

JOB DESCRIPTION

May 2015

Director Area: Environment and Economy		Is this description a generic JD? Yes
Service Area: Legal Services Lincolnshire		
GRADE: G8		JEM Reference No: 5244 Enhanced DBS Required? Yes No
JOB TITLE: Principal Legal Officer		
REPORTS TO: Principal Lawyer		
1	PURPOSE OF JOB: . Contribute to the delivery of services for Legal Services Lincolnshire. Assist, as appropriate, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an integrated approach to performance management, quality standards and service delivery • Embedding new ways of thinking and working • Developing and maintaining strong, positive working relationships with commissioners, partners external clients and their teams/partners and across service areas as appropriate <p>Provide high quality efficient and effective legal casework processing and administration services to the County Council, partners and external clients</p> <p>To take personal responsibility for work within own area of responsibility</p> <p>To have an understanding of public law and governance in support of clients' decision-making processes appropriate to grade.</p> <p>To demonstrate and promote the values and culture of the service including the highest degrees of flexibility openness and collaboration and the provision of risk-based, solution focused advice centred on enabling clients to achieve their outcomes.</p> <p>Continuously look for synergies and efficiency savings across area of responsibility.</p>	
2	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS & DUTIES . The specific accountabilities of this role will be flexible and will change to meet the needs of the organisation as required but will include (or be equivalent in nature to) those listed below:	
	i	a) To provide high quality efficient and effective legal and administrative advice and services to the County Council, partners and external customers to the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics and in a way that furthers and promotes good customer care within

	<p>Legal Services Lincolnshire.</p> <p>b) To undertake all legal services work whether advice, case work or assistance to other fee earners as required within the area of work designated in the post outline for the time being with minimal supervision and professional support.</p> <p>c) To give legal procedural and propriety advice to senior officers, elected members or other persons or bodies whose conduct or activities fall within the remit of the Monitoring Officer's duties as appropriate for grade and to follow all instructions of the Monitoring Officer or any deputy in relation to the conduct of any monitoring officer activities.</p> <p>d) To make the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, an Assistant Chief Legal Officer (or any other deputy) aware of any:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - matters that are of a critical nature - matters that are politically sensitive or high profile - problems in any areas of service delivery or Council activity - instance in which any advice given by him/her has been refused or ignored, or - any proposals, decisions, actions or omissions that have, or would contravene any rule of law or code of practice or conduct or amount to maladministration. <p>e) To assist in the investigation of complaints, particularly in relation to issues raised with the Ombudsman, any Inspectorate, the Council's Auditors, or the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>f) To provide and/or receive the level of professional support and supervision appropriate to grade and as set out in the post outline.</p> <p>g) To ensure that the post-holder deals with a workload of an appropriate size and level of complexity.</p> <p>h) To develop strong and effective links with the users of the services provided by the post-holder and to notify any notable achievements, compliments, complaints, problems or issues relating to his/her work.</p> <p>i) To work as required with members of any other Team within Legal Services Lincolnshire and as a member of any specific project, task or network Team.</p> <p>j) Contribute to documents produced for internal and external communications purposes and participate in the presentation of training and development for customers, elected members and others.</p> <p>k) To operate all quality, information management and other systems, processes and procedures and to use ICT and other support services as instructed by the departmental management team.</p> <p>l) To contribute positively to the good management of Legal Services Lincolnshire and in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to attend Team and other meetings and participate in project Teams,
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		<p>Team Away days and other management development activities when required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to participate in the employee development and appraisal process - to contribute to the service and action plans for Legal Services Lincolnshire and - to communicate effectively within and outside Legal Services Lincolnshire
	ii.	<p>a) Taking day to day responsibility and providing leadership as appropriate to deliver the agreed priorities, working collaboratively with commissioning teams, partners and external customers and with colleagues in Legal Services Lincolnshire.</p> <p>b) Coach/mentor teams/colleagues as appropriate to embed new ways of thinking and working and assist with ensuring flexibility within Legal Services Lincolnshire</p> <p>c) Maximising the impact of resources and value for money to achieve improved outcomes for the Council, partners and external customers</p> <p>d) Take pride in own performance and ensure effective engagement with Legal Services Lincolnshire performance management processes to deliver outcomes in line with service delivery obligations</p> <p>e) Provide expert advice and guidance as appropriate for own area of expertise.</p> <p>f) Deliver a personal workload of advice, case work or support to other fee earners</p> <p>g) Demonstration of the Council's Core Abilities (at the relevant level)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Leadership Being Future Focused Political and Commercial Astuteness Supporting a High Performing and Flexible Workforce Drive for Results
	iii.	Understand and work with Legal Services Lincolnshire's target market and existing customers as appropriate, developing and maintaining relationships with County Council commissioners, partners, external customers, service users, stakeholders and potential providers.
	iv.	Contribute to Legal Services Lincolnshire's work with commissioners/partners to ensure a robust approach to data analysis and forecasting
	v.	Contribute to the performance by the County Council, partners and external customers of their statutory obligations and where appropriate any national and local performance indicators
	vi	Ensure the way in which the postholder conducts themselves within the area of responsibility reflects the agreed culture and style and standing orders of the County Council and the culture and style of Legal Services Lincolnshire as set out in Working in Legal Services Lincolnshire as

