

May 2019

ROLE PROFILE

Role Title: Head of Democratic Services
Service Group: Deputy Chief Executive Group
Accountable to: Director (Law and Governance)
Grade: L **Competency Level:** 4
JE Code: JE1460
Date: May 2019

Purpose of job

To provide service leadership to ensure the delivery of high quality decision making, scrutiny, electoral, civic and councillor support functions in accordance with all legal and constitutional requirements.

To support and line manage the Council's Electoral Services Team.

To ensure effective delivery of voter registration in the Borough.

To be the Council's designated Scrutiny Officer in accordance with the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

To facilitate and manage productive working relationships with internal and external key stakeholders.

To manage the performance of the service and to build capacity, add value and deliver continuous improvement.

Key Objectives

1	To provide leadership across all areas of managerial responsibility to ensure that effective management systems and processes are in place throughout Democratic Services.
2	To be responsible for the leadership, direction and management of the elections and electoral registration service and support the Returning Officer in the management and operation of UK Parliamentary, local and parish elections, Police Commissioner elections, referendums and parish polls
3	To develop, interpret and manage the documents associated with the Council's Constitution, including the Constitution itself, the various Procedure Rules, and the Scheme of Delegation to ensure that they meet statutory requirements, are relevant, and are up to date.
4	To ensure that all decisions made are in the context of the above documents and that effective governance is achieved through seamless collaboration with Legal Services.
5	To provide advice and support to all councillors, and specifically to the Mayor, Leader, Cabinet, Group Leaders, Scrutiny Chairs and Committee Chairs in relation to effective and lawful decision-making processes, civic and ceremonial responsibilities and appropriate courses of action/processes that achieve issue resolution.

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6	To support the Group Leaders and/or Group Business Managers to address and eliminate barriers to effective decision-making and promote effective working relationships with officer colleagues in the context of achieving good governance through effective behaviour, leadership and mutual respect.
7	To develop policy and procedures in relation to member learning and development, advising the Group Leaders and the Councillor Development Champions (Councillor Training Steering Group) to ensure the effective delivery of the annual Training and Development Programme for councillors.
8	To ensure that councillors' needs in the governance of the Council and the requirements of their Wards are met. To resolve issues in the context of working in a finely balanced political organisation, without recourse to senior management.
9	To arrange, support and advise the Independent Panel on Councillors Allowances.
10.	To develop and implement the annual Team Plan and performance manage the service to ensure priorities and improvement are delivered, setting clear targets and priorities in line with corporate strategies and performance standards.
11	To champion and display values of public service and excellence in service delivery; provide staff with clear guidance on the expected level of service delivery both as to quality and outcomes, and encourage and develop optimum performance from staff to meet and improve on service standards and to meet customer needs.
12	To manage the provision of services to any external body to meet the standards agreed in the Service Level Agreement.
13.	To collaborate with and support the Director through processes of organisational change and development to deliver the most effective and efficient services possible.
14.	To ensure equality of opportunity for employees and service users by fostering a culture of fairness, respect and mutual support.

Scope

Councillors – Works closely with councillors, Group Leaders (individually and collectively), Committee Chairs and Spokespersons, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to develop policy and procedures, agree work programmes and ensure effective support for both councillors and decision making. This involves daily contact with councillors and with officer colleagues throughout the Council at all levels and across all service disciplines, taking account of the political and organisational implications of advice given and the approach to tackling issues. There is a regular requirement for a high degree of knowledge of all Council services to facilitate problem solving and ensure credibility. There is a need for the post holder to have highly developed political awareness and the ability to act independently to resolve problems and issues and promote effective and productive working relationships between councillors and officers.

Democracy - Works closely with the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer, party agents, candidates, councillors, MPs, councillors, the Council's Legal Services team, the Electoral Commission, and Central Government Departments to ensure

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the whole process from registering electors to conducting elections is carried out within strict legal guidelines, meets national standards, runs smoothly and is fair and transparent.

Other Service Groups – Daily contact with members of the Corporate Leadership Team, Directors, and staff at all levels in the preparation of agendas and reports, and in challenging and offering advice on draft reports, and the decision-making and scrutiny processes.

External Relationships – The post holder is responsible for services provided directly to the community, therefore has frequent, and often repeated, contact with the public and external bodies, often in difficult circumstances, with the expectation that the post holder will manage and contain issues through to resolution:

- (a) when acting as a representative of the Chief Executive, Returning Officer and the Council in appropriate circumstances, including liaising with political party agents, the Electoral Commission and the Local Government Association;
- (b) associated with Council and Committee Meetings,

The post holder is also the Council's representative on the CMIS National User-Group.

