

Service Director: Legal and Governance

Reports to: Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships

Grade:

Location: Cambridgeshire

Job Purpose

A Service Director of the Council, key adviser to and attendee at the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and a member of the Council's Extended Leadership Team (ELT), this role takes collective and shared responsibility for the effective leadership and corporate management of the Council's services and delivery of improved outcomes and the achievement of value for money.

Acting as the professional lead on all matters within their portfolio of responsibility, the postholder is responsible for a range of Council services that includes, but is not limited to:

- Council Monitoring Officer
- Legal Services
- Democratic and Members Services
- Audit and Risk Management
- Information Governance and Data Protection

Although the postholder is line managed by the Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships, they will retain a professional accountability to the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service). The postholder will therefore be expected to work with the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) directly, as required, to ensure that the overall corporate governance of the Council is robust and effective.

Leadership and Collaboration

Provide clear, compelling and inspiring leadership to the Council contributing to the delivery of the Council's Purpose, Strategic Priorities, communicating a clear vision and purpose to positively engage others, internally and externally.

Effectively contribute to the development and delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Workforce Plan. Actively understand the challenges faced by colleagues across the organisation to be able to support all ELT colleagues to deliver their objectives as well as those of the whole council.

Create a high-performance culture by providing strong and motivational leadership to drive continuous improvement, efficiency savings and higher levels of satisfaction for residents of the County. Actively promote the council's priorities and ways of working and the Council's values and behaviours to ensure they are delivered throughout the organisation.

Role model and take responsibility for ensuring an effective approach to corporate parenting and safeguarding of vulnerable people is embedded in areas of responsibility.

Develop and implement effective communication and engagement arrangements with service users, stakeholders, communities and partnership agencies to facilitate effective relationships that drive improvements in service delivery.

Actively develop and maintain strong and strategic relationships with key external stakeholders in the public, private and community and voluntary sectors, to optimise opportunities for delivering services in partnership wherever this would generate improved outcomes, effectiveness, or efficiency.

Ensure that the Council is able to specifically influence, work with and achieve collaborative benefits and investments, in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System and the Greater Cambridge Partnership and District and City Councils.

As a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) or Sponsor of major programmes and projects of change and delivery, ensuring effective programme and project management approaches are applied, ensuring delivery to time, budget and plan, managing risks and issues dynamically and ensuring benefits planned are realised.

Governance

Fully understand and uphold the Constitution, Scheme of Financial Delegation and Contract Procedure Rules of the Council and ensure that they are followed throughout the directorate as well as that effective strategy, policy and resource considerations are at the heart of decision making so that services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Support the democratic process, providing advice to elected members on the appropriate response to local, regional, national and international matters as well as the internal business of the Council.

Champion and lead risk effective management of risk and the active response to audit findings in relation to service delivery and be jointly accountable with others in CLT for the corporate risk register and corporate risk management framework of the Council.

Ensures the Council fulfils its duties in relation to standards, complaints and scrutiny, to maintains an open culture of transparency, accountability and ownership, taking responsibility for mistakes, putting them right and learning lessons for future improvement.

Act to protect and improve the overall reputation of the Council, representing the Council at appropriate local, regional and national forums and in the media, as required.

To promote, preserve and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of councillors, employees, service users, contractors and partners in the provision of Council services, ensuring that the provisions of all relevant legislation are achieved, such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Innovation

Champion innovation by being open minded to new and radical ways to deliver services, actively seeking out good practice from others to learn from to develop our own service design and delivery.

Promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging colleagues to share ideas, take appropriate risks, and recognising innovation.

Champion and embed a performance and quality assurance culture that delivers results through rigorous open challenge, personal accountability and continuous improvement.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Promote an organisational culture that is positive, safe, respectful and compassionate, as well as open to change and feedback enabling everyone to feel empowered and valued.

Act at all times in ways that create an inclusive environment where people can thrive and be empowered to do their best. Role model good behaviour and practice and proactively seek ways to ensure staff feel valued and develop a sense of belonging.

Demonstrate awareness of the diverse needs of our residents to inform the decisions made about the services we deliver and ensuring a robust approach to equality impact assessments and their application to employment, service delivery and policy development.

