



Job Profile

JOB TITLE:	Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer
GRADE:	POF
POST NO:	29499
JOB TIER:	5 (Deputy Team Manager)
DBS CHECK:	Standard
GROUP:	Corporate / Chief Executive's Office
SERVICE:	Legal Services

REPORTING STRUCTURE

Reports to:	Head of Legal
Direct Reports:	Up to 6
Indirect Reports:	0

ROLE PURPOSE:

The Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer is required to support the Head of Legal in providing strong leadership and management to the Planning Legal Team by delivering proactive, specialist and in-depth legal advice to colleagues, and client departments, as well as implementing initiatives and processes that promote high-quality standards in the management of legal risk. The Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer is also required to support the Head of Legal in reinforcing a culture of integrity, ethical behaviour and 'putting our residents first' across the service.

Key duties include having conduct of an active complicated caseload of planning-related matters and progressing them to completion efficiently and to a professional standard. The role demands excellent organisational and time management skills to

meet challenging deadlines, a collaborative approach when working with internal departments and external agencies, and a commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity. The Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer will be responsible for the day-to-day supervision and management of officers within the Planning Legal Team, providing support, guidance and mentoring to enable high standards of performance and service delivery, while proactively managing and addressing any performance, conduct or capability issues where necessary. The Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer will also be required to support and manage the provision of an efficient, cost-effective and high-quality legal service to the Council and its departments, ensuring that the service supports the Council's objectives and policies while protecting the Council's interests.

A. Job Description

1. Legal (include but are not limited to):

- To be a specialist Planning lawyer with providing specialist legal advice in Planning Law. This will include providing legal support, advice, and case conduct across a range of planning related matters.
- To proactively manage a high volume and demanding caseload while ensuring compliance with Civil Procedure and Magistrates' Court and Tribunal Rules preventing procedural complications, and to comply with Planning Law as well as Council Policy and Constitution.
- To have conduct and responsibility for cases across a range of Planning matters including highly complex, and/or contentious and sensitive matters that relate to the Council's financial strategic objectives and may present high financial or reputational risk to the Council.
- To conduct advocacy on behalf of the Council and present cases in Court and Tribunals as well as represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council in all forms of dispute resolution and mediation as well as Licensing and Planning Committees.
- To ensure matters are conducted from start to completion in a manner that is to a high professional standard and compliant with the Council's procedures and policies as well as cost-effective.
- To provide key strategic advice on policy, legislation, practice, governance, and procedures as well as leading on key legal projects and providing strategic input into risk management. Additionally, to provide training and briefings to clients, stakeholders, colleagues, and services users.
- To deal with those legal matters delegated by the Head of Legal and Director of Legal, and to provide legal advice and support to Members and other groups in the Council as directed by the Head of Legal.

- Review, advise and provide legal comments on all legal aspects of Cabinet Reports and Council publications and policies in relation to Planning matters.

2. Resident & Community Contribution

- To demonstrate an understanding of the Council's Customer Care Standards and to ensure that these standards are met in order to deliver the Council vision of 'putting our residents first'.
- To maintain a cross-functional perspective when advising the Council, by understanding the inter-play between different departments where there may be competing interests and risks.
- To understand and implement awareness in relation to the objectives concerning capacity and the Council's public sector duties with regards to protected characteristics.
- To personally provide accurate and timely legal advice to clients in a cost effective and efficient manner.

2. People Management

- Responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy working environment in line with Health & Safety at Work Act (1974).
- Provide day-to-day support and supervision and management to the Planning Legal Team. This also includes providing support, guidance and mentoring to enable high standards of performance and service delivery, while proactively managing and addressing any performance, conduct or capability issues where necessary.
- Ensure that the Planning Legal team and their client departments are fully aware of and compliant with their obligations under GDPR with particular sensitivity to information sharing and data storage rules in performance of their duties.
- Ensure that all LEXCEL standards are rigorously adhered to in the Planning Legal Team. This includes undertaking regular work reviews and supervisions. At all times to comply with LEXCEL time recording requirements and to maximise the use of ICT.
- Ensure that work carried out by paralegals, trainees, apprentices and non-authorised members of staff is compliant with the requirements of the Legal Services Act 2007.
- Assist the Head of Legal in the selection, development and performance of the Planning Legal Team in line with the Council's HR policies. Assist the Head of Legal to manage the provision of efficient and cost-effective legal advice and assistance to Planning Services and Members.

