

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Director of Law, Governance & Elections
Grade: JNC 2

Reports to (Designation): Chief Executive

Directorate: Chief Executive

Main Purpose of the job:

- The Director of Law, Governance and Elections is part of the Senior Leadership Team charged with transforming the way the organisation operates in order to deliver great services to residents.
 - To provide effective inclusive leadership and management that will contribute to the continuous improvement of the Council.
 - This role will play a key part in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy and will develop and lead a modern legal and governance service for the Council ensuring that the customer is at the heart of everything we do.
 - Working within a complex environment, the post holder will work collaboratively to deliver the highest standards of modern governance and legal practice across the organisation and prepare services for future challenges. The role is integral to the Council achieving the desired step change in both culture and approach when modernising services and responding to efficiency challenges.
 - The role will also act as the Council's Monitoring Officer in accordance with S.5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
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Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

To lead and manage Law, Governance and Elections Services ensuring that:

- Makes an active contribution to the leadership of the Council in a way that promotes a 'one Council' approach.
- Effective, efficient high quality legal advice, support and representation reflecting modern best practice is given to Members and officers.
- Effective, efficient and high quality support is given to the democratic process by way of support to the member decision making process and at other member meetings.
- Effective, efficient, best practice and legally sound electoral services are delivered.
- Customers/clients are at the centre of decision making and their business needs are understood and support is given to deliver them.
- The Council's constitution is effective, reflects modern working practices and is fit for purpose.
- The Council's decisions are lawful and comply with the Council's constitution.

MANAGEMENT ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

As a Lewisham Director you will:

- Develop and maintain positive relationships with diverse elected members to ensure the Council and Directorate strategic priorities are effectively implemented and to support Members to undertake their strategic monitoring role.

- To promote equality among all staff, and ensure that services are delivered in a way that promotes equality of access, treatment and outcomes, and that recognises systemic discrimination and disadvantage.
- To promote sustainability in the management of the Division, including encouraging a culture of innovation and accountability amongst all staff towards sustainability, embedding sustainability in strategic policies, the management of physical resources and the delivery of services.
- Participate in the GOLD rota as directed by the Chief Executive to ensure emergency planning and business contingency arrangements are in place throughout the Council.

The role is expected to:

- To act in the capacity of Deputy Acting Returning Officer, or the appropriate roles, if so appointed by the relevant Returning Officer, ensuring that the election process runs smoothly and complies with all relevant legislation.
- To provide timely advice, on a range of matters which often attract public interest, to the Mayor, Members, the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.
- To be responsible for the effective operation of the Councillors' Code of Conduct including initial decision making on complaints.
- To be the Council's Monitoring Officer with statutory responsibility under S5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- Actively consider new, inclusive and innovative ways of delivering services that provide high quality and good value for money. Research and benchmark to establish most effective delivery methods.
- Drive the implementation of consistently high quality service standards and levels of customer service, establish and monitor performance using Council project management and service review approaches.
- Provide inspirational and professional leadership to staff, fostering a strong culture of modern standards, performance and accountability to deliver public value and efficiency.
- Be a role model of the Council's behaviours and leadership expectations, and ensure that all approaches and outcomes are consistent with organizational and public services values.
- Look beyond all the Council's boundaries to identify innovative approaches and best practice nationally and internationally that could deliver improved outcomes for our residents.
- Determine the most cost effective use and deployment of resources to achieve corporate and functional objectives, ensuring compliance with statutory and financial obligations, and that effective systems operate to manage performance and risk.
- Work inclusively with a diverse range of stakeholders and provide leadership on equality issues to promote equality of opportunity.
- Participate in the Council's emergency planning and response to emergency situations, including out of hours work as required.

Key Service/Functional Accountabilities

- To lead on the delivery of modern, effective and transparent decision-making processes and governance arrangements in the Council, including the Cabinet, Council and committees.
- To ensure that Council decisions are lawful and to be the Council's Solicitor of Record.
- To lead and manage the Council's Law, Governance and Elections services, ensuring that they are effective, fit for purpose and in line with the Council's requirements.
- To ensure the Council complies with its statutory requirements and that sound and timely advice is given to the Chief Executive, Mayor, political groups and members and officers as appropriate.
- Maintain an awareness of national policy on all legal, democratic governance and electoral requirements.

- Challenge and signoff financial strategies and plans/budgets that support the effective delivery of strategic priorities; monitor the Divisional budget and ensure it is effectively controlled within cash limits, driving down spend where appropriate; hold managers to account to manage their budgets and to provide services that are delivered or procured that represent value for money.
- Establish clarity around expected outcomes and standards, providing clear lines of accountability and delegated authority.
- Establish and promote an inclusive culture of learning and workforce planning that enables staff to realise their potential, manage their careers and therefore improve outcomes for Lewisham's residents.

Internal Contacts: These include Mayor, Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Members and all Councillors/Ward Members.

External Contacts: This will include local residents, legal chambers, political agents and MPs, anchor institutions.

To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's relevant codes and procedures.

All employees are required to participate in the Performance Evaluation Scheme (PES) and to undertake appropriate training and development identified to enhance their work.

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Consideration will be given to restructuring the duties of this post for a disabled post holder

THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.

Number of staff: circa 60

Responsible for total revenue budget: circa £4m

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Director of Law, Governance and Elections

POST NO:

DEPARTMENT: Chief Executive

GRADE: JNC2

Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person, but are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

Knowledge:

- Demonstrable understanding of the changing role of local authorities, the issues facing local government and the wider economy and how they impact relevant service areas.
- Up to date professional knowledge base of the key areas relevant to the role and authoritative insight into the relationship between different fields.
- A thorough understanding of the role of the Monitoring Officer in local government.

Skills and abilities:

- Ability to balance strategic leadership and direction with effective operational management.
- Ability to foster an open and trusting culture with the ability to lead change through others and inspire high levels of performance.
- Ability to apply discretion and initiative in dealing with complex issues.
- Authoritative and influential with high developed relationship management and networking skills, and the ability to foster joint working across service and organizational boundaries for the benefit of residents and communities in Lewisham.
- Naturally engaging with an ability to inspire and command respect, trust and confidence of colleagues, Council Members and other stakeholders.
- Excellent negotiation and influencing skills, able to persuade others to alternative points of view.
- Ability to adopt best practice, modern, innovative working practices, which enable the delivery of corporate priorities.
- Customer oriented, with well-developed networking and partnership skills, able to build relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- Financial and commercial awareness and effective budgeting and financial management skills.
- Ability to maintain a clear overview of the issues affecting the Council in general and the service in particular.
- Political sensitivity with an ability to make progress in complex policy areas and a strong belief in the value of local democracy and accountability.

- Commitment to Lewisham Council's values and behaviours and equal opportunity policy, with an ability to demonstrate personal leadership on the importance of diversity.

Experience:

- Substantial experience, evidenced by a solid track record of success, leading high quality services.
- A successful track record of engaging effectively with others at a senior level and building productive partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Substantial experience and demonstrable success in managing organisational change and of securing the support of others in the process.
- Experience of leading on new ways of working and delivery of culture change in a large complex organisation.

Other requirements

- Politically restricted officer post.

Political Restricted Posts

The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 imposes restrictions on political activities for certain categories of local government employees. In accordance with this legislation, this post is politically restricted and as such the post holder must refrain from being a candidate for election, an election agent or sub agent, an officer of a political party, or sub committee of such a party or canvass, speak to the public at large, publish written or artistic work or display posters in support of a political party or sub group of such a party.

Physical

- Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post