Role profile

**Senior Lawyer**

**Our values:**

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

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| **Service** | Legal & Democratic |
| **Reports to** | Principal Lawyer |
| **Job family** | Professional and Technical |
| **Grade** | J |
| **Political restricted?** | N |
| **DBS required?** | N |
| **Date** | April 2022 |
| **JE Code** | JE1669 |

Key deliverables

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| **1** | To provide legal advice and services to support the Council to deliver its objectives and support the Principal Lawyer in their team in promoting the Council’s values and embedding a corporate outcome focused approach to legal work. |
| **2** | To manage a caseload of medium and high-level matters 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. |
| **3** | To undertake advocacy (if appropriate to work area) in all levels of Court on own matters and on behalf of the team as workload allows. |
| **4** | Take responsibility for cases from instruction through to completion to ensure successful outcome and to attend at client meetings, meetings with barristers and meetings with external solicitors where appropriate. To provide clear and concise advice, both verbal and written. |
| **5** | Ensure through compliance with robust performance standards the delivery of services to best practice standards. |
| **6** | 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. |
| **7** | Through high quality service, advocacy, advice, and casework support the Council in achieving its outcomes successfully. Possess current skills and competencies to advise on all relevant legal matters and ensure that legal skills, knowledge and competencies develop and adapt over time to meet future business developments. |
| **8** | Assist in supervising the advice, advocacy and casework of more junior lawyers as arranged with the Principal Lawyer through supervision or other arrangements. |
| **9** | Accountable, with the Principal Lawyer, for the delivery of key performance targets for the team. |
| **10** | 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 significant knowledge of relevant local government law. |
| **3** | Demonstrable ability to draft all necessary legal, transactional, and other formal documentation. |
| **4** | Demonstrable knowledge of researching complex areas of law and presenting them in clear and understandable terms to clients. |
| **5** | Proven ability to work under pressure, to meet agreed work objectives and targets in accordance with local frameworks, guidelines and budgetary requirements. |
| **6** | Proven ability to negotiate complex matters of high value or risk, translating those matters into actions that best represents and protects the interests and good governance of the Council. |
| **7** | Delivering information clearly and succinctly to others in the Council, partnerships, external organisations and to clients, and employing suitable interpersonal skills. |
| **8** | Ability to manage other team members where allocated, including organising the distribution of work, monitoring progress and quality and measuring against agreed standards. |
| **9** | Identifying and evaluating risks systematically, communicating information to enable appropriate and timely action; recognising situations where risk may be justifiable. |
| **10** | Responding positively to change within your work area and taking responsibility for putting into practice changes which are being implemented. |

Job family

**Professional and Technical (Grade J)**

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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 job holders usually report to a Head of Service and are responsible for the development and implementation of strategy relating to a whole function within that service. Posts carry significant responsibilities for finance and a range of other non-financial assets and job holders will make autonomous decisions and lead the management of change throughout their functional area.

**The knowledge and skills required**

The advanced theoretical knowledge required to make appropriate judgements and decisions at this level is augmented by ongoing professional development and awareness of external legislative and societal change. Also, by a deeper understanding of the city council operational structures which both support and depend upon the job holder’s actions and advice. Roles will be professional experts, providing guidance to those in earlier career stages.

**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.

The information exchanged at this level will be routinely complex and even contentious in nature. Job holders will, however, 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 a 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 probably report to a Head of Service and will devise and implement strategic plans in relation to their specific functional area.

**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 critical day to day decisions with legal and reputational dimensions. Job holders will make a major contribution to the development of policy and functional procedures. Job holders will also lead the implementation of appropriate programmes on behalf of large groups of people.

Such roles are likely to have at least two other elevated levels of responsibility for such elements as finance (substantial budget management), information assets (statutory corporate databases and council-wide applications) or premises (of very high value and operational importance).

Internal facing roles are likely to have this pattern reversed, with the weightiest responsibility for very high value or significant financial and non-financial assets including policy development, but somewhat less accountability for the assessment of group needs. Roles will have full line management responsibility over a number of teams with differing functional specialties and employee profiles.

**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 very complex, demanding of particularly lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention while also managing very high levels of work.

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.

Many Professional and Technical 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.