# Job description

Post title: Director of Law and Governance

Service area: Resources

Grade: CO2

Reports to: Corporate Director of Resources

Your team: 4 direct reports, approximately 120 staff\*

*\*subject to consultation*

## Our ambition

We're determined to make Islington more equal. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

We also have an ambitious goal – to be the best council in the country– with every employee clear about the part they play and inspired, focused and supported to give their very best.

We want to build an organisation where employees feel valued, inspired and empowered to help us achieve our goals and provide the best services possible to our residents.

## Our values and behaviours

‘Be Islington’ is about setting a clear challenge about what it means to be an Islington employee and sets the standard for every new recruit.

We ask our employees to ‘Be Islington’ – playing their part in working together for a more equal borough and to always be collaborative, be ambitious, be resourceful, and be empowering (‘CARE’).

## Our commitment to challenging inequality

We are committed to tackling inequality, racism and injustice and creating a more equal borough for all. In order to do this, we need to set the example by being a fair employer and creating a workplace environment which is free from discrimination, racism and inequality. Our approach needs to be proactive, consistently learning to create a more equal workplace and foster a culture which empowers all staff to challenge inequality.

Equality is at the heart of what we do. We want to celebrate and embrace our differences by:

* Ensuring our workforce is representative of the people we work on behalf of, our residents
* Creating equitable working environments and diverse teams
  + Understanding our residents in order to design and deliver services that help tackle inequality and improve life chances for our residents
  + Getting to know people and their differences
  + Interpreting issues and concerns from a cultural perspective and address situations or problems from the points-of-view of multiple cultures
* Supporting people with long-term health conditions and/or disabilities
* Recognising the value of flexible working to support staff where possible

## Key Responsibilities

The main purposes of the Director of Law and Governance role are:

* To take an effective role in transforming the way the organisation operates in order to deliver great services to residents as part of the Corporate Leadership Board.
* To provide effective inclusive leadership and management that will contribute to the continuous improvement of the Council.
* To play a key part in the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Strategy, developing and championing a modern legal and governance service for the Council ensuring that the customer is at the heart of everything we do.
* To work collaboratively to deliver the highest standards of modern governance and legal practice across the organisation whilst working within a complex environment.
* To build resilience across the Council in preparation for future challenges within the sector through achieving the desired change in both culture and approach when modernising services and responding to efficiency challenges.
* To act as the Council’s Monitoring Officer in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
* To be the Council’s Deputy Senior Information Risk Owner (Deputy SIRO).
* To represent Islington Council externally in issues of importance to the borough and to ensure strong partnership working, strong public relations and for other reasons as appropriate.

The main responsibility of this role is to guide and manage the Council’s Law, Governance, Elections and Business Support Services ensuring that they are effective, fit for purpose and in line with the Council’s requirements. The postholder will also need to ensure that:

* They work closely with the Corporate Director of Resources as part of the Resources Departmental Management Team, supporting them in their work leading the department.
* The department makes an active contribution to the leadership of the Council promoting a ‘One Council’ approach.
* The service is offering effective, efficient, and high-quality legal advice, support and representation reflecting modern best practice to Members and officers including reviewing and initiating new policies and submitting recommendations for change to existing policies.
* The service is providing effective, efficient, and high-quality support to the democratic process including the member decision making process and at other member meetings.
* The service will deliver an effective, efficient, legally sound electoral service learning from best practice.
* Customers and clients are at the centre of decision making, their business needs are understood, and they have the support available to 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.
* They take ownership and support major projects and programmes across the Council to deliver and anticipate future Council needs.

The key service and functional accountabilities for the Director of Law and Governance are:

* To lead on the delivery of modern, effective and transparent decision-making processes and governance arrangements in the Council, including the Executive, Council and committees.
* To ensure that Council decisions are lawful and to be the Council’s Solicitor of Record.
* To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory requirements and that sound and timely advice is given to the Chief Executive, Leader, Members and officers as appropriate.
* To maintain an awareness of national policy on all legal, democratic governance and electoral requirements.
* To challenge and sign-off financial strategies and budgets that support the effective delivery of strategic priorities.
* To monitor the departmental budget and ensure it is effectively controlled within cash limits, driving down spend where appropriate, holding managers to account to manage their budgets and to provide services that are delivered or procured that represent value for money.
* To establish clarity around expected outcomes and standards, providing clear lines of accountability and delegated authority.
* To establish and promote an inclusive culture of learning and workforce planning that enables staff to realise their potential, manager their careers and therefore improve outcomes for residents.
* To act in the capacity of Deputy Acting Returning Officer, or the appropriate roles 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 Leader, Members, the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.
* To be responsible for the effective operation of the Councillor’s Code of Conduct including initial decision making on complaints.
* To be the Council’s Monitoring Officer with statutory responsibility under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
* To participate in the Council’s emergency planning and response to emergency situations, including out of hours work as required.
* To ensure that the Service has the structures, systems, processes and policies necessary for effective service delivery.
* To represent the Council externally on legal and governance matters of importance to the borough.
* To act as the qualified person in relation to providing a view as to whether the Council has a duty to disclose under the effective conduct of public affairs exemption in section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### Leadership

