

Post Specification

Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title:** Deputy Chief Legal Officer (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- **Date:** April 2026
- **Post Group Number:** 8181
- **Job Family:** Organisational Support
- **Job Family Role Profile:** OS19
- **Final Grade:** Grade 19

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile.

Service Area Description

This is a high-profile statutory leadership role within Westmorland and Furness Council. The post holder works corporately across all services and with external partners to ensure effective governance, legal compliance and high-quality, value-for-money outcomes.

Leading the Governance, Democratic and Elections Service functions of the Council, the post holder will work with and advise the Council, Committees and Members of the Council on all matters within the post holder's area of responsibility, providing leadership, direction and insight to shape, develop and prioritise work to help ensure the Council is legally compliant, high performing, efficient and fair.

The Deputy Chief Legal Officer (Deputy Monitoring Officer) is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and reports to the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer. When acting in the absence of the Monitoring Officer, the post holder carries out and exercises the full statutory powers, duties, staffing and budgetary responsibilities of the role and attends the Golden Triangle Meeting and Senior Leadership Team as required.

The role operates in a complex and evolving environment and requires resilience, adaptability and political awareness, alongside the ability to maintain effective governance and assurance. The Council has an ambitious Transformation Plan and this is a key role to ensure that the Council's priorities and Transformation Plan is delivered.

Purpose of this Post

- To act as Deputy Chief Legal Officer (Deputy Monitoring Officer) for Westmorland and Furness Council, providing leadership and assurance across legal, governance, democratic and electoral functions.
- To deputise for the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer when required, exercising full statutory responsibilities.
- To provide advice to ensure sound decision making advising on reports, delegated decisions and at Full Council, Cabinet and other Committees as required.
- To promote ethical governance, high standards of conduct and legal compliance across the Council.
- To provide authoritative legal and governance advice to Members, the Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team and Senior Leadership Team and Council Officers.
- To lead services within the Directorate, ensuring delivery of council priorities, statutory duties and value for money.

Key Job Specific Accountabilities

The post holder is accountable for:

Corporate Governance and Legal Assurance

- Provision of timely corporate governance legal advice across the Council to ensure effective and informed decision making.
- Embedding high standards of good governance, ethical conduct and compliance and the development of Governance Frameworks.
- Advising Council, Cabinet, Committees, Boards and other Member meetings as required.
- Maintaining an up-to-date Constitution and ensuring adherence to constitutional requirements advising and supporting all Directorates.
- Working collaboratively with the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Section 151 Officer and statutory officers on governance, risk and assurance.

Leadership of Services

- Strategic and operational leadership of:
 - Democratic Services (including Scrutiny)
 - Governance Services
 - Elections and Electoral Registration
 - Member Support and Member Development
 - Information Governance, Data Protection and Records Management
 - Ombudsman and complaints matters
 - Political Assistants
 - Registrars (TBC)
 - Management of the Coroners Contract
- Ensuring services are aligned to the Council's operating model and deliver statutory duties, priorities and value for money.
- Management and responsibility for budgets and the allocation of resources across the service area.

Information and Data Governance

- Acting as an Information Asset Owner for the service.
- Responsibility for Leading Council-wide information and data governance workstreams and ensuring compliance with Council policies, including records management, retention and disposal, data protection and the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence.
- Management of the Contract with Cumberland Council relating to records management.

Member and External Governance Functions

- Leading the Democratic Services (including scrutiny) and Member Development programmes to support elected Members.
- Responsibility for Member standards, registers of interests, allowances, and the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- Leading on Town and Parish Council governance, including Standards matters, Boundary and Polling Station Reviews, Community Governance Reviews and liaison with relevant external bodies.

- Responsibility for Police and Crime Panel functions, including complaints handling and transition to the Mayoral Combined Authority by May 2027.

Elections

- Supporting the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer and Returning Officer, including appointment as Deputy Returning Officer where required.
- Oversight of electoral administration and electoral registration duties, ensuring delivery of legally compliant elections.

