London Borough of Bexley

Job Description

Finance and Corporate Services Directorate
Section: Legal Services

Job title: Solicitor/Lawyer (BL7)

Reports to: Senior Solicitor

Post holders name (if applicable):

1. Purpose of the job

To provide legal advice as appropriate to the Cabinet, Members, Committees (including sub-committees) (as appropriate) and officers from the Council's Management Groups in relation to matters within the post-holder's area of specialism and other areas as applicable.

Have conduct of legal matters, in one or more of the following disciplines:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Community Safety
- **Contracts and Procurement**
- Debt Recovery
- Education
- Employment
- Governance
- Highways
- Homelessness
- Housing
- Licencing
- Litigation
- Local Government law
- Planning
- Property
- Social Care (Adults and Children)
- Special Educational Needs

2. Dimensions

(a) Although the post holder will have no direct budget responsibility, she/he shall assist the Principal / Senior Solicitor to generate income for the Council and contribute to reducing Council costs through specifically established projects, as directed.

(b) Assist in the development of legal officers as agreed by the Principal / Senior Solicitor.

(c) Supervise legal officers as agreed and directed by the Head of Legal Services and the Principal / Senior Solicitor.

3. Hardest part of the job

Manage a diverse case load with competing demands in a constantly changing environment.

Ensuring legal knowledge is up to date while working in a busy legal Department. Managing competing priorities while conducting a demanding caseload.

Meeting deadlines and managing client expectations.

Communicating legal advice in challenging and varied situations.

Assist the Principal / Senior Solicitor liaise with clients to facilitate high levels of customer satisfaction.

4. Principal accountabilities

Implementation

Provide timely legal advice and support which will enable the Council to discharge its functions, duties, powers and responsibilities within the framework of the Council objectives.

To provide client departments with sound advice and represent the Council, as required, on matters relating to the post-holder's area of specialism.

To brief clients on a range of matters as directed by the Head of Legal Services, Principal / Senior Solicitor.

Issue and defend legal proceedings on behalf of the Council.

Attend courts, tribunals, panels, hearings and inquiries as appropriate.

Instruct Counsel, solicitors and experts as required.

Draft, comment and negotiate legal documentation.

Undertake regular reviews of files allocated to them to ensure timely progress of work.

Provide appropriate client care to facilitate effective working relationships and high levels of customer satisfaction. Assist the Principal / Senior Solicitor and or Head of Legal Services, as appropriate, to identify any improvements in respect of practices and procedures of the Management Groups.

Assist and support the implementation and delivery of the Council's corporate initiatives and/or projects by participating in, for example, in working parties, project groups and conferences as required from time to time.

Assist the Head of Legal Services and the Principal / Senior Solicitor to determine Service priorities and implement any recommendations to deliver those priorities.

Attend such Committee and such other meetings as required, review and provide legal comments on committee reports on behalf of the Council's Monitoring Officer. Provide advice to Committee members as appropriate. Ensure that areas of work are dealt with expeditiously and update client Departments on progress.

Assist the Head of Legal Services and Principal / Senior Solicitor to keep under review and assist in the development of structure, procedures and working practices to help facilitate an integrated, effective and efficient approach to service delivery.

Maximise the use of technology to ensure efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

Undertake any other duties as may be assigned to the post-holder from time to time.

Organisational Control and Development

To assist the Head of Legal Services and the Principal / Senior Solicitor by contributing to developing structures, procedures and work practices of the Service and contribute to ensuring a cohesive, effective and efficient approach to the delivery of the Service.

To assist the Principal / Senior Solicitor to ensure that working practices and processes are adopted to maximise the use of new technology to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services.

Staff Management and Development

Where appropriate, assist in the recruitment and development of staff, contributing to the training and development of all staff within the department so as to meet service needs and to provide equality of opportunity for all employees.

Provide guidance and assistance to staff within the section they work and where appropriate, across the Service.

Personal Effectiveness

Deal promptly with matters requiring the post-holder's personal attention.

To be fully conversant with relevant statutory provisions, the Council's Constitution, processes and procedures; to continually develop the requisite professional skills and knowledge to satisfy the requirements of the post.

To establish and develop effective working relationships with relevant partners.

5. Organisation

The post-holder will undertake their duties within the structure as detailed in the attached organisation chart, as amended from time to time.