Confidentiality - The effective operation of the role is dependent on the post holder maintaining the highest degree of confidentiality and being politically sensitive at all times and in all dealings with Councillors, Council employees and external partner organisations.

Staff - The post has responsibility for 2 direct reports, with performance appraisal responsibilities and 12 indirect reports, with overall responsibility for their effective deployment to meet planned requirements and newly emerging priorities.

Suppliers – Frequent contact with suppliers, including various service providers of the Council's strategic partner, the CMIS software suppliers, and various suppliers of support at Elections time.

Budgets – Oversees the all budgets within Democratic Services and ensures that all cost centres operate within strict budget constraints. Expected to escalate to the Director at the earliest possible opportunity any emerging and significant budget issues together with recommended courses of action. Takes responsibility for determining the correct levels of resource for Democratic Services and makes appropriate recommendations to the Director on opportunities to achieve value for money; actively seeks and establishes external funding and partnerships to deliver cost effective services and maximises income through providing meeting support services to other Service Groups and partner organisations.

Current Budget Levels
Committee Services – (£170,000)
Overview and Scrutiny (£161,000),
Income (currently £47,000)
Members Services and Support (£1,265,000)
Elections (£256,000)
Electoral Registration (£138,000)
Corporate subscriptions (£85,500)

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Other – Required to review, further develop and maintain the Council's Constitution and related documents and ensure that they are amended and distributed appropriately; responsible for the maintenance of the Executive Forward Plan, the Committee Management Information System, the relevant Council and Democracy pages on the Council's web-site and intranet, and the storage and archiving of documents appropriate to the decision-making process.

As a Head of Service - the post holder is required to fulfil responsibilities and meet corporate standards for the management of people, budgets, risk, projects etc. in a 'One Council' context and to be guided by and model the organisation's values.

Special Aspects – the nature of the job requires the post-holder to work unsocial hours on an irregular but frequent basis.

Work Profile

The post-holder has responsibility for, and is accountable for:

- Leading and managing the Democratic Services Team and deputising for the Director as required.
- Exercising the functions delegated to the Head of Democratic Services under the Constitution.
- Ensuring that all statutory meetings of the Council comply with legal and constitutional requirements.
- Ensuring that the Elections and Electoral Registration services comply with current legislative requirements, the Performance Standards set down by the Electoral Commission for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers, financial probity and good practice.
- Managing, through the resources of the Committee and Scrutiny Services Team, the provision of professional support to the whole of the Council's formal decision making and scrutiny processes.
- Discharging all necessary duties and arrangements relating to Parliamentary, Police Commissioner, Borough and Parish Council Elections, Referendums and Parish Polls and other electoral activities as they arise, including the employment, training, supervision and payment of casual staff employed on such duties.
- Acting as the Responsible Officer for assigned budgets for electoral registration and all elections.
- Preparing accounts:
 - (a) on behalf of the (A)LRO for the UK Parliamentary and Police Commissioner elections for submission to Government
 - (b) for local elections for submission to the Returning Officer
- Oversight of the preparation and the maintenance of the Register of Electors, and the employment and supervision of permanent and casual staff employed on such duties.

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- Ensuring that advice and guidance is available to all stakeholders on issues relating to electoral registration and elections/ referendums
- Promoting and encouraging participation in democratic processes through the development of policies and strategies to maximise voter registration and increase elector turnout.
- Taking a pro-active role in reviewing, developing and enhancing the Council's Constitution, specifically to maintain and update the Constitution to ensure that it meets current legislative and best practice requirements.
- Actively promoting awareness and understanding of the Council's decision making processes, the Constitution and its requirements among CLT, Directors and their senior management teams.
- Developing, applying and advising on policy and procedures for the areas of responsibility.
- Providing effective interfaces between all councillors and officers to assist councillors in carrying out their democratic and representative roles in the interests of their constituents and the community of Milton Keynes as a whole.
- Developing policy and procedures for councillors' learning and development, working directly with the Group Leaders and the Councillor Development Champions and ensuring the effective delivery of the annual Training and Development Programme for councillors.
- Ensuring that there is full co-ordinated and operational support given to the policy and strategic objectives of the Council in all areas for which the post holder has managerial responsibility.
- Initiating dialogue and also responding to councillors and officer colleagues with advice and support as and when required.
- Providing accurate and helpful advice to the public and partner organisations to assist in the smooth-running and accessibility of the Council's decision-making and scrutiny processes, elections and electoral registration, civic and ceremonial matters.
- Responding to enquiries from councillors, candidates, political party agents, MPs and members of the public to the required timescales and standards.
- Ensuring that relationships with local stakeholders and local communities are managed effectively and harmoniously.
- Assisting the Director and, as appropriate, the Corporate Leadership Team and the Chief Executive in the development and implementation of corporate strategies in any of the areas covered by Democratic Services.
- Delivering corporate initiatives where these impact on the services for which the post holder is responsible.
- Building effective, trusting relationships with councillors, the public and key stakeholders.
- Ensuring that all internal processes are transparent and well regulated.