Leadership and Ways of Working

Strategic and Political Leadership

- Provides clear, credible and politically astute advice to Members and Senior Officers. Including the provision of advice on Strategic and High profile projects.
- Understands and navigates complex political environments to build trust and consensus.
- Takes a “One Council” approach, avoiding silos and enabling collaborative delivery.

People and Organisational Leadership

- Provides inclusive, authentic and decisive leadership.
- Motivates, coaches and develops staff, addressing underperformance constructively.
- Values difference, ensures equality of access to services and promotes inclusive practice.

Delivery, Performance and Resources

- Takes accountability for outcomes, performance and financial management.
- Delivers at pace against competing priorities.
- Drives continuous improvement, innovation and efficiency across services.
- Leads and drives initiatives to identify and deliver efficiencies across the council and through partnership working.
- Challenges self and other to think outside of the box; enables the council to continuously improve and innovate in the long term
- Ensures the use of technology to modernise the service and ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- Accountable for strategic and operational leadership of the relevant teams including performance of the teams towards Monitors progress towards KPIs; acts as an enabler to achievement, not a blocker.
- Knows what to do and when to do it, delivering at pace.
- To work with Departments to put proper governance/transparency at the heart of service design and decision making, removing barriers and enabling staff to be imaginative and innovative, collaborating with stakeholders across departmental and organisational boundaries to deliver the Councils priorities and Transformation Plan.

Customer and Community Focus

- Champions customer-focused service design and delivery.
- Uses feedback and complaints to drive organisational learning and improvement.
- Ensures transparency, openness and accountability in decision-making.

Please note: Annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process.

Key Facts and Figures of the Post

- **Budget Responsibilities:** Circa £6 million
- **Staff Management Responsibilities:** Direct reports include:
 - Group Lawyer – Corporate and Governance
 - Interim Lead Officer – Democratic Services
 - Interim Lead Officer – Elections
 - Interim Lead Officer – Member Development and Support
 - Political Assistants (Labour, Conservative and Liberal Groups)
 - Any additional services assigned by the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer
 - (Scrutiny and Registrars)

Essential Criteria

- **Qualifications:**
 - Relevant degree or equivalent qualification.
 - Qualified Solicitor or Barrister, CILEX with substantial post-qualification experience in local government law.
 - Current practicing certificate for England and Wales.
 - Evidence of continuous professional development and senior professional membership.
- **Knowledge:**
 - Strong organisational and political acumen with significant experience of successfully working at a senior level with Elected or Board Members on complex issues with an ability to work productively and closely with Members to provide clear advice on policy options and build consensus and resolve differences of opinion
- **Experience:**
 - Significant senior management experience leading legal, governance and/or democratic services.
 - Proven experience managing large, complex budgets and multi-disciplinary teams.
 - Track record of service improvement and delivery of value for money, savings and efficiency.
 - Significant experience of advising at a senior level on complex legal and governance matters.
 - Demonstrable record of successfully managing large, complex budgets involving a range of funding streams.
 - Experience of leading and motivating significant numbers of staff in a demanding environment.
 - Extensive experience advising Members and senior officers on complex governance and legal matters.
- **Expertise:**
 - Ability to make complex and sensitive decisions in a statutory Monitoring Officer capacity.
 - Strategic thinker with strong analytical and reporting skills.
 - Highly resilient, adaptable and credible.
 - Demonstrates the highest standards of personal integrity and commitment to public service values.
 - Ability to maximise the effective use of technology in service delivery.
 - Authentic, honest and respectful leadership qualities to inspire individuals and teams.
 - Empathic, mentoring and coaching skills to motivate and engage, developing talent and making people feel respected, brings out the best in them.
 - Emotionally intelligent.

- Ability and experience of challenging poor performance constructively and holding difficult conversations to bring about change in behaviour.
- Ability to have courageous conversations when required.
- Effective communicator, credible and ability to convey key messages and influence people.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job Working Circumstances

- **Emotional Demands:** Minimal
- **Physical Demands:** Minimal
- **Working Conditions:** Minimal
- **Other Factors:** Agile working required, with travel across Westmorland and Furness as necessary.

Other Factors:

- The post holder is expected to always uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the Council's organisational values.