Role Specific Accountabilities

The post is responsible to the Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships for setting the strategic direction of legal, audit and risk, democratic and member services, aligned to the overall Council strategic direction.

The post sets the strategy, policy and services for their area and ensures delivery within budget, quality and compliance standards.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

As the Council's statutory Monitoring Officer, the postholder is required to undertake all the duties as specified in section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as supplemented and amended in additional legislation, Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation.

In this role and when acting as Monitoring Officer, the postholder will be required to take significant decisions independently in relation to the Council and its activities, reporting these as required.

To fulfil all the statutory Monitoring Officer duties including:

- Maintain an up-to-date version of the Constitution, Rules of Procedure, Schemes of Delegation and make sure it is widely available to Members, officers and the public.
- Report to the Council (or the relevant Committee) if any proposal, decision or failure could give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration.
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by providing support particularly to the Full Council, Constitution and Ethics and Audit and Accounts Committees, including the provision of reports and recommendations.
- Make sure the Council's decisions (together with the reasons for those decisions) reports, and background papers are made available to the public.
- Confirm whether or not the Council's decisions are in keeping with the Budget and Policy Framework
- Give Elected Members advice to take decisions and on maladministration, financial irregularities, guiding principles, and the Budget and major Policy Framework.

Legal Services

To ensure the provision of high-quality advice to elected members and officers to enable them to achieve the delivery of the Council's strategies, policies and plans and, in particular, support to Group Leaders, Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees and CLT and ELT officers in this context.

To be the Council's principal legal adviser and ensure provision of timely, outcome focussed and pragmatic legal advice which incorporates a thorough understanding and assessment of risk – particularly on a range of high profile, high risk, "cutting edge" projects.

To personally attend and advise Full Council meetings and other meetings as required.

To organise, support and record Council and Committee meetings, and provide a range of support to councillors to enable them to fulfil their duties and responsibilities and contribute positively to the Council's image and reputation.

To oversee the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of the Council's legal services provided by Pathfinder Legal Services, ensuring that this meets expected standards and costs, overseeing and acting on contract performance.

To oversee and scrutinise the use of external legal advisers on behalf of the Council, ensuring that such advice is only utilised where necessary and that external legal costs are managed, reported upon and subject to challenge, as necessary.

Democratic and Member Services

Lead the design, development, delivery and management of the Council's democratic processes including the provision of support to Elected Members and advice at meetings to members and officers on the interpretation of the Constitution so that all decisions are taken at the most appropriate level and are within the law.

Ensure that the Council complies with all the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act and associated laws, guidance and best practice in respect of the publication, recording and transparency of Council decision making.

Ensure the provision of effective and efficient support to all County Councillors, enabling them to fulfil their duties and responsibilities in politically leading the Council and responding to residents of Cambridgeshire in a professional and appropriate manner.

Ensure the Council has appropriate and effective arrangements in place for the management of Elected Member Remuneration reviews and recommendations.

Ensure that the Council has robust and effective arrangements in operation for the management of Local Government Ombudsman rulings and recommendations.

Ensure that a clear, transparent and robust register of elected member interests is maintained and kept current.

Provide leadership and support to the County Returning Officer for the fair, legal and effective delivery of County Council elections, byelections and associated electoral matters.

Audit and Risk

Accountable for the delivery of an effective Internal Audit, Counter Fraud and Internal Controls function across Cambridgeshire County Council, and for leading the organisational approach to risk management. Ensuring that the team works to a clear Audit Plan which is closely aligned to the strategies, objectives and risks of the Council.

Ensure that an effective approach to delivering a professional independent and robust Annual Audit Opinion for the Council is achieved and that the Council's Corporate Governance Framework and annual assurance processes and statements are completed in a timely manner.

Working in partnership with the Executive Director of Finance and Resources, as the Section 151 Officer of the Council, ensure that the arrangements for the Council's external audit service provision is robust, cost-effective and delivers clear and timely outcomes and annual judgements.

Provide leadership to ensure that the Council operates an effective, transparent and fair approach to the management of Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblowing issues, ensuring that a safe and supportive environment is created whereby concerns can be raised, will be properly investigated and that lessons will be learned and embedded as a result of such issues.

