

## Role profile

# Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer (Litigation & Social Care)

### Our values:

**We are dedicated, respectful, collaborative. We are Milton Keynes City Council.**

|                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Service               | Law and Governance          |
| Reports to            | Director Law and Governance |
| Job family            | Strategic Leadership        |
| Grade                 | M                           |
| Political restricted? | Y - Specified               |
| DBS required?         | N                           |
| Date                  | November 2024               |
| JE Code               | JE2668                      |

## Key deliverables

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Lead and manage a large team of Legal professionals, ensuring their development and performance align with the council's strategic objectives. Creating a responsive, agile operational team, adding value, and delivering effective business-focused, and commercially viable solutions, providing expert and pragmatic advice in all areas of law, pertaining to all Litigation matters, including Housing Litigation, Prosecutions, Debt Recovery, all Civil Litigations for all departments of the Council, Employment Law, Regulatory matters, Social Care, including Children Protection, Adult Social Care, Education. Governance and Information Law. |
| 2 | To be the Deputy Monitoring Officer for the Council and a member of the Law and Governance Management team, promoting high standards of conduct across the Council.   |
| 3 | Manage contract and budget management ensuring key contracts with external providers are managed well, the quality and service provision is good, and any performance issues are addressed early.   |
| 4 | Responsible for overseeing and managing the service budget, ensuring financial efficiency by closely monitoring expenditures and implementing strategies to minimise costs associated with external legal services and agency resources. This includes regular budget reviews, identifying potential savings, and ensuring resources are utilized effectively.  |
| 5 | Establish and develop a trusted customer-focused relationship with directors and senior leadership teams of the assigned business areas to support the identification and delivery of service priorities, initiatives and agreed outcomes. Understand the business area's objectives and challenges and enable effective legal solutions through technical expertise, advice and professional, intelligent challenge and influencing.   |
| 6 | Identify and promote new and innovative opportunities to develop the Legal service for the future including alternative methods of service delivery.  |

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|---|---|
| 7 | Ensure that the Council receives timely, cost effective and customer focussed legal advice that appropriately meets the needs of all stakeholders and customers including work with Departments in developing appropriate legal performance reporting.                                |
| 8 | Develop an effective, resilient team and ensure a positive team culture aligned to the Council's corporate values. This includes reviewing effectiveness of existing working methods and devise, in conjunction with relevant colleagues, creative approaches to service development. |

*Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that you will be flexible and adaptable in your delivery to meet both service and city council wide needs*

## **Essential requirements** Key skills, expertise, and qualifications

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Educated to Degree level and Practising Solicitor, Barrister or equivalent and demonstrating continuous professional development and awareness of major legislation and policy issues affecting local government.            |
| 2 | Significant legal and managerial experience in local government or a comparable organisation.  |
| 3 | Demonstrable knowledge and experience in either Litigation or Social Care legal practice and ability to deal with complex and high profile cases.  |
| 4 | Evidence of having excellent communication skills, verbally and in writing combined with strong interpersonal, consultative skills, with the ability to form effective working relationships with a wide range of audiences. |
| 5 | Demonstrable influencing skills and ability to positively challenge across all levels of the organisation, particularly at a senior level.   |
| 6 | Ability to challenge others constructively and to make informed decisions that if challenged can be substantiated.   |
| 7 | Proven track record of finding creative solutions to a wide range of legal challenges. The ability to think strategically across organisational boundaries to provide solutions.   |
| 8 | Evidence of successful contributions to strategic and corporate policies and plans. Ability to see the big picture, interpret it and develop relevant strategies, plans and deliverables.                                    |
| 9 | Strong Management skills and expertise in the use of management information systems to specify and monitor performance. Strong financial management and budgetary skills.  |

## **Job family**

# **Strategic Leadership (Grade M)**

### **Colleague expectations**

- Be professional at all times
- Work together for the good of the team, city council and local people
- Promote a supportive culture
- Challenge assumptions
- Take ownership
- Be willing to change and do things differently
- Always work in a safe manner

### **Manager expectations**

- Be a role model by displaying positive behaviours at all times
- Make well-considered decisions
- Support, coach and communicate with my team
- Be accountable for my team's performance

The essential characteristic of strategic leadership jobs is that they bear responsibility for the planning and development of the city council's approach to its statutory and elective aims, maximising efficiency, value for money and the quality of service delivery across entire operating functions.

This element of the profile, taken from the job family descriptor for this grade, provides a general understanding of the level of work and demands required.

### **Role characteristics**

At this level job holders report to a Group Head or Director and are responsible for the development and implementation of strategy relating to several services within that group.

Role carry significant responsibilities for finance and a range of other non-financial assets.

Job holders make autonomous decisions and lead the management of change throughout their area of influence within the group.

### **The knowledge and skills required**

Job holders require advanced theoretical knowledge to make appropriate judgements and decisions at this level. In addition, job holders will maintain ongoing professional development and have a thorough understanding of external legislative and societal change, as well as a deep understanding of the city council's operational structures which both support and depend upon the job holder's actions and advice. Roles will be professional experts, providing expert leadership across a number of services.

### **Thinking, planning and communication**

Job holders will use their professional expertise to deal with highly complex, pressing issues including change initiatives and risk management across a range of services. They will also look well ahead and take a long-term, strategic view of their project and service delivery objectives over several years into the future, shaping their service's composition, approach and operating procedures in accordance with wider goals mandated by group management.

The information exchanged at this level will be routinely complex, contentious in nature and/or highly significant to the city council's reputation. Job holders will have additional demands placed upon them by the need to persuade others to adopt courses of action they may not otherwise wish to take, based on evidence based and reasoned argument. This will occur in written interactions but can also be the case in face to face verbal exchanges where job holders will advocate the city council's position in response to opposing opinion in a formal or informal setting.

### **Decision making and innovation**

The limitations to job holders' decision making will be only the broad policy and practice guidelines that exist at both a corporate and even national/professional level. At this level of autonomy, job holders will be the final arbiter of many escalated technical and professional disputes and problems. They will report to a Group Head or Director and will devise and implement strategic plans and policy in relation to several service areas.

### **Areas of responsibility**

With a diverse range of jobs being represented at this level, the precise blend of responsibilities for which the job holder is accountable will depend upon the service in which they operate.

Roles will focus on the needs of external service users or partners and will be responsible for critical day to day decisions with legal and reputational dimensions and the development of directorate level policy and functional procedures.

In addition, such roles are likely to have very high levels of responsibility for such elements as finance (very substantial budget management), information assets (council-wide systems) or premises (of extremely high value and critical operational importance).

Job holders will have full line management responsibility over several service areas, each with their own full management structure and featuring highly diverse specialties and employee profiles.

### **Impacts and demands**

The combination of both tactical and strategic matters that job holders deal with means that roles are inherently very complex, demanding of particularly lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention while also managing very high levels of work-related pressure from deadlines, interruptions or conflicting demands.

At this level, tasks and duties will be generally carried out in a sedentary position but there will always be a requirement for standing and walking from time to time, and the occasional need to lift or carry items.

Job holders will not be required to develop and maintain working relationships with people who, through their circumstances or behaviour, place particular emotional demands on the job holder.

Job holders at this level will find themselves very occasionally exposed to some disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous working conditions.