

Principal Lawyer

JE Code: JE1671

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| **We are dedicated, respectful, collaborative. We are Milton Keynes Council** |
| **Service:** | Legal & Democratic |
| **Reports to:** | Head of Legal  |
| **Job Family:** | Professional & Technical |
| **Grade:** | L |
| **Political restricted:****Date:****JE Code:** | YApril 2021JE1671 |

**Key Deliverables**

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| **1.** | To lead on the advocacy function for a team of lawyers responsible for a mixed caseload of complex and routine matters. Ensuring through appropriate delegation and supervision that all work is both of the correct quality and performed in a timely manner. All work will be undertaken with the purpose of assisting the Council to achieve its business objectives. |
| **2.** | Ensure through robust performance management the delivery of value for money services to high practice standards within a culture of continuous improvement.  |
| **3.** | To ensure the team assists and supports the Council in achieving its outcomes successfully. To ensure the team has the skills and competencies to advise on all relevant matters within agreed resources. Success will be determined through agreed and measured timely quality outcomes. |
| **4.** | To establish and maintain an understanding of the client’s business needs and objectives through building and maintaining professional relationships. Mentoring and encouraging more junior team members so that the client’s objectives are understood and shared throughout the team. |
| **5.** | To ensure through proper delegation and professional supervision arrangements that work is undertaken in the most efficient manner. To ensure that the use of external advice and support is only procured in accordance with agreed procedures and is focused on achieving best value.  |
| **6.** | To work with clients to ensure that where practicable activity is moved into client functions where that represents a more effective arrangement. |
| **7.** | As a Principal Lawyer to be the Council’s legal expert (or one of the Council’s legal experts) in one or more core areas of legal work dealt with by Legal Services. |
| **8.** | Be an integral part of the Management Team of Legal Services demonstrating a personal commitment to the Council’s Values and encouraging and holding to account those values throughout their team. |
| **9.** | To deputise for the Service Director Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Legal Services or other Principal Lawyers at Committee meetings, meetings with Senior Officers or other important meetings with Councillors and external stakeholders. |
| **10.** |  To assist in the management of the budget responsibility for their core areas of work (eg Children’s Social Care) for the provision of external legal suppliers. |

*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 council wide needs*

**Essential Requirements (key skills, expertise & 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.** | Significant experience of relevant legislation. |
| **3.** | Significant knowledge of relevant local government law and ability to be the Council’s lead expert in a core area of work. |
| **4.** | Ability to draft legal, transactional and other formal documentation. |
| **5.** | Significant knowledge of relevant local government law and ability to be the Council’s lead expert in a core area of work. |
| **6.** | Must demonstrate the ability to handle cases involving medium to high risk to the Council’s reputation or finances. |
| **7.** | Demonstrate aptitude to manage and motivate staff, including an understanding how to manage the quality, timeliness and volume of a team’s work. |
| **8.** | Undertake legal continuing professional development in accordance with any professional requirements. |
| **9.** | Demonstrable knowledge of researching complex areas of law and presenting them in clear and understandable terms to clients. |
| **10.** | Taking responsibility for delivering the teams work and meeting agreed work objectives, working to local frameworks and guidelines. |
| **11.** | Ability to work under pressure and handle complex workloads. |
| **12.** | Ability to negotiate complex matters of high value risk or importance, translating those matters into actions that best represents and protects the interests, desires and good governance of the Council. |
| **13.** | Delivering information clearly and succinctly to others in the Council, partnerships, external organisations and to clients. |
| **14.** | Employing suitable interpersonal skills and being able to communicate at all levels. |
| **15.** | Being able to use numerical and statistical data accurately to influence others where appropriate. |
| **16.** | Being able to devise innovative solutions to significant and complex problems. |
| **17.** | Identifying and evaluating risks systematically, communicating information to enable appropriate and timely action; recognising situations where risk may be justifiable. |
| **18.** | Taking responsibility to minimise issues that could disrupt work, and escalate the issue where appropriate. Keeping those involved informed. |
| **19.** | Responding positively to change within your work area and taking responsibility for putting into practice changes which are being implemented. |
| **20.** | Providing leadership to people in a way which motivates, supports and enables them to achieve the objectives of Milton Keynes Council’s vision and values. Demonstrating a leadership style which inspires and draws out the strengths from individuals within a team. |
| **21.** | Establishing individual responsibility and accountability for delivery of identified priorities and objectives. |
| **22.** | Promote by personal example a culture of lesson learning and innovation and encourage the identification and uptake of best practices and standards. |
| **23.** | Planning and organising the distribution of work; monitoring progress and quality, measuring against agreed standards, reviewing and updating in the light of developments. |
| **24.** | Supporting and enabling colleagues to improve performance through a continuous learning culture in which appropriate resources are available and employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development. |
| **25.** | Experience of identifying ways in which services can be delivered more efficiently by ensuring that the processes used, and the resources needed to apply those processes, provide the optimum route to achieving cost-effective solutions. |

Job Family

Professional & Technical

Grade L



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| **Colleagues Expectations*** Be professional at all times
* Work together for the good of the team, 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
 | **Managers 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
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**Job Family- Professional & Technical**

**Role Characteristics**

At this level job holders report to a Director and are responsible for the development and implementation of strategy relating to several functions 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 area of influence within the Service.

### ****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 thorough understanding of external legislative and societal change.  Also by a deeper understanding of the Council operational structures which both support and depend upon the job holder’s actions and advice. Roles will be professional experts, providing expert professional leadership across a number of functions.

### ****Thinking, Planning and Communication****

Job holders will use their professional expertise to deal with highly complex, pressing issues including Service level change initiatives and risk management. 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 the service directorate.

The information exchanged at this level will be routinely complex, contentious in nature and/or highly significant to the Council’s reputation. 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 and reasoned argument. This will occur in written interactions but can also in face to face verbal exchanges where job holders will advocate the 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 Director and will devise and implement strategic plans and policy in relation to several functional 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 whole classes of people - whether 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).

Roles will have full line management responsibility over several functional areas with differing specialties and employee profiles.

### ****Impacts and Demands****

The combination of both tactical and strategic matters that job holders deal with means 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.

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.

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.