		amended from time to time.
	vii	Operate Legal Services Lincolnshire's LEXCEL policies, processes and procedures and any frameworks for Quality Assurance, agreed appropriate performance standards and review processes operated by County Council commissioners, partners or external customers and monitor delivery against commissioned requirements
	viii	Ensure Council resources are optimised and utilised effectively and efficiently.
	ix	Look to continuously improve services in area of responsibility, identifying where possible, value for money savings and ways of managing within allocated budgets.
	x	Act as a role model to others helping them to manage uncertainty and to respond positively and creatively to changing expectations.
	xi	Contribute to the development of individuals across the Council coaching, mentoring and motivating staff as appropriate to achieve performance excellence.
	xii	As an employee, create a positive image of the County Council
	xiii	Deliver excellent customer service, incorporating the Council's equality and diversity objectives and supporting the council to achieve best practice in all it delivers
	xiv	Remain up to date and compliant with all relevant legislation, organisational procedures, policies and professional codes of conduct in order to uphold standards of best practice
	xv	Take personal responsibility for contributing to organisational transformation and changes in ways of working, maximising the benefits and efficiencies for both internal and external customers, including the promotion and use of self -service to achieve maximum cost effectiveness.
3.	MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE None SUPERVISION OF PEOPLE Supervision and training of Senior Legal Officers and Legal Officers where applicable as specified in the Post Outline. Informal assistance and support to peers and within the team.	
4.	CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION The job requires the ability to apply established legal principles and approaches within a particular area of legal practice to legal and factual problems which can be of a complex nature. Applies established guidance and case law to inform advice given and steps taken. Identifies and interprets relevant evidence, understands the implications of established solutions and draws sound conclusions, advising and acting accordingly. The post-holder will seek guidance where the facts do not fit or the client does	

	<p>not wish to pursue established solutions or if there is a lack of established case law or guidance.</p> <p>Examples</p> <p>Advising the client Directorate on changes to policy or practice to reflect the outcome of cases and where applicable both consulting and advising on drafts of directorate policy.</p> <p>Advising on the application of exemptions in respect of freedom of information and subject access requests and undertaking cases in respect of the Information Commissioner</p> <p>Taking of tactical and strategic decisions on High/County Court cases.</p> <p>All of the above requiring grasp of technical detail from other disciplines.</p>
5.	<p>CONTACTS AND RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>Contact with officers at all levels in the Council, including frequent contact with senior managers. Some contact with members of the Council for the provision of information and assistance on own cases including explaining the basis of decisions made.</p> <p>Contact with members of the public.</p> <p>Contacts with service users, other local authorities, partners and external bodies, other professionals (lawyers and non-lawyers), courts and tribunals.</p> <p>The post-holder will represent the Council and be responsible for influencing and negotiating with others on contentious commercial community and legal matters within established professional parameters in circumstances where the relationships between contacts and the matters in question can be standard or complex and can involve difficult and emotional situations requiring support, persuasion and advocacy and sensitivity. The post-holder will be responsible for advocating on behalf of the Council generally including where appropriate to the post formal advocacy before courts and tribunals.</p>
6.	<p>DECISIONS</p>

	<p>a) Discretion</p> <p>Autonomy in the conduct of individual matters subject to requirement to recognise when consultation is required with more senior colleagues. Consultation required on more complex matters and matters which may have significant financial implications or which may be high-profile or politically sensitive. More senior colleagues provide advice and guidance. The post-holder is not required to refer matters to a more senior colleague for decision.</p> <p>Discretion to take tactical and strategic decisions on own case load. Discretion in taking decisions in the conduct of particular matters concerning procedural steps to be taken and the substantive advice to be given. Would take instructions from the client before decisions are taken unless not required in accordance with established practices or procedures. Legal advice given will limit the scope and often be determinative of the final decision made because of the fundamental importance of legal advice to local authority decision-making. It will thereby affect directly the choices and working practices of other staff across the Council.</p> <p>The post-holder will prioritise their own work against established timetables and procedural requirements, recognizing urgent situations and taking appropriate action.</p>
	<p>b) Consequences</p> <p>Major implications of advice given decisions made and action taken both on individual Directorates and across the County Council and partner organisations. Major impact on the lawfulness of the Council's actions. Major impact on the legal liability, finances and reputation of the Council and service delivery.</p> <p>Direct and significant impact on the well-being of Service Users, and members of the public including children. Advice given and decisions and actions taken have a major impact on the quality of other Council decision-making and the outcome of Council cases, projects and initiatives.</p> <p>The post-holder has autonomy within each individual case. Recommendations would only be over-ruled in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>The postholder takes on professional responsibility and potentially incurs Council liability in the delivery of legal advice to outside bodies</p>
7.	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Laptops and mobiles phones where applicable. IT databases are shown in the Post Outline. Security of confidential and sensitive paper and electronic data when transporting and using files and laptops when working away from the office.</p>
8.	<p>WORK ENVIRONMENT</p>

