

GROUP MANAGER LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Mendip District, Taunton Deane Borough and West Somerset Councils

Role Purpose

SHAPE Law is a pioneering partnership service bringing together a range of specialist support functions to provide a stronger service to customers whilst creating efficiencies and savings. The first of these functions is Law and Governance, the first tranche of which, Shared Legal Service launched on 1 April 2015.

Through corporate leadership and a flexible approach to change, the new role of Group Manager Law and Governance will support the shared ambitions and corporate priorities of the three Councils' by leading and developing a team that provides customer focused, consistent and proactive services. The post holder will have a lead role in the reform of public services across the Councils'.

Consolidating the current transformation programme, the Group Manager for Law and Governance will be expected to lead the effective development of a range of corporate functions. A commercial approach will be essential as the post holder will be expected to develop and deliver a sales and marketing strategy for the legal service pursuing opportunities for income growth and savings contribution both through the sale of legal services and through supporting the Councils' wider commercial agendas.

Fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer, the post holder must ensure the Councils' fulfil their lawful obligations, meet their statutory duties, perform their functions and activities in accordance with the law and best practice in governance.

Mendip is the lead and employing authority to the Partnership. The post is accountable to a Deputy Chief Executive of the Council and will work closely with this Officer to develop and deliver high quality services to support and Councils' and develop a commercial service generating income.

Role Portfolio

The specific portfolio for this post is:

- Leadership, management and development of the Law and Governance Partnership including Legal, Democratic and Election Services.

- Nominated Officer for the statutory post of Monitoring Officer for Mendip District Council.
- Nominated Officer for the post of Deputy Monitoring Officer for Taunton Deane Borough Council and for West Somerset Council.
- The Councils' Solicitor of Record.

Group Accountabilities

- Lead and direct the Law and Governance service ensuring the delivery of high quality, proactive legal advice and representation to the Councils' services, as well as to current and future external clients of the service, including the County Council, Parish Councils, the private and third sector.
- Ensure the Councils' comply with its statutory requirements and that sound and timely legal advice is given to the Councils' Chief Executives, Leaders, Senior Management Teams, political groups, Members and Officers as appropriate.
- Embed robust and proactive Officer and Councillor governance structures with sound systems to support effective decision making, ensuring probity and good governance in the democratic process.
- Have an active role in leading and facilitating the cultural and organisational change required to achieve the three Councils' aims, objectives and ambitions.
- Have lead responsibility for Members compliance with Mendip's Code of Conduct, including leading on the handling of complaints under the Code and initial decision-making on complaints. Professional lead for the custody and development of Mendip's constitution.
- Develop and deliver a trading strategy for Law and Governance that diversifies the client base and ensures the service is able to operate in a cost neutral way.
- Lead and direct democratic and elections services ensuring the delivery of high quality strategically driven services across the Councils'.
- Ensure that support services to elected Members are delivered to the highest quality and professional standards.
- To oversee and ensure that proper electoral processes are facilitated and responsibilities effectively discharged so that Mendip District Council meets with statutory requirements and best practice standards. To support the Returning Officer in the management and conduct of elections, and ensure the maintenance of the electoral register.
- Maintain an awareness of national policy on all democratic, electoral and legal requirements, in particular those pertinent to the role of local authorities and the commercialisation of their assets and operations.

- Report to a Deputy Chief Executive of Mendip District Council for the success of the service in cost, operational effectiveness and income generation.
- Oversee the planning and expenditure of the service's budget, ensuring that finances are allocated and spent in accordance with corporate and service priorities, savings targets are achieved, income targets are achieved, risk is effectively managed, and all aspects of the groups operations deliver demonstrable value for money.
- Represent the Councils' at local and national level, attending and/or presenting at conferences, seminars and working parties as needed in order to share learning and promote the Shape Law and Governance Partnership.

Political Restriction

This is a politically restricted post as defined by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Person Specification

Knowledge and Experience

- Extensive experience as a senior solicitor
- Successful track record and background of consistent achievement as a senior manager in a large complex organisation, or within a reputable professional services firm, or equivalent
- Substantial and successful direct management of resources experience in the context of leading legal services
- Leading and developing large teams of staff, including those with professional expertise, especially in the context of leading through change
- Exploiting new opportunities, leading and managing change to achieve improved, outcomes based customer focused services
- Strategic budget management, including evaluation of competing budgetary priorities within tight financial limits
- Establishing effective performance measures and a performance culture that achieves corporate and service objectives
- Delivering successful partnership working with a wide range of internal and external people, developing a positive personal and organisational profile
- Formulating, leading and implementing successful strategies
- Providing strategic advice within a statutory framework
- Experience of applying risk management in setting strategy and in identifying and managing principal risks to achievement of objectives
- Knowledge of the legislative frameworks and key issues relevant to the portfolio of service responsibility
- Development of strategies to generate income from legal services
- IT Systems literate with experience of using both information and technology to improve service outcomes

Qualifications

- NQF Level 7 qualification e.g. Post Graduate Certificates and Diplomas with extensive experience in the relevant specialist area and other related areas of work, or a wider range of areas **Or** Evidence of the equivalent level of knowledge gained through work experience
- A qualified solicitor
- Evidence of continuing professional development

Additional

- Attendance at evening meetings is a requirement of this post
- The post is politically restricted as defined in the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended)