

## **HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL - JOB DESCRIPTION**

**POST TITLE:** Senior Planning Lawyer

**GRADE:** 10

**SERVICE:** Legal Services

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** Head of Legal Services

**RESPONSIBLE FOR:** Lawyer x 1

### **VARIATIONS TO STANDARD CONDITIONS OF SERVICE:**

1. This is a description of the job as it is constituted at the date shown below. It is the practice of this Authority to periodically examine employees' job descriptions and to update them to ensure that they relate to the job as then being performed, or to incorporate whatever changes are being proposed. This procedure is jointly conducted by each manager in consultation with those working directly to them. You will therefore be expected to participate fully in such discussions. It is the Authority's aim to reach agreement to reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible management reserves the right to insist on changes to your job description after consultation with you.
2. Casual User Car Allowance
3. Work outside normal office hours will be required including attendance at evening meetings
4. May be required to work additional hours at short notice
5. Clearance by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be required for this post. A standard level DBS check will apply.
6. Post is politically restricted

**DATE ISSUED:** January 2024

### **JOB PURPOSE:**

- To deliver good quality legal advice to client departments, ensuring they are aware of, and comply with, statutory requirements and the Council's activities are conducted in a lawful and transparent matter.
- To contribute to the day-to-day delivery of the Legal Service and to embed a culture of continuous improvement in service quality, cost efficiency and customer responsiveness.
- To support the Head of Legal Services in the delivery of a high quality and effective services.

- To fully engage as part of the wider team to ensure both service and cross service objectives are achieved. This will involve matrix working, 'task to finish' operations and overall effective marshalling of resources across the authority to enable a forward looking, responsive and innovative culture delivering sustainable and high-quality services.
- To contribute to the teams service plans and team plans are completed.

## **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

### **CORPORATE**

- To contribute to the creation of a team where a culture of excellent customer service is a key focus for all job activities.
- To challenge and drive performance to create excellent services and reputation for the Council
- To ensure the services delivered by the Council are designed to meet the needs of Harborough District's community and customers, removing obstacles and barriers to ensure effective service delivery to the highest possible standards
- To actively promote a 'one team approach', showing respect for colleagues on a personal and professional level and work with other organisations and partners in order to deliver service effectively.
- To contribute to the team's goal to grow talent and capability in the team through coaching and by undertaking all employee appraisals and one to one catch ups in a timely manner and effectively address issues as appropriate.
- To work with the Head of Legal Services to develop, implement and review robust management systems, policies, processes and infrastructures to effectively and efficiently deliver service objectives.
- To use corporate systems to make decisions in line with the Council's policies, ensuring that financial and corporate governance controls are implemented, whilst seeking areas for ongoing improvement.
- To make a positive corporate contribution, including contributing to or leading on corporate projects and initiatives which may crosscut service areas
- To work effectively with elected members, providing high quality professional advice and relevant support as appropriate.
- To ensure that all activities and ways of working build upon the Council's positive approach to equality and diversity.

## **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

1. To provide legal advice and services as requested to the Council, its client departments and elected members in all areas of Planning, and to assist in contentious and non-contentious work in other areas as they occur.
2. To ensure that the implications of local government law are understood and complied with, including adequately representing the Council in tribunals and courts.
3. To draft and advise on reports for Cabinet, Council Committees and other meetings as required ensuring that all procedural and standing order requirements are complied with, and to attend meetings as required, which may include meetings outside of usual office hours.
4. To attend planning committee as the Council's legal adviser, including attendance at the Chairman's briefing meeting.
5. To assist the Head of Legal Services in the training of other service officers in law and procedure.
6. To contribute and support the effective delivery of the Council's objectives and priorities.
7. To assist the Head of Legal Services in more complex and sensitive work. This will include dealing with contentious and non-contentious matters.
8. To monitor and share changes in law and practice as appropriate and implement changes to policy and processes when necessary, and informing client department of changes in law and practice.
9. To respond to calls and queries professionally and promptly, using effective engagement and communication
10. To carry out one to one meetings and Appraisals and reviews for all directly reporting staff in the Legal Services Team.
11. To use the service's case management system to ensure complete and proper digital and physical records are maintained as appropriate relating to all work undertaken, including time records.
12. To ensure compliance with all Council policies and statutory requirements and guidance in relation to Equality and Diversity, Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Communication and involvement policies

## **Other**

As a term of employment, the post holder may be required to undertake other such duties as may reasonably be required of you in the post and department (or section) mentioned above or in a comparable post in any of the Organisation's other sections or departments at any of the Authority's establishments.

To uphold and display the HDC behaviour competency framework to at least level 3.  
REFER TO COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK.

## **Health and Safety**

To be familiar with and at all times comply with

- the Council's general health and safety policy,
- the Council's specific health & safety policies and procedures as detailed in the Council health and safety policy documents, and
- local department specific health and safety procedures as amended or added to from time to time.

To report any unsafe practice, accident, incident, dangerous occurrence or hazard found during your work to your line manager for action.

To take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work. To maintain Personal Protective Equipment and to report any PPE that is defective.

To co-operate with all staff and members of the authority so far as is necessary to enable all health and safety requirements to be performed or complied with.

To ensure anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare is not intentionally or recklessly interfered with or misused.

## **Safeguarding**

- To carry out our legal and moral responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns involving adults and children, ensuring the recording of relevant information and passing it on to a Designated Safeguarding Officer's, (DSO) or in the absence of a DSO personally making the referral in line with the Councils Adult and Children's Safeguarding Policy.
- To undertake Safeguarding Training to Gold Level.

## **Equalities**

- To ensure compliance with all Council policies and statutory requirements and guidance in relation to Equality and Diversity, Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Communication and involvement policies

## HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL – PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Senior Planning Lawyer						
TEAM:		POST NO:	GRADE:	ALLOWANCE:	PERMANENT	WEEKLY HOURS:
Legal Services			10	Casual Car Allowance		37
CRITERIA: (necessary for safe & effective performance)	ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS: (A clear definition of the necessary criteria)			Assessment	ADDITIONAL/USEFUL REQUIREMENTS: (Where available, elements that contribute to improved/immediate performance in the job)	Assessment
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relevant degree</li><li>Qualified CILEX, Solicitor or Barrister, licensed to practice</li></ul>			A/E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Secondary professional qualification ideally related to the public sector</li></ul>	A/E
Experience and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Effectively and appropriately provide and communicate complex legal advice to Members, Officers and other stakeholders generally and at committee meetings.</li><li>Attendance at Committee meetings</li><li>Experience in dealing with planning matters, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General legal advice on planning matters</li><li>Negotiation and drafting of s.106 agreements</li><li>Variations of s.106 agreements</li><li>Advice for planning appeals</li><li>Advice on specialist matters, for example Judicial Reviews and/or seeking advice from Counsel as necessary</li><li>Support and advice on planning enforcement</li></ul></li><li>Preparing and making reports to committees</li></ul>			A/I/T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Experience of advocacy at inquiries and/or tribunals</li><li>Working knowledge of contracts and procurement</li><li>Working knowledge of housing and environmental law</li><li>Advising Members in a political environment.</li><li>Work constructively with members and demonstrate political sensitivity</li></ul>	A/I

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of managing competing demands and tight deadlines.</li> <li>• Flexible, positive can-do approach to change and work demands</li> <li>• Experience of day-to-day management of lawyers and/or administrative staff</li> </ul>			
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong communication and presentation</li> <li>• Negotiation and influencing skills</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Basic computer literacy and familiarity with on-line services</li> <li>• Self-motivated with commitment to achieving targets</li> <li>• Ability and flexibility to work as part of a team, but with the ability to work independently and to prioritise workload</li> <li>• Ability to work with officers and elected members</li> <li>• Ability to handle a high pressure of work and meet tight deadlines and attend evening meetings possibly at short notice.</li> </ul>	A/I/T	Experience of using case management tools	A/I
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to undertake a Disclosure and Baring check – standard level</li> <li>• Full valid driving license and access to a suitable vehicle</li> <li>• Willingness to attend evening meetings and occasional working outside of usual office hours.</li> </ul>	A/I		
<b>Assessment Legend:</b> <div> <div>A = Application</div> <div>I = Interview</div> <div>T = Test or Assessment</div> <div>E = Evidence (e.g. certificate)</div> </div>				