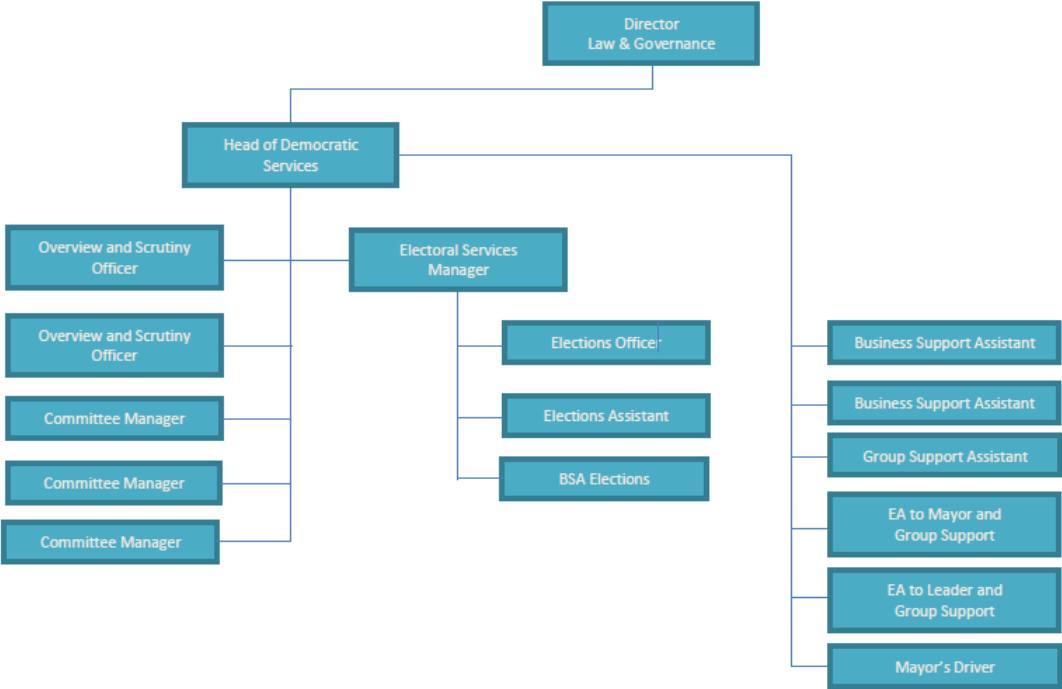
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- Preparing, managing and monitoring the Democratic Services budgets in line with recognised Council Financial Procedures
- Liaising with key suppliers to identify, acquire and maintain the resources needed to carry out the various tasks associated with the post, e.g., software, printing.
- Developing and maintaining contacts with other authorities and bodies for the sharing of best practice and the benchmarking of performance, and to take part from time to time in appropriate corporate working and initiatives, promoting best practice through learning from other councils and organisations and sharing the learning with colleagues.
- To be involved in corporate projects and activities as required.
- Carrying out such other duties as may from time to time be allocated and compatible with post holder's qualifications and / or experience.

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Role Context DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DIVISION - STRUCTURE

Democratic Services Proposed Structure - May 2019



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

In this section the Skills, Knowledge, Qualification and Competency requirements to perform the role to a satisfactory standard are set out. The extent, nature and level of the role holder’s knowledge and skills should be specified

Awareness some knowledge or skills sufficient to show aptitude and the ability to learn in the particular work area
Significant knowledge and skills gained through practice and/or qualification sufficient to fulfil the role requirements
Extensive knowledge and skills gained through practice and/ or qualification to fulfil the role requirements and contribute to training others and developing policy and practice in the work area

PERSON SPECIFICATION	Examples specific to role	Required		Level			Method of Assessment interview, testing, reference
		Essential	Desirable	Awareness	Significant	Extensive	
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE Technical knowledge and qualifications	Extensive knowledge and experience of current operational knowledge of governance, law and practice of Local Authority meetings	X				X	Application and / or interview
	Extensive knowledge and experience of managing Election/ Electoral Registration Services	X				X	
	Significant knowledge of relevant Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments	X				X	
	Experience of acting as a Returning Officer/ Deputy Returning Officer.	X			X		
	Extensive knowledge of public service/local government arrangements and procedures.	X				X	
	Extensive and detailed knowledge of relevant Local Authority strategic policies and plans.	X				X	
	Good understanding of “political” dimensions and issues around competing priorities.	X			X		
	Educated to Degree level in a public administration discipline, or able to demonstrate extensive relevant experience	X					
	Membership of appropriate professional organisation (ADSO, AEA or previously the ICOSA), to reflect the professional nature of the post	X					

