

Slough Borough Council

Job Description

Job Description Reference: MO 0

Date: June 2023

Post Pay Level: SML 14

DBS requirement:

Job Title: Director of Law and Governance(Monitoring Officer)

Responsible to: Chief Executive

Responsible for: Legal Services, Democratic Services, Elections, Registrars, Cemeteries & Crematoria, Statutory Monitoring Officer

As the council's statutory Monitoring Officer for matters of law, governance and democracy, this post is directly responsible for:

Number of reports:

Direct reports: 5

Indirect reports: c.25

Total Managed: c. 30 Financial Responsibilities:

Combined service budgets of c. £5m

Main purpose of Job:

This Postholder will be the Borough's Monitoring Officer and therefore one of the three statutory governance officers of the authority. It will have a significant strategic impact on the authority and its ability to act with integrity and uphold high standards in its service of its residents. The postholder sits on the most senior officer governing body CLT

The role is to ensure legality and fairness of decision-making and will advise members and officers of their powers and responsibilities and ensure that members and officers act within the law.

The council is currently subject to statutory intervention from Government. The post holder will play a pivotal role in ensuring the authority meets the terms of that intervention and contributes to developing and leading delivery of plans to ensure the authority exits the intervention at the most senior level.

Additionally, the post holder will be specifically responsible, in whole or in part, for

delivery of a number of the Secretary of State's Directions including, improving governance, improving scrutiny and culture change.

The post holder will also provide effective leadership of a number of services to the borough's 160,000 residents, 6,500 businesses and 42 Elected Members. The postholder will oversee delivery of a range of related but distinct services, ensuring that the council meets both its legal obligations and its local priorities. This post is designated as the council's statutory Monitoring Officer.

General Accountabilities:

- **Strategy development**

Help shape the direction of the council to drive forward the public service reform agenda and ensure delivery of its priorities and value to residents. Provide a strategic vision for the future development of the service to enable the council to meet its future challenges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

- **Corporate leadership**

As a senior leader working as part of a wider leadership team across the council, work together take collective responsibility and drive forward a range of cross-council initiatives which are required to ensure changes are embedded in a sustainable way throughout the organisation. Provide corporate leadership that encourages our staff to recognise their contribution to the strategic objectives the council has set.

- **Service leadership and management**

Lead the integrated delivery, improvement, management and performance of the service, commissioning and directing activity within the council and externally as required, and ensuring overall objectives are translated into effective plans and that the service is efficient and locally responsive. Provide inspirational and professional leadership to staff, strengthening skills and competence and fostering a strong culture of standards, performance and accountability.

- **Resources / Financial management**

Ensure tight budgetary control and prioritise use of resources and assets to support the delivery of the council's corporate vision and help ensure that the council receives value for money from its expenditure. Drive and/or support the development of outcome-based commissioning models to better ensure strong price competition and transfer of risks through contracts with third parties. Champion and drive the development of commercial opportunities where appropriate.

- **Partners and stakeholders**

Actively engage, communicate and influence within the council, across partners and with the wider local and central government community to champion the council's approach to unified public services. Foster the bringing together of local services and decisions across agencies to reduce demand and help communities more independently support themselves.

- **Business change**

Lead, develop, implement and review change management programmes to deliver continual improvement. Assist the Chief Executive and Executive Directors in developing a single council-wide corporate culture to engender a strong and shared approach to delivering services and provide better support for staff to deliver savings.

- **Compliance**

Ensure that all activities within the service comply with the council's Constitution, Standing Orders, financial regulations, health and safety and safeguarding responsibilities and that effective systems operate within the service to manage performance and risk.

- **Equality and diversity**

Uphold and promote the aims of the council's equality and diversity policies to ensure non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work, and that diversity is embedded in everything, from workforce planning and policy development to service delivery.

Specific responsibilities

1. To be the authorities' Monitoring Officer – working alongside the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer and responsible for ensuring the authority acts within the law and upholds high standards in public office
2. To be the client manager of the legal service which is supplied by Harrow LB under an Inter Authority Agreement
3. To take leadership responsibility for delivering against the statutory intervention from government, including accountability for delivery of a number of specific Directions
4. To lead a complex group of services, taking accountabilities for all aspects of planning, finance, performance, people, change and risk management within the service. In doing this, the postholder will ensure delivery of the highest quality service that can be provided to the public with the resources available.
5. To be the council's statutory Monitoring Officer and to effectively discharge the obligations and responsibilities of this role. The postholder will periodically review the Council's Constitution and will ensure that good governance arrangements are in place across the authority and that the council meets its legal obligations and the requirements of its own Constitution and the associated articles, codes and rules of procedure. The postholder will be responsible for ensuring the legality and fairness of decision making by and within the Council and will also be responsible for the operation of the Member Code of Conduct.
6. To ensure delivery of an effective service to the borough's 160,000 residents and 42 Elected Members. The postholder will seek opportunities to unify a complex set of services into a coherent service offer to internal and external customers, identifying synergies and drawing these together to provide an effective, value for money public service in the most efficient and cost-effectiveway.

