

WHERE  
CAREERS  
THRIVE

When potential  
is unlocked,  
talent *thrives*



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

Job description and person specification

## **Senior Lawyer (Civil Litigation)**

Litigation team

Law and Governance, Corporate Services

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our vision at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is: 'to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive'.

We truly stand by this and work hard every day to make this a reality, and at WNC it's about our people. People who thrive with ambition, bring new ideas, demand better ways of working, care about every detail, and who never shy away from a challenge.

Our culture is a gateway for new experiences. A place to forge new opportunities. To empower you in your career and unite you with like-minded people. When potential is unlocked, talent thrives.



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## **Purpose and impact:**

- To assist in the provision of a Legal Service providing legal advice and assistance to the Council.
- To represent the Council in civil proceedings in the County Court in relation to, but not limited to, contractual and commercial property disputes, debt recovery and other money claims issued by and against the Council and trespasser possession and ASB injunction proceedings.
- Advising Council officers about a wide range of contentious civil legal issues including, but not limited to, the above matters, as well as in relation to judicial reviews against the Council.
- Assisting the Principal Lawyer in conducting litigation in the High Court in relation to judicial reviews and other civil claims issued by and against the Council.
- Supervising a small team of unqualified colleagues in the Litigation team, who will assist in relation to the above matters.
- To deputise for the relevant Principal Lawyer as required.
- To work collaboratively with all members of the Law and Governance Service to deliver excellent quality services across the full range of functions provided by the legal service.

## **Accountable to:**

The post sits within the Council's in-house Legal Services' Litigation team, which is located within the Law and Governance department, part of the Council's Resources and Finance Services Directorate.

This post is accountable to the Litigation team Principal Lawyer.

## **Responsibilities:**

1. To provide legal advice and representation on a variety of contentious general civil litigation related matters within the designated legal team to elected members and officers of the Council and their service areas.
2. To conduct and manage a wide-ranging caseload of complex legal work in relation to the same and to prepare and draft complex legal documents as required in an efficient, effective and timely manner.
3. To prepare instructions and briefs to Counsel and external legal advisors, when necessary.
4. To provide a high-quality service, advocacy and casework to support the Council, including advice to elected members and officers, in writing and verbally, taking into account relevant professional conduct obligations.
5. To deputise for the Principal Lawyer and assist in the supervision of the unqualified colleagues in the Litigation team as required.
6. To identify and implement developments in areas of practice including cascading those developments to officers within the legal service.
7. To deliver training on areas of practice to departments / directorates across the Council.
8. To promote a positive image of the Council.
9. Keep up to date on relevant new legislation, case law, codes of practice, guidance and policy.
10. To build and maintain good working relationships with fellow officers and foster partnership working with external partners / agencies.



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11. To contribute to the development of a customer focused legal service.
12. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours.
13. Demonstrate awareness / understanding of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs. Ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons, to certify compliance with policies and procedures relating to health and safety within the service.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

## Person specification:

The requirements for the role are outlined below and will be part of the selection process. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured by:

**(A)** Application Form, **(I)** Interview, **(D)** Documentation.

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills experience and qualifications required for this job.

| Skills and abilities:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Essential / Desirable | Measured by |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Communication skills - highly developed written and oral communication skills.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Essential             | A and I     |
| Research skills - excellent research skills to effectively and confidently advise on a wide variety of legal issues.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Essential             | A and I     |
| Advising experience - Post qualification experience in providing legal advice, representation and undertaking legal work in contentious and potentially complex areas of general civil legal practice, ideally in relation to commercial property and contractual disputes and debt recovery matters. | Essential             | A and I     |
| Advocacy experience – Post qualification experience in representing clients in hearings in the County Court.                                                                                                                                                                                          | Essential             | A and I     |
| Working under pressure - Experience of working well under pressure to agreed objectives / targets.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Essential             | A and I     |
| Experience of providing advice to Committees and Sub-Committees, or relevant comparable experience.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Desirable             | A and I     |
| Project Experience - Experience of working as part of a professional team in the delivery of a major project.                                                                                                                                                                                         | Desirable             | A and I     |
| Management Experience - Experience in the supervision, development and management of people and resources.                                                                                                                                                                                            | Desirable             | A and I     |
| Demonstrate effective use of Office 365 (incl. Teams, OneDrive, etc.) and legal case management systems, preferably IKEN, or willingness to undertake training during the probation period.                                                                                                           | Essential             | A and I     |