PERSON SPECIFICATION	Examples specific to role	Required		Level			Method of Assessment interview, testing, reference
		Essential	Desirable	Awareness	Significant	Extensive	
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (CONTINUED) Technical knowledge and qualifications (continued)	Advanced research, analytical and problem solving capabilities with the ability to work effectively with complex information presented in a range of different ways, along with significant experience in local government policy/research environment.	X			X		
	Ability to write reports on complex strategic issues and the ability to present them to a range of audiences.	X			X		
	Proficient IT skills in the use of Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint.	X			X		
Planning and organising work	Demonstrable understanding of target setting and improvements in service delivery	X			X		Application and / or interview
	Extensive proven experience of administering / supporting formal committee / decision making processes at a senior level	X				X	
	Ability to assess priorities and allocate appropriate resources to ensure outcomes are achieved and deadlines are met.	X				X	
	Being highly organised, methodical and well organised with the ability to produce quality work to tight deadlines.	X				X	
	Managing different stages of preparation and follow-up for several meetings at a time.	X				X	
	Ability to manage and monitor complex projects to ensure that targets and timescales are consistently met	X				X	
Planning capacity and resources	Ability to assess relative priorities and allocate appropriate resources to ensure deadlines met, including ensuring that all relevant meetings are appropriately supported.	X				X	Application and / or interview
	Able to ensure the most cost effective outcomes are achieved within available resources and budget limits.	X				X	

PERSON SPECIFICATION	Examples specific to role	Required		Level			Method of Assessment interview, testing, reference
		Essential	Desirable	Awareness	Significant	Extensive	
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (CONTINUED) Influencing and interpersonal skills	Ability to engage stakeholders to make accountability real.	X				X	Application and / or interview
	Ability to act with integrity in accordance with standards of behaviour that is ethically appropriate.	X				X	
	Ability to visualise, communicate effectively and lead and motivate colleagues to improve service delivery.	X				X	
	Ability to write reports on complex strategic issues and the ability to present them to a range of audiences.	X			X		
	Proven successful working relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.	X				X	
	Able to communicate effectively with colleagues and stakeholders and have fluent written and spoken communication skills.	X				X	
	Able to effectively represent the Council / Department in a positive light at meetings (internal, external and with councillors) sometimes requiring attendance at out of normal working hours.	X				X	
	Excellent negotiating skills and an ability to deliver difficult messages with the appropriate level of tact and diplomacy and broker resolutions to complex and often emotive issues.	X				X	
	Ability to communicate to a range of audiences, to deliver information clearly and succinctly to others (within the Council, partnerships, external organisations and customers).	X				X	
	Understanding of politics and politicians with the ability to work within the political process, with extensive experience in dealing with politically sensitive issues involving Members and Senior Managers in a local authority context.	X				X	

PERSON SPECIFICATION	Examples specific to role	Required		Level			Method of Assessment interview, testing, reference
		Essential	Desirable	Awareness	Significant	Extensive	
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (CONTINUED) Influencing and interpersonal skills (continued)	Ability to work effectively in a political environment and establish positive relationship with Councillors, senior managers, staff and external partners, to establish confidence, trust and credibility	X				X	
PROBLEM-SOLVING Using Initiative to overcome problems	<p>Ability to analyse complex information / situations / problems, consider a range of possible solutions, quickly, reaching and articulating with clarity, deliverable solutions rather than defend the traditional process, implementing agreed solution(s) as necessary.</p> <p>Able to deal with complex agenda preparation.</p> <p>Responding to issues associated with Elections Management, particularly in the period of elections, from candidates, agents, electors, staff, etc., when answers need to be given very quickly and often under pressure.</p> <p>Representation of the Directorate at meetings involving councillors to advise on matters relating to constitutional and procedural matters and to support the Chair.</p> <p>Ability to refuse unreasonable or unachievable requests from time to time in a manner which will not damage future relationships</p>	X			X		Application and / or interview
	Able to deal with complex agenda preparation.	X				X	
	Responding to issues associated with Elections Management, particularly in the period of elections, from candidates, agents, electors, staff, etc., when answers need to be given very quickly and often under pressure.	X				X	
	Representation of the Directorate at meetings involving councillors to advise on matters relating to constitutional and procedural matters and to support the Chair.	X			X		
	Ability to refuse unreasonable or unachievable requests from time to time in a manner which will not damage future relationships	X			X		
Managing Risk	<p>Ability to take informed transparent decisions and manage risk.</p> <p>Able to advise the Council on specific service area matters on the risks of options and policy implications</p> <p>Able to prioritise work load effectively to meeting statutory committee preparation deadlines</p> <p>Able to deliver services within budget.</p> <p>Able to recognise why customer expectations are not met and put in place processes and mechanisms to prevent problems from being repeated.</p> <p>Able to work with and listening to customers to find out how services can be improved.</p>						Application and / or interview
	Able to advise the Council on specific service area matters on the risks of options and policy implications						
	Able to prioritise work load effectively to meeting statutory committee preparation deadlines						
	Able to deliver services within budget.						
	Able to recognise why customer expectations are not met and put in place processes and mechanisms to prevent problems from being repeated.	X				X	
	Able to work with and listening to customers to find out how services can be improved.	X			X		