7. To effectively contract manage the council's delegated legal service from HB Public Law. The postholder will put arrangements in place to ensure that the contract provides a good quality service and value for money for the council. The postholder will regularly review the arrangements to ensure that it continues to meet the council's needs and, from time to time, appraise alternative options for the service.
8. To ensure that effective and pragmatic legal advice is available to the Council, its Cabinet, committees and officers to inform good governance, compliance and effective decision making. The postholder will obtain external legal advice and opinion, where necessary, including from HB Public Law, other solicitors and counsel.
9. To be accountable to the Returning Officer for the planning, co-ordination and delivery of Referenda, National and Local Elections. The council's Electoral Services Manager reports to this post and is responsible for the management of these activities, with the Director of Law and Governance being accountable for their successful delivery and compliance with regulations and good practice.
10. To contribute to the council's corporate plan, specifically contributing advice and formulating strategy in respect of legal, governance and democratic engagement.
11. To take decisions of significant impact, including financial delegation of up to £100k. Such decisions will be informed by collaboration and engagement with other colleagues and made within the boundaries council's Constitution and financial framework, but the postholder is ultimately accountable for making such decisions.
12. To represent the council and promote its interests in local, regional and national collaboration forums. This will include engaging with peers in other authorities, NHS organisations, police forces, Government departments and arms-length bodies.
13. To undertake any other duties commensurate with level of responsibility of the post.

Person Specification- Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Qualifications	Essential / Desirable
Educated to degree level or equivalent in law, jurisprudence or related discipline.	D

Qualified solicitor, barrister or legal executive.	E
Evidence of continuous professional development which reflects commitment to good governance and effective management in a large organisation.	E
Experience	
Substantial post-qualification experience as a solicitor, barrister or legal executive practising in a relevant sector and field of practice.	E
Substantial experience of leading a related, high performing service in a public sector organisation of comparable size and complexity.	E
A proven track record of developing and delivering relevant policies and strategies; postholder will be able to evidence the positive outcomes achieved.	E
Substantial experience of working in a political environment such as local or central government.	E
Substantial experience of working with Elected Members in a strategic capacity.	E
A proven track record of successful multi-agency working with partners relevant to this role; the postholder will be able to evidence shared outcomes achieved.	E
A proven track record of successfully managing finance, risk and performance within the context of a demand-led but resource-constrained service.	E
A proven track record of leading a customer-focused, high-performance team culture, including objective setting, performance management, motivating and inspiring a diverse group of staff with different backgrounds and career goals.	E
Skills and abilities	
Strategic thinking and planning, able to develop clear strategies at organisation-level to achieve outcomes over a medium-to long-term timeframe, typically up to 5 years	E
Business planning, able to develop clear business and operational plans for the delivery of a high-quality internal support services to customers	E
Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, able to translate complex technical concepts into simple, clear communications for a diverse range of audiences	E
Ability to work collaboratively, working across departmental and organisational boundaries to develop shared solutions to deliver wider borough goals	E
Excellent influencing and negotiation skills and evidence of having successfully applied these internally (in building excellent stakeholder relationships) and externally (in securing value for the council in relationships with third parties)	E
Judgement and proportionality, able to manage competing priorities, quickly identify key factors and direct attention and resources appropriately	E
Excellent problem-solving skills, able to analyse complex scenarios and synthesise multiple strands of work into solutions that can be simply and clearly articulated to senior stakeholders including Members	E

Excellent political acumen; the postholder will be able to demonstrate having applied political acumen and judgement to overcome challenges in a comparable setting	E
The highest personal integrity and loyalty, supportive to colleagues, with a drive to deliver corporately on the Council's vision and values	E
Knowledge and understanding	
Expert understanding of local authority governance.	E
Broad knowledge and awareness of best practice in the areas relevant this post, with the ability to draw on the deep subject expertise of team members to make decisions and recommendations	E
An understanding of, and a personal commitment to, the vision, aims, values and priorities of Slough Borough Council.	E