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| <b>Knowledge:</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>Essential /<br/>Desirable</b> | <b>Measured by</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Local authority - Knowledge of the legislation governing the operation of Local Authorities.                                      | Desirable                        | A and I            |
| Designated legal team knowledge - Knowledge of the legislation governing the service specific areas of the designated legal team. | Essential                        | A and I            |

| <b>Relevant experience:</b>                                                         | <b>Essential /<br/>Desirable</b> | <b>Measured by</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Work experience - Experience of working within a local authority legal environment. | Desirable                        | A and I            |

| <b>Education, training and work qualifications:</b>                                                                                      | <b>Essential /<br/>Desirable</b> | <b>Measured by</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Qualified practicing solicitor or practicing Barrister authorised to conduct litigation for the purposes of the Legal Services Act 2007. | Essential                        | A and D            |

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance and verification of certificates.



## Day-to-day in the role:

|                                          |                   |                                           |                                             |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hours:</b>                            | 37 hours per week | <b>Primary work base:</b>                 | One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton |
| <b>Job family band:</b>                  | Grade 9           | <b>Worker type:</b>                       | Part-flexible                               |
| <b>Salary range:</b>                     | £49,587 - £52,860 | <b>Budget responsibility:</b>             | N/A                                         |
| <b>People management responsibility:</b> | N/A               | <b>People supervision responsibility:</b> | Two – A Paralegal and Legal Assistant       |

### Working conditions & how we work:

This role has been identified as a part-flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to work from other work locations and when not working from an office you will be working remotely for up to 3 days a week (including from home).

We are open to discussions about flexible working, but the post will require attendance at Court and off-site meetings as and when required.

## Our organisational values and behaviours

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things and we want all colleagues to THRIVE, both personally and professionally. Our values and our behaviours framework underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

|          |                 |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>T</b> | Trust           | We are honest, fair, transparent and accountable. We can be trusted to do what we say we will.                                                                   |
| <b>H</b> | High Performing | we get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.                                                                          |
| <b>R</b> | Respect         | we respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional and supportive environment.                                                                   |
| <b>I</b> | Innovate        | we encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.                                          |
| <b>V</b> | Value           | We continually strive for best practice and ways of improving existing procedures, practices and systems and thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness |
| <b>E</b> | Empower         | we believe in people, will listen, learn and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.                                            |

**“Valuing colleagues as individuals and encompassing our different perspectives to deliver our collective ambitions. One West inclusive culture”**

# When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

Choose a career that offers you a true sense of achievement, fills you with pride and challenges you in a positive way, everyday.

## The benefits of a career at WNC include:

- **People** are at the centre of everything we do. Without our people, we wouldn't be able to deliver services to the people in our community.
- **Ambition** runs through everything we do at West Northants Council, we nurture and develop our people's ambition and willingness to succeed, to continually improve the service we provide to the community.
- **Care** is at the heart of West Northants Council, we care in so many ways; seen and unseen, helping our colleagues and community to thrive.
- **Flexibility** is key, we know work-life balance is critical to wellbeing, so we work hard to make sure our benefits package promotes and improves wellbeing; from annual leave, sick pay, family leave and flexible working, financial security offered by a local government pension scheme and life assurance, and discount schemes which make a difference to your day-to-day life, through to employee helplines offering free legal, health, financial and wellbeing advice and support.

We want you to have balance and be happy.

