

Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Purpose of the Role

The Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer is a key strategic leadership role responsible for ensuring the highest standards of legal compliance, governance, and ethical conduct across the strategic authority. The role will lead the authority's legal services and democratic governance, providing expert advice to elected members, senior officers, and partners.

This role is pivotal in shaping the authority's legal and governance frameworks, enabling transparent decision-making, safeguarding integrity, and supporting the delivery of regional priorities. This role will report into the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and also have a close relationship with the Mayor to deliver effective governance and fulfil statutory officer requirements as the Monitoring Officer.

Key Responsibilities

Statutory Duties

- Fulfil the statutory responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- Ensure the authority acts lawfully and ethically in all its operations and decision-making.
- As the Combined Authority Monitoring Officer, report to the Chief Executive and elected members and make recommendations on the appropriate action against any unlawful acts.

Legal Leadership

- Lead and manage the Legal Services team, ensuring high-quality, timely legal advice across all service areas.
- Oversee legal risk management, litigation, contracts, procurement, and regulatory compliance.
- Act as the most senior legal adviser to the authority, the Mayor, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, including on constitutional matters and complex legal issues.

Governance and Assurance

- Develop, evolve and maintain the authority's Constitution, governance frameworks, and decision-making protocols to ensure they are fit for purpose.
 - Lead the democratic services function, ensuring effective support for elected members, committees, and public engagement.
 - Oversee corporate assurance, including standards, ethics, declarations of interest, and whistleblowing.
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Strategic Influence

- Work closely with the Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team to shape and deliver strategic policy and corporate plans.
- Provide legal and governance input into programmes, partnerships, and regional initiatives.
- Represent the authority in high-level negotiations, legal forums, and external partnerships.

Leadership and Management

- Lead, inspire and develop a high-performing team of legal and governance professionals, providing clear objectives and direction.
- Lead by example as part of the Senior Leadership Team, embodying the values of the Combined Authority and demonstrating these at all times.
- Promote a culture of integrity, transparency, and continuous improvement through mentoring and coaching of staff.
- Manage budgets, resources, and external legal providers effectively.
- Support the development of the team by creating a learning environment and a culture of collaboration.

General

- To always act with a high level of professionalism, demonstrating your commitment to our values and behaviours.
- Ensure the services delivered both internally and externally are inclusive and accessible.
- Undertake any other tasks that are reasonably expected with the scope and level of this role.

Who is the Person

Knowledge and Experience

- Extensive post qualification experience as a senior legal professional in local government or similar role.
- In-depth knowledge of local government law, governance, constitutional frameworks, and public law.
- Proven track record of managing complex legal issues, litigation, and statutory responsibilities.
- Experience of working with elected members, senior stakeholders, and external partners.
- Demonstrable experience of leading teams and delivering strategic change in a public sector organisation.
- Thorough knowledge of the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer.

Skills and Abilities

- Highly developed analytical, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills, with the ability to convey complex legal concepts clearly.
- Strong leadership and people management capabilities.
- Political awareness and the ability to operate effectively in a politically sensitive environment.
- Ability to manage competing priorities and deliver under pressure.
- Ability to build strong professional relationships with a variety of stakeholders.

Qualifications

- Qualified solicitor or barrister entitled to practise in England and Wales.
- Evidence of continuous professional development in relevant legal and governance areas.