PERSON SPECIFICATION	Examples specific to role	Required		Level			Method of Assessment interview, testing, reference
		Essential	Desirable	Awareness	Significant	Extensive	
PROBLEM-SOLVING (CONTINUED) Managing Risk (continued)	Ability to direct organisational change and development, while enhancing organisational efficiency	X			X		Application and / or interview
	Able to identify and evaluate risks systematically, and put in place appropriate mitigation, recognising situations where risk may be justifiable.	X				X	
	Take responsibility to minimise issues that could disrupt work, and escalate the issue where appropriate. Keeping those involved informed.	X			X		
	Put in place, maintain and monitor risk registers as required	X			X		
Managing Change	Ability to direct organisational change and development, while enhancing organisational efficiency	X			X		Application and / or interview
	Able to manage the implementation of new legislation.	X			X		
	Keeping an awareness of relevant technological applications and improvements.	X			X		
	Supporting new councillors.	X			X		
	Ability to assess and monitor internal processes and deliver changes in order to deliver continuous improvement.	X			X		
	Able to lead, influence and motivate line reports through the practicalities of changing processes and culture.	X				X	
	Able to develop ideas on how to improve the current methods and levels of service and willing to take measured risks to try new ideas.	X				X	
	Able to respond positively to change within work area and take responsibility for putting into practice changes which are being implemented.	X				X	

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ACCOUNTABILITY and RESPONSIBILITY Undertakes tasks without supervision	Managing the demands of supporting Council Meetings and committees	X			X	Application and / or interview
	Ability to work autonomously, manage workload and projects with minimal supervision, whilst delivering to tight deadlines and satisfactory outcomes.	X			X	
	Able to take responsibility for delivering own work and meet agreed work objectives, working to local frameworks and guidelines.	X			X	
	Able to work as part of the local and larger team and support those teams to achieve their work goals.	X			X	
Managing People	Ability to develop and motivate individuals or groups of staff while providing clearly identifiable 'milestones' for progress and achievement	X		X		Application and / or interview
	Ability to create a positive employee relations climate where staff are involved, empowered and committed	X			X	
	Ability to challenge and direct staff	X			X	
	Ability to work well within teams, listening and learning from others, while providing leadership to direct and indirect line reports in a way which motivates supports and enables them to achieve the objectives of the Council.	X			X	
	Ability to work successfully in partnership with others	X		X		
	Proven track record of promoting service improvement customer care and equality	X			X	
	Proven track record of addressing performance issues in a large and complex organisation.	X			X	
	Able to contribute to the wellbeing and productivity of staff to decrease risks and maintain the integrity of the Council as a responsible employer	X			X	
Managing financial resources	Proven track record of successful financial management in a large complex organisation, including proven ability to manage and monitor budgets	X			X	Application and / or interview
	Use of ERP Gold in line with financial procedures	X		X		

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COMPETENCIES REQUIRED – The post-holder must comply with the Council’s core competency requirements of communication, respect for others, customer service, drive for results, delivering the promise and continuous personal development. In addition, as a manager, the post-holder’s essential competencies are managing self and personal skills, providing direction, facilitating and managing change, working with people, using resources, achieving results, promoting policy, values and culture, customer service and health and safety.

SPOKEN ENGLISH FLUENCY DUTY REQUIREMENT - The ability to converse at ease with members of the public and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for this post.

Other information

- able to travel to meet service delivery requirements
- available to undertake work outside of normal working hours

Signed Job holder	Signed Line Manager	Signed Director	
Print Job holder	Print Line Manager	Print Director	Date