The post-holder will be responsible for undertaking work allocated by the Head of Legal Services and the Principal / Senior Solicitor or as agreed within the team. In addition, the post-holder will ensure the timely progression of work allocated. The post-holder will attend formal supervision and appraisals at such intervals as required. The post-holder will provide informal support to other officers within Legal Services, as appropriate, in order to facilitate the effective discharge of the Services' functions.

The post-holder will report to the Principal / Senior Solicitor. The post-holder will contribute in the formulation and implementation of the strategic Legal Service Plan.

PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR POST OF SOLICITOR/LAWYER (BL7)

Directorate: Finance and Corporate Services
Section: Legal Services

SELECTION CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL/ DESIRABLE (E/D)
(a) **Education and Formal Training**	
Qualified Solicitor or Barrister or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives or Licensed Conveyancer.	E
A minimum of two years legal experience and knowledge.	E
(b) **Relevant Technical Experience and Knowledge**	
Relevant legal experience.	E
Experience and or the ability of providing advice in the post-holders area of specialism.	E
Ability to manage a diverse workload and focus on key objectives.	E
Ability to prioritise and work to tight deadlines.	E
Ability to conduct a caseload with appropriate supervision and to meet tight deadlines.	E
Experience of attending Committees, Panels and or other bodies, as appropriate.	D

(c) Customer Focus	
Ability to assist the Principal/ Senior Solicitor to determine (in conjunction with client officers) service priorities.	E
Ability to assist the Principal/ Senior Solicitor by contributing to the identification and implementation of appropriate work practices that facilitate the timely delivery of the Service.	E
Ability to contribute to the formulation and implementation of strategies to effect change to service delivery.	D
Experience of facilitating and or developing and or assisting in the development of client training.	D

Post Title: Solicitor / Lawyer	Job Family: Professional 1	Grade: BL7

High Performance Indicators	Level	Description
Change and Innovation	C	I actively seek new ideas and opportunities to challenge the status quo, I generate solutions to improve performance I help others to adapt to and implement change I borrow good ideas from other organisations and adjust them to my customer or service area
Communicating and Influencing	C	I use a range of influencing techniques, sometimes using more than one to work towards my goal I prepare and present information anticipating questions and problems I convey complex information to a varied audience I emphasise risks / benefits
Achievement, Drive and Ownership	C	I continuously ask 'how could I make this better?' to ensure I adapt and make improvements I actively seek opportunities to develop myself I set myself stretching targets I look ahead and identify potential problems and take actions to manage them
Customer Orientation	B	I monitor customer feedback and level of satisfaction with the service they receive I make myself available to customers, ensuring they know how to contact me I take responsibility for correcting customer concerns promptly, without judging others I offer ideas to enhance the development of customer centred services / solutions I seek to build and maintain positive relationships with customers
Partnership Building	C	I work to promote positive working relationships with others I facilitate conflict resolution between others I monitor the progress of formal and informal partnership arrangements I develop services by recognising the needs of both external and internal partners I build an environment which values individual differences

Leadership	C	I use a range of leadership and management styles to get
		the best out of people I demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and personal conviction, inspiring confidence in the vision I inspire others to stretch beyond what they thought they could do I encourage action without relying on authority I am willing to take difficult decisions I ensure the team supports wider organisational objectives, and take corrective action where appropriate I provide constructive and motivational feedback
Political Awareness	C	I understand the politics with both a large and a small 'p' in Bexley and partner organisations I work with others to ensure Members queries are dealt with appropriately I am aware of other organisations political agendas and how they relate with Bexley I provide advice and guidance to staff to enable them to work within political protocols
Breakthrough Thinking	C	I analyse information to determine patterns and trends in information I produce strategies and solutions based on evidence gathers from different sources I ask 'what if…?' to develop fresh thinking and innovative approaches determine new solutions to current issues I step back from complex situations to gain a high level understanding of issues I communicate the big picture to others to encourage creative problem solving and a new outlook I encourage risk taking and trying out of new ideas
Using Technology	D	I keep abreast of new technological developments and identify potential applications
Professional Knowledge	D	I have an in-depth knowledge of my own professional specialism I act as a mentor / guide to others
Understanding Regulatory Requirements	C	I keep abreast of internal requirements and external legislation changes as they relate to work / service, and assess the likely impact