	<p>a) Work Demands</p> <p>The post-holder operates in an environment governed by the need to meet deadlines including deadlines externally imposed in a context of continually changing priorities. Work is carried out in a demand-led environment where the workflows cannot be controlled and work plans can be interrupted by urgent demands.</p>
	<p>b) Physical Demands</p> <p>Handling of heavy documentation especially deed parcels and court and public inquiry files and bundles of evidence which can be large in number and difficult to transport safely. Keyboard work in carrying out own typing in support of casework</p>
	<p>c) Working Conditions</p> <p>Office based with requirement to travel in and out of county to courts and site visits and to visit people in their homes.</p> <p>Regular exposure to material and situations likely to cause distress such as photographs and taking statements from vulnerable/distressed witnesses.</p>
	<p>d) Work Context</p> <p>Risk of verbal and physical abuse aggression and intimidation. Highly stressful environment owing to routinely contentious nature of the work.</p>
9.	<p>KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</p> <p>Must have completed part 2 of ILEX or have at least 7 years relevant experience.</p> <p>Legal skills to be able to acquire an expertise and a thorough and working knowledge of all relevant law and procedure in a specialist role.</p> <p>A good, general working knowledge of the law applicable to local government commensurate with grade.</p> <p>Able to adapt to new areas of work and take on tasks/duties outside his/her field of expertise competently recognising when he/she lacks the requisite knowledge and requires professional support and supervision.</p> <p>Able to represent the County Council in Court and at other tribunals where such representation is permitted by professional or court rules, if relevant to the post and the area of work.</p> <p>Interpersonal skills to enable the post-holder to operate at this level of ten requiring sensitivity and diplomacy.</p> <p>Management of a full and substantial workload of matters commensurate with high/her level of expertise.</p> <p>Able to use his/her skills and expertise to command respect and authority with</p>

	<p>those persons who he/she is required to influence, support and advise.</p> <p>Drafting skills sufficient to be able to depart from established precedents in relation to less complex legal documents.</p> <p>Able to influence and persuade.</p> <p>Competent negotiator.</p> <p>Able to communicate clearly and appropriately both verbally and in writing at all levels.</p> <p>Understanding of the nature of local government in-house legal service and contributes positively to service development and continuous improvement. Able to supervise and provide professional support to more junior colleagues in a positive and developmental way.</p> <p>Able to work as an integrated part of the wider Legal Services team, and supportive of colleagues and management.</p> <p>Able to devise prepare and deliver training.</p> <p>Knowledge of main office IT packages.</p> <p>Keep up to date with changes to relevant law and procedure.</p> <p>Able to travel and keep appointments.</p> <p>The specific knowledge, skills and abilities required with vary depending on the needs of the role. Specific posts may necessitate advanced specialist knowledge and skills. Post holders should be comfortable working with ambiguity and uncertainty.</p>		
<p>10. GENERAL</p> <p>Job Evaluation - This job description has been compiled to allow the job to be evaluated using the GLPC Job Evaluation scheme as adopted by the County Council</p> <p>Other Duties - The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not exhaustive. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties that may be required from time to time within the general scope of the post. Any such duties should not substantially change the general character of the post. Duties and responsibilities outside of the general scope of this grade of post will be with the consent of the post holder.</p> <p>Equal Opportunities - The post holder is required to carry out the duties in accordance with Council Equal Opportunities policies.</p> <p>Health and Safety - The post holder is required to carry out the duties in accordance with the Council Health and Safety policies and procedures.</p> <p>Safeguarding -. All employees need to be aware of the possible abuse of children and vulnerable adults and if you are concerned you need to follow the Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding Policy. In addition employees working with children and vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults during the course of their work.</p>			
	Name:	Signature:	Date
Job Description written by: [Manager]

Job Description agreed by: [Post holder]
<p>Note: Qualifications and Experience headings are included in the Person Specification; see 'Using Competencies in Recruitment & Selection' in the Employment Manual on George.</p> <p>Guidance on the completion of this JD can also be found on George or available from your HR Adviser.</p>			