As a member of the Council’s management team, to contribute proactively to the collective leadership for the Council, working collaboratively with Members, services across the Council, partners and stakeholders to deliver the Council’s objectives and priorities.

To drive positive cultural change, embodying and promoting the values and behaviours of the council and empowering staff to reach their full potential. Ensure that the performance and development framework is effective for all staff.

To lead on and ensure the effective implementation of corporate initiatives and transformation programmes that cut across the whole or part of the Council’s activities.

### Resources and Financial management

Ensure effective Financial Management, cost controls and income maximisation in an ever changing environment, fluctuating demands and priorities. Ensure resources are well managed and effectively deployed to the best possible effects assuring value for money in all activities.

### Compliance

Ensure legal, regulatory and policy compliance under UK GDPR, Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Health and Safety and in area of your specialism identifying opportunities and risks and escalating where appropriate.

## Person specification

You should demonstrate on your application form how you meet the essential criteria. Please ensure that you address each of the criteria as this will be assessed to determine your suitability for the post.

### Essential criteria

#### Qualifications

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | A qualified solicitor or barrister and member of a specified legal body, and substantial post qualification experience at senior level in a large organisation. | Application |

#### Experience

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2 | A substantial track record of success at senior management level as a solicitor or barrister, within a large, complex organisation. | Application/Interview |
| 3 | Experience of acting as Monitoring or Deputy Monitoring Officer and management understanding of the council’s democratic processes, including elections. | Application/Interview |
| 4 | A record of working effectively within a political environment, providing clear, balanced advice and guidance on strategic and operational issues that achieve the corporate and service objectives. | Application/Interview |
| 5 | Evidence of a clear understanding of the legal, financial and political framework of local government, and a record of successful application of relevant legislation and appropriate business management to achieve corporate and service objectives. | Application/Interview |
| 6 | Demonstrable success in performance management and project management in a comparable professional function that ensures pre-determined objectives and outcomes are achieved on time, to the standards and within the budget specified. | Application/Interview |
| 7 | A record of effective leadership and delivery at a senior level which demonstrates:   * Taking corporate responsibility * Delivering results * Flexing style and approach * Providing systems leadership * Resilience, drive energy and enthusiasm * Motivating and Empowering/ works through others. | Application/Interview |

#### Skills

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8 | Effective style:   * Is collaborative/a team player * Is comfortable with complexity * Open and honest * Responsive and flexible * Good communicator | Application/Interview |
| 9 | Ability to apply relevant laws, including law relating to local government and local authority administration, local government finance, property, social services, data protection and freedom of information, discrimination and harassment, employment and industrial relations, environment, education and civil litigation. | Application/Interview |
| 10 | Exceptional political nous with the ability to apply diplomacy, tact and discretion in challenging situations. | Application/Interview |
| 11 | Ability to work collaboratively as part of the Resources Management Team to secure a corporate and strategic approach and take shared responsibility for decisions. | Application/Interview |
| 12 | Ability to manage the division’s budgets, to contribute to budget preparations, to monitor and control costs and to ensure that services are provided in a cost effective and competitive manner in accordance with business plans and within a framework of Best Value. | Application/Interview |
| 13 | Ability to promote creative and innovate team working and individual development to maximise performance and effective working relationships to achieve a performance and quality culture. | Application/Interview |
| 14 | Ability to adhere to the Council’s Dignity for All policy – and a commitment to championing the Council’s equality policies and practices across all aspects of the role. | Application/Interview |

## Special requirements of the post

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 15 | This post is subject to the Council’s policy on pecuniary and personal interest | N/A |
| 16 | This post is designated as politically restricted | N/A |

## Our accreditations

Our accreditations include: the Healthy Workplace award, Timewise, London Living Wage Employer, Disability Confident Committed, The Mayor’s Good Work Standard, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Time to Change.