- Initiate and maintain working practices and procedures for the efficient and effective working of the Planning Legal Team.

3. Operational Service Delivery

- Attending and advise Planning Committee as well as client liaison meetings. Chair and lead on other meetings or committees when requested to by the Head of Legal.
- Deputise in all matters for the Head of Legal when he/she is absent from the office or unavailable. Undertake any other duties that are commensurate with the general level of responsibility of the post. Provide high quality legal support in the day-to-day operations entailed in maintaining the processes and performance of the Legal Services team.
- Gather information from other client departments, third parties, and other persons and review such information or documents to be in a position to progress cases and to comply with legislative and procedural requirements as well as to maintain integrity and compliance of the Council's public sector duties when progressing cases.
- To draft and prepare legal documentation including pleadings, claims, statement of cases and other Court or Tribunal documents, and to be the first point of contact with the court and client departments in this regard. To attend court (which includes advocacy) as and where required.
- Carry out all clerical and administrative duties as required, including any other duties commensurate with the general level of the post particularly in relation to any designated project work.
- To open and close files and operate all files under this project in accordance with the LEXCEL standards and practices, and to be responsibility for managing deadlines or directions are complied with, and to despatch copies of all appeal and other documents (such as legal agreements), as requested, both internally and externally.
- Maintain an awareness of the Council-wide policies such as equality, data protection, customer care, and the Council's complaints procedure. To assist with any templates or procedure notes that may be drafted to further the efficient progression of such cases in the future.

4. Service Planning & Development

- Assist in ensuring that an annual Team Plan, aligned to the Group/Service Plan(s), is developed, agreed and communicated to team members in a timely manner.

- Review, advise and provide legal comments on all legal aspects of Cabinet Reports and Council publications and policies in relation to Planning matters.
- Assist in maintaining a current service workforce plan including a succession plan for all key roles within own team.
- Ensure effective balance of internal and external counsel from a human resource and cost perspective.
- Assist and manage with outsourcing of legal matters including keeping the Head of Legal, client departments and other relevant stakeholders informed with substantive updates. To provide support and/or (where directed) to lead, on Planning related projects.

5. Financial & Resource Management

- To ensure all purchasing and procurement is conducted in line with the corporate guidelines with appropriate use of the Council's financial systems.
- To ensure that all workforce expenditure is compliant with corporate guidance and that any temporary resource is purchased through the Council's agency contracts.

6. Service Improvement

- Implement continuous monitoring of team and individual performance and productivity to ensure the delivery of Service Level Agreements (SLA's) are maximised.
- Manage the implementation of improvement initiatives and change programmes using the Council's Project Management and Service Improvement methodologies.
- To assist the Head of Legal in providing briefing and information to Planning Services on developments in the law affecting these areas.
- Attend at meetings of Cabinet, Council, Overview and Committees, Working Parties and other bodies or conferences in order to advise, chair, or be Legal lead / representative.

7. Contacts

- Primary contact will be with other officers within the Council, and service users, residents, and their representative bodies.
- To develop positive working relations with the judiciary by implementing guidance from local courts and judges on preferred case management standards as well as providing regular feedback to the courts service with attendance of judicial liaison meetings.

- All Officers from Chief Executive and Group Director Level and Members of the Council.
- All Members of Parliament, Government Departments, members of the public, Courts, outside Solicitors, Barristers, Consultants and private organisations.

8. Additional Responsibilities

- Complete other reasonable tasks to fulfil role purpose or as instructed by Head of Legal.

9. Key Performance Indicators

- Delivery of PADA and/or appraisal objectives. Other data monitoring in relation to designated cases or area of work.
- Compliance with LEXCEL Standard and operation procedure during the conduct of cases.
- Meeting CPD and training requirements as required by the relevant professional body.
- Meeting the required monthly billable hours and time recording targets.

