aspects of property law and practice.

To lead a small team in providing advice, support, and assistance and being responsible for the service delivery of all Property related legal work. This will include supervising a Senior Property Lawyer and Property Lawyer and training and assisting any other junior staff. Please see career grading document.

Reporting Structure

- Senior Property Lawyer
- Property Lawyer

Role Specific Responsibilities / Accountabilities

- To be responsible for service delivery and, provide advice on and undertake conveyancing and property work of all kinds on the Council's behalf, or other client's including some more complex work, particularly (but not limited to): -
 - the acquisition and disposal of land.
 - the grant, taking and modification of business and residential leases.
 - the grant, taking and modification of rights over land.
 - easements and licences.
 - landlord and tenant matters.
 - development schemes.
 - housing enabling work.
 - drainage and highway agreements.
 - development agreements.

- the use of compulsory acquisition powers.
 - the drafting and completion of contracts and other types of property agreements.
 - the drafting, processing, issue and service of notices.
 - Assets of Community Value nominations.
- To give legal advice to the Council, its members, officers and services in respect of any and all of the Council's functions relating to property matters and to deal with relevant enquiries from members of the public.
 - To liaise with members and advise members and client services on current issues such as the impact of legislation and codes of practice on particular proposals, local policies and Council practices in relation to the work areas of the post-holder.
 - To draft, prepare and comment on committee reports, policy documents and other briefing papers as required by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
 - To instruct counsel or external solicitors in respect of seeking advice or representation at planning inquiries or court hearings.
 - To ensure that the post-holder's performance targets contained in any appraisal document, best value or other performance document, specification or service level agreement are met.
 - To 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 to legal services.
 - To ensure that all work produced is reflective of best practice and is of a high professional and modern standard.
 - To ensure compliance with legal services' practice manual and quality assurance requirements.
 - To represent the Head of Legal and Democratic Services at meetings with members, committees, sub-committees, panels, working groups, public meetings, public agencies and external professional representatives.
 - To contribute to the effective working relationships within legal services and between legal services and client services, external solicitors, counsel, other professionals, public agencies and members of the public. To carry out any of the above work for any external clients as necessary.
 - To carry out such training as the Head of Legal and Democratic Services considers appropriate.
 - To carry out such other duties that may reasonably be required.
 - Please note the Lawyer Career Grading document which should be read alongside this job profile.

Knowledge, Skills and Qualifications

Minimum knowledge, skills and qualifications required to perform this role, relevant experience may be a substitute.

Essential Criteria

- Able to demonstrate practising experience in property law and practice.
- Good customer services skills.
- Flexible and adaptable.

- Clear, concise, modern and authoritative written, typed and verbal communication skills.
- Able to communicate with a range of people from different backgrounds, including ethnic, social and professional, both verbally and in writing.
- Able to draft a range of complex legal documents, including leases and agreements.
- Able to use all available methods of research.
- Logical and systematic in approach.
- Able to prioritise work and respond to deadlines.
- Good time management and organisational skills; able to use time management system.
- Able to handle own caseload and provide prompt, clear and accurate advice in specialist fields.
- Prepared to think creatively and to use initiative.
- Able and willing to work well as part of a team and also to work well independently and on own initiative.
- Prepared to learn and undertake personal development.
- Competent IT user, able to use different systems and packages, particularly Microsoft Word and Outlook - efficient use of IT is essential.
- Have an interest in local government and the public service.
- Educated to both GCSE and A Level, or equivalent.
- Admitted as a Solicitor, Barrister or Fellow Chartered Legal Executive.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of working in local government and local government legal practices.
- Knowledge of the local government structure and experience of dealing with Council members.

Appendix

Generic Employee Responsibilities / Accountabilities

- Engage and participate in delivering the corporate objectives of the Council and contribute to the collective leadership, development and management of the organisation to assist in the implementation and realisation of the Council's strategic objectives and Corporate Plan through the development of business plans.
- Ensure that all duties are carried out in compliance with statutory processes, corporate policies and the Council's constitution.
- Proactively seek opportunities to improve ways of working by evaluating activities to determine what adds value and where necessary, implement changes to improve / enhance performance to continuously deliver improvements to services.
- Develop team members' skills and knowledge through a culture of learning, collaborative working and excellence to build a culture of high performance which inspires and enables people and supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and strategic objectives.

- Develop good working relationships with local people, local businesses, the voluntary sector, regional authorities, government and a wide range of other partners in order to promote the interests and uphold the reputation of the Council and so building a positive image of the organisation.
- Participate in the recruitment and management of team members, giving clarity regarding targets, standards and performance expectations. Review performance giving regular feedback and implementing solutions to address both high performance and poor performance. Before acting as recruiting manager you must partake in training on the Council's recruitment processes.
- Ensure all team members, and new team members, including casual workers undertake mandatory training (Fire, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Safeguarding).
- Support in the management of budgets and resources ensuring that they are deployed effectively with robust internal controls to deliver intended outcomes in a manner which demonstrates value for money and compliance with relevant policies and guidelines.
- Contribute in the provision of advice and guidance to cabinet / Council, Scrutiny Committees and Advisory Groups to assist in supporting the translation of political objectives and priorities into coherent initiatives that will deliver their intended outcomes for Horsham District
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion, access to services and tackle discrimination both within and outside the Council to ensure there is a clear and consistent focus across the organisation and its partners in delivering an inclusive customer experience to all.
- Generally to comply with all Health and Safety policies and guidance ensuring the required mechanisms are used and to support the promotion of a culture of good health, safety and welfare, especially if nominated or appointed specifically to carry out simple checks at your place of work and log the activity.
- Follow the Council's safeguarding procedures and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults across Council services.
- Assess risk management in service areas and follow reporting procedures, as appropriate, to minimise risks to people and the Council's operations.
- Follow and adhere to all Data Protection procedures and processes in accordance with relevant legislation ensuring all personal data of employees, members of the public and clients is used appropriately and retained within guidelines.
- The Returning Officer in this constituency is responsible for the election process. There is an expectation that Council employees will, as reasonably requested to do so, assist the returning officer in election processes.
- In the event of a major incident or disaster you may be required to assist in whatever capacity necessary to provide the necessary organisation, co-ordination and supply of resources to support the local emergency services or other services within the council and relevant partner organisations.

Generic Employee Behaviours

Our behaviours framework links to our values and identifies the core knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes we require from our people to deliver services.

Customer Focus

- Managing customer service
- Constructive customer relationships
- Improve customer service to meet local needs and aspirations

Achieving Excellence

- Strive to be an excellent organisation
- Deliver continuous service improvement
- Use taxpayers' money wisely to deliver the highest quality services to the satisfaction of our customers

Our People

- Support the team to work collaboratively
- Invest in our people for continuous improvement
- Support creativity and responsibility
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