



**North  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## **Head of Legal**

### **Job Details**

**Job title:** Head of Legal

**Grade:** SM13

**Reports to:** Director of Law and Governance

**Directorate and Service area:** Law and Governance, Legal Services

### **Purpose of Job**

The Head of Legal Services will lead the Council's legal function delivered both internally and the provision of external advice, providing professional leadership of legal services and across the whole of the council in supporting the Monitoring Officer and Director of Law and Governance.

The role provides professional leadership, oversight of legal risk, and strategic advice on high risk, complex and politically sensitive matters across the Council. This includes advice on lawfulness, constitutional compliance, ethical governance and standards of conduct, and assisting in the identification, assessment and escalation of matters that may require formal statutory consideration or intervention.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

#### **1. Leadership and Strategic Direction**

- Provide professional and strategic leadership for Legal Services, setting standards, direction, KPIs and a culture of high performance and professional excellence
- Lead the legal function to ensure the consistent delivery of timely, robust, solution focused legal advice across all service areas
- Shape the development and implementation of service plans, governance work programmes and multiyear legal projects.

#### **2. Governance, Monitoring Officer Support and Corporate Responsibilities**

- Support and deputise for the Monitoring Officer in relation to governance, ethics, Member conduct and constitutional compliance.
- Ensure decision-making across the Council is lawful, defensible and procedurally compliant.
- Provide strategic legal advice to Members, directors and senior officers on major projects, policies, reports and key corporate decisions.
- Contribute to corporate governance, organisational effectiveness and statutory compliance.

### **3. Complex Legal Advice and Risk Management**

- Act as the Council's lead legal adviser on complex, high-risk and politically sensitive matters.
- Identify, assess, mitigate and communicate legal, financial and reputational risk relating to significant decisions, programmes and litigation.
- Oversee complex casework, litigation strategy and the quality assurance of high-risk legal outputs.

### **4. Staff Leadership and Development**

- Manage, develop and support Principal Lawyers and wider legal teams, ensuring professional competence, resilience and continuous improvement.
- Lead service transformation, performance management, workforce planning and professional development initiatives.
- Promote a culture that embodies Council values, professional ethics and high standards of conduct.

### **5. External Legal Providers and Stakeholder Management**

- Instruct, manage and monitor external law firms and Counsel, ensuring value for money and strategic alignment.
- Build strong internal and external relationships with senior officers, Members, partner organisations, courts, regulators and government agencies.

### **6. Financial Management**

- Jointly manage the Legal Services budget (~£3.2m) with the Legal Business Manager, overseeing expenditure, forecasting and commissioning.
- Ensure external legal spend, subscriptions and systems provide added value and contribute to service efficiency.

### **7. Service Improvement and Transformation**

- Lead continuous improvement across Legal Services, including systems, templates, processes, training and workflow optimisation.
- Identify and deliver opportunities for digital improvement, enhanced risk management and better customer service.

### **General Responsibilities applicable to all Jobs**

1. Demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs.
2. Comply with the Council's policies and procedures including (but not limited to) safeguarding, financial regulations, promotion of equalities, customer care, agreed audit actions and health and safety (ensuring that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons).
3. Carry out any other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of this job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.

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 –**

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Essential Criteria</b>	<b>Desirable Criteria</b>
Education, Qualifications and Training	Admitted Solicitor/Barrister/FCILEx with substantial experience in local government/public law.  Evidence of continuing professional development.	Additional specialist legal training or accreditation such as higher rights of audience  Leadership or management qualifications.
Experience and Knowledge	Extensive and authoritative knowledge of local government, public and administrative law and its application within complex political and statutory environments.  Strong expertise in governance, constitutional frameworks and ethical standards, including the statutory role and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer and the identification, management and escalation of matters involving potential unlawfulness, maladministration or breach of governance.	Knowledge of administrative systems and case management tools.

	<p>Experience as a Monitoring Officer or evidence of deputising for the Monitoring Officer within Local Government.</p> <p>Substantial experience in local government/public law and in leading multi-disciplinary legal teams.</p> <p>Experience managing complex, high-risk and politically sensitive matters.</p> <p>Experience advising Members, senior officers and corporate boards.</p> <p>Experience managing external legal providers and budgets.</p>	
<p>Ability and Skills</p>	<p>Knowledge of local government systems and case management tools. Strong analytical and judgement skills, including balancing political, legal and operational considerations.</p> <p>Clear, proportionate and solution-focused legal advice.</p> <p>Excellent drafting, advocacy, negotiation and communication skills.</p> <p>Strong interpersonal and team-working skills.</p>	<p>Public sector leadership experience.</p>

	<p>Senior leadership and professional assurance skills, including setting legal standards, exercising quality control over complex advice, mentoring senior professionals and ensuring consistency and integrity of legal advice across multiple disciplines.</p> <p>Ability to lead, motivate and develop teams effectively.</p>	
Equal Opportunities	<p>Ability to demonstrate awareness /understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs.</p>	
Additional Factors	<p>Promote and display the Council's values of being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customer-focused</li><li>• Respectful</li><li>• Efficient</li><li>• Supportive</li><li>• Trustworthy</li></ul> <p>Ability to handle sensitive and distressing case material.</p>	

	Ability to travel for work purposes.	
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