B. Person Specification

Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer

This person specification will be used for recruitment to the Deputy Principal Planning Lawyer Team vacancy in LBH. It will form the basis of the application form, and candidates will be also assessed against aspects of this person specification at interview.

1. QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL ✓	DESIRABLE ✓
To be an admitted (qualified) Solicitor, Barrister or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives and to have rights of audience in all proceedings in the County Court and adhering to CPD requirements.	✓	
Minimum of 2 years PQE with significant and recent experience in complex Planning matters	✓	
2. STATUTORY or ROLE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL ✓	DESIRABLE ✓
Good communication skills both orally and written and ability to explain issues clearly, objectively and in a professional manner, as well as the ability to express opinions and ideas in a logical and persuasive manner.	✓	
Ability to undertake all required training including CPD.	✓	
To carry out legal research and the ability to debate legal points in a pragmatic and impartial way.	✓	
To work in a professional manner with respect to colleagues, clients, stakeholders and other service users.	✓	
Carry out collaborative working with other departments or third parties.	✓	
Deputise or assist the for Head of Legal, which includes, but is not limited to, assisting other departments, assisting on project work, attending meetings, drafting briefings, and providing legal comments to cabinet reports.	✓	
Carrying out complicated planning legal work including, but not limited to, section 111 and 106 agreements, enforcement action, legal advisory work, attending hearings, conduct of planning cases, managing outsourced matters, reviewing and providing legal commentary on cabinet or planning reports, attending and advising on planning committees.	✓	
Managing members of the Planning Legal Team.	✓	

3. EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL ✓	DESIRABLE ✓
Significant legal experience in Planning Law including but not limited to; Section 111 and 106 Agreements, Unilateral and Bilateral Agreements, Planning Enforcement, Planning Appeals, Planning Injunctive Relief, and Planning Committee.	✓	
Experience of dealing with and advising on significant Planning matters including Planning Legislation and Infrastructure, Planning Case Authorities, Planning Regulations, Planning Plans, Policy and Guidance.	✓	
Experience of managing a team.	✓	
Experience in Development Consent Orders.		✓
Recent experience of advocacy in Court, Tribunals and Public Inquiries.		✓
4. KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	ESSENTIAL ✓	DESIRABLE ✓
Knowledge of Planning law, local government law, and recent legislative developments and changes to planning infrastructure.	✓	
Drafting of Planning related documents including, but not limited to: Planning related legal advice, Section 111 and 106 Agreements, Unilateral and Bilateral Agreements, Deeds of Variation, Planning Enforcement Notices, Legal Pleadings relating to Planning matters, and Brief to Counsel.	✓	
Attending and advising on Committees (including, but not limited to, Planning Committee).	✓	
Knowledge of the Local Authority's duties and recent case law developments.	✓	
Ability to manage and motivate staff and set clear targets for service delivery.	✓	
Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines. Ability to organise and prioritise workloads, ability to meet deadlines and provide regular reports on progress.	✓	
Ability to proactively provide legal advice and support to colleagues, clients departments, Councillors and Senior Officers.	✓	
Ability to provide legal advice related to the Council's policy objectives.	✓	
Problem solving skills	✓	
Sound awareness of confidentiality and GDPR.	✓	

5. COMPETENCIES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
“Can do” positive attitude Demonstrates a commitment to changing work practices and processes, and a willingness to try new ways of working or thinking.	✓	
Takes responsibility and delivers results Adapts to changing demands to ensure that objectives are met, overcoming problems and making well considered decisions.	✓	
Team working Acts as a role model to others in the team, sharing knowledge and experience when necessary, whilst respecting and valuing the contribution other team members' experiences can bring.	✓	
Communication Demonstrates well developed written and verbal communication skills; and the confidence to present reports and verbal accounts credibly to a variety of different audiences.	✓	
Customer Care Develops contacts and relationships with customer/ client groups, regularly reviewing service delivery and taking responsibility to ensure quality service provision.	✓	
Takes ownership of personal development Takes action to develop own and others' capability and knowledge by promoting and supporting developmental opportunities to improve performance.	✓	