Information Governance and Data Protection

Provide leadership to ensure that the Council has a well-developed and embedded approach to information asset management, including records management, to meet all legal duties and responsibilities and, equally, to ensure that data and information is regarded as a key element to improve Council services and is subjected to an appropriate and ongoing regime of data quality checks and audits.

Ensuring that the Council has a managed and coordinated approach to managing and responding to all incoming information requests and data security, to provide assurance of compliance with all aspects of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

Political Restriction

This post is politically restricted under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the post holder may not have any active political role either in or outside work.

Person Specification (essential criteria)

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| Experience | <p>Significant and successful experience of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working at a senior level within a large and complex organisation with comparable scope, responsibilities, budget, and resources. • Providing balanced strategic advice and guidance in a political setting. • Leading the delivery of public services with competing priorities and demands often outside of the Council’s direct control. • Leading transformational change and creating innovative service models, particularly in response to the demands of an organisation that is undergoing a radical transformation and modernisation. • Delivering complex projects on time and within budget and outcomes. • Leading and contributing to strategic decision making, resource allocation and to policy formulation and delivery, adopting a problem-solving culture. • Delivering creative and innovative solutions to improve the use of resources and achieve value for money across an organisation. • Establishing a strong performance culture including effective performance measures, evaluation of service quality and the improvement of service delivery to achieve the Council’s objectives • Leading, managing and developing employees to sustain high levels of service delivery, recognising and developing talent. • Developing and nurturing positive and constructive working relationships with a wide range of customers, stakeholders and partners, maintaining a positive personal and organisational profile. <p>Role specific:</p> <p>Extensive experience of working effectively in a political environment, demonstrating high levels of political awareness, sensitivity, confidentiality and understanding with the ability to translate that into delivering the agendas of the administration and winning the confidence of elected members.</p> <p>Previous experience of fulfilling the role of Monitoring Officer in a Local Authority and ensuring an effective regime relating to member standards and conduct.</p> <p>Leading a range of corporate governance functions and ensuring their contribution to a well led and effective public body, managing risk, upholding the law and ensuring the effective stewardship of public funds.</p> |
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| Skills and knowledge | <p>Ability to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive understanding of the current issues and challenges facing local government as well as the statutory framework governing the sector. • Skills in understanding and responding to different perspectives and taking a cross-organisational approach, gained by working in a political or similarly challenging environment. • Business acumen and an entrepreneurial mindset to lead the strategic delivery of services and maintain a focus on obtaining best value for money at all times balanced, against the difficult and sensitive challenges faced. • Ability to lead, develop and sustain effective team, partnership and multi-agency working through strong effective advocacy, influencing and negotiating skills. • Skills to provide creative solutions to complex problems together with high level analytical, presentational and communication skills. • Ability to establish and sustain positive relationships that generate confidence, ability and trust. • Highly developed influencing and negotiation skills to operate at a strategic professional and political level, locally and nationally. • Understanding of the barriers to organisational and cultural change and the commitment to being a catalyst for change. <p>Role specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to advise members on policy options, determine priorities and to communicate a clearly recommended way forward. • Thorough and well developed knowledge and understanding of local government and of statutory, regulatory and ethical frameworks. • A good understanding of the financial framework governing local authority activities. |
| Personal Effectiveness | <p>Ability to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear and strong personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and a track record of developing inclusive services and leading by example. • Evidence of leading people and services to recognise, respect and value individual needs to achieve a culture of inclusivity. • Evidence of operating effectively and openly within the democratic process with the political acumen and skills to develop productive working relationships with Councillors that command respect, trust and confidence. • Personal and professional credibility which commands the confidence of elected members, senior managers, staff, external partners and external stakeholders. • Leadership by example with a style that empowers others and is open to question and challenge as well as a commitment to continuous self-improvement. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to and evidence of successful strategies in managing personal resilience and wellbeing at a leadership level and promoting positive leadership practice, role modelling these behaviours for others. • Evidence of planning for the future delivery of services, including effective workforce planning for future challenges. |
| Qualifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified solicitor or barrister with full practising certificate and up to date CPD record, with a minimum of 5 years post qualification experience, or equivalent. • A relevant Postgraduate Level qualification or equivalent and/or relevant compensating experience at a senior leadership level. • Evidence of continuous professional and leadership skill development. |