Role profile

**Lawyer - Planning**

**Our values:**

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

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| **Service** | Legal & Democratic |
| **Reports to** | Principal Lawyer - Place |
| **Job family** | Professional and Technical |
| **Grade** | I |
| **Political restricted?** | N |
| **DBS required?** | N |
| **Date** | March 2025 |
| **JE Code** | JE2698 |

Key deliverables

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| **1** | To manage a caseload of medium and occasionally high-level matters in the areas of Planning Law, Highways Laws and other related subjects, ensuring that all work is both of a high quality and delivered in a timely manner. All work should be undertaken with the purpose of assisting the Council to achieve its business objectives and operates within the wider policy context. |
| **2** | Ensure the delivery of value for money services to high practice standards within a culture of continuous improvement. |
| **3** | To provide training and guidance to the client department and legal team in their core area of work. |
| **4** | Ensure through compliance with robust performance standards the delivery of services to best practice standards. |
| **5** | Maintain effective working relationships with all internal Council departments and other relevant outside organisations to ensure that the Council is best placed to achieve its objectives. |
| **6** | Through high quality service, advocacy, advice and casework to support the Council, including advice to officers and members in writing as well verbally at committee meetings, in achieving its outcomes successfully. To ensure that you have the current skills and competencies to advise on all relevant matters and that you ensure that these skills and competencies develop and adapt over time to meet future business developments. |
| **7** | As a Lawyer to assist in supervising the advice, advocacy and casework of Trainees and Paralegals as arranged with the Principal Lawyer through supervision or other arrangements. |
| **8** | Accountable, with the Principal Lawyer, for the delivery of key performance targets for the team. |
| **9** | Demonstrate a personal commitment to the Council’s Values and encouraging and holding to account those values throughout their team. |

*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

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| **1** | Qualified Solicitor or Barrister (Supreme Court of England and Wales/English Bar) or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives or equivalent relevant qualification with relevant experience. |
| **2** | Established knowledge of relevant local government law in the areas of Planning Law, Highways Laws and other related subjects. |
| **3** | Demonstrable ability to draft all necessary legal, transactional and other formal documentation. |
| **4** | Demonstrable knowledge of researching areas of law and presenting them in clear and understandable terms to clients. |
| **5** | Taking responsibility for delivering own work and meeting agreed work objectives, working to local frameworks and guidelines. |
| **6** | Being part of the local and larger team and supporting these teams to achieve their work goals. |
| **7** | Ability to act as an advocate before courts, tribunals, public inquiries or other hearings to successfully represent the Authority's position at trial or other setting dealing with contested matters. |
| **8** | Delivering information clearly and succinctly to others in the council, partnerships, external organisations and to clients. |
| **9** | Employing suitable interpersonal skills and being able to communicate at all levels. |
| **10** | Being able to use numerical and statistical data accurately to influence others where appropriate. |
| **11** | Being able to devise solutions to legal problems. |
| **12** | Identifying and evaluating risks systematically, communicating information to enable appropriate and timely action; recognising situations where risk may be justifiable. |

Job family

**Professional and Technical (Grade I)**

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| **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 |

Professional and Technical job holders rely upon their deep knowledge of the specialism or discipline in which they work to carry out vital tasks and provide authoritative advice to others. Often developing within recognised career paths, their evolving expertise sees them bear increasing responsibility for managing city council assets, the development of policies and procedures and the strategic direction of the functions they support.

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 roles will have many day-to-day professional, technical and management issues to deal with but must also take a longer-term view of the service sector they support, assessing its changing needs and demands and making significant contributions to resource planning. This will see job holders dealing with serious issues without recourse to managers and making autonomous decisions based upon their specialist knowledge and dedicated experience.

**The knowledge and skills required**

The broad knowledge requirement needed to deal with the technical and business challenges of roles is usually underpinned by an appreciation of the theoretical basis of the particular discipline such that job holders can fall back on the first principles of their specialism to make decisions and offer advice.

This level of knowledge is often indicated by the need for a degree level education in the relevant field, but for some roles this is substituted by a significant level of on the job training and focussed experience such that the level of expertise confers a similar level of authority.

While the majority of roles will have demands for manual dexterity in relation to typing and similar functions, other jobs at this level will use a range of equipment requiring precision in their use and handling.

**Thinking, planning and communication**

Job holders will use their professional expertise to deal with complex, pressing issues on a day to day basis, but will also look well ahead and take a more strategic view of their project and service delivery objectives, shaping their teams’ composition, approach and operating procedures in accordance with wider service goals mandated by service management.

At this level, the information exchanged with internal and external colleagues, and members of the public will call for developed communication skills on the part of the job holders. Matters will be technically complicated, requiring careful explanation, or sensitive, requiring significant listening skills to interpret information and provide appropriate advice.

**Decision making and innovation**

Job holders will have the freedom to interpret policy and broad operating guidelines in order to shape their teams’ detailed approach to meeting their corporate objectives and targets. They will deal with escalated, multi-faceted problems independently and will tend to only consult their manager on fundamental policy or resource issues.

**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.

External facing roles will focus on the needs of people, whether external service users or partners and will be responsible for high impact decision making and the implementation of appropriate programmes on behalf of individuals or groups of people or enforcement of regulations which have direct and significant consequences upon those served. Such roles are likely to have at least one other elevated level of responsibility for such elements as finance, information assets, equipment or premises.

Internal roles are likely to have this pattern reversed, with the weightiest responsibility for highly valuable or significant financial and non-financial assets, but somewhat less accountability for the assessment of needs of individuals and groups.

Jobs will generally have formal line management responsibility and will not only allocate and check work, but also be directly involved in assessment, recruitment, and other human resource related procedures. Posts that do not have this level of managerial responsibility are likely to have compensatory levels of accountability in relation to the users of city council services, finance or other major asset(s).

**Impacts and demands**

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.

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

Duties of jobs at this level will not require job holders to develop and maintain working relationships with people who, through their circumstances or behaviour, place particular emotional demands on the job holder.

Job holders find themselves exposed to some disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous working conditions. Particularly when the needs of their specialism require them to work on external sites exposed to the weather, in or around refuse and waste plant, close to particularly noisy machinery and in similar environments.

Other jobs, such as enforcement roles, may also see job holders exposed to verbal abuse and threatening environments. In all cases, job holders will minimise risk and conform to health and safety regulations to mitigate any negative effects of such exposure.