

SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

Directorate/Department:	Legal Services
Service:	Legal Services
Title of Post:	Principal Solicitor (Property and Planning)
Post Number:	
Responsible to:	Head of Legal Services

Job Purpose:

To provide clear and practical legal advice to the Council, ensuring that the legal process is a route to achieving desired outcomes, not a barrier.

The post holder will work with a minimum of supervision under the general guidance of the Head of Legal Services and will be responsible for a wide range of highly complex casework of non-contentious matters but with particular responsibility for major projects of the Council.

IMPORTANT INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Corporate Management Team, Executive Heads, Officers and Members across the Authority at all levels

IMPORTANT EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

External legal representatives, relevant government departments, other local authorities.

MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB

Generic Responsibilities

- To provide the service in accordance with the Council's Performance Objectives
- To work effectively with colleagues in delivering a high quality service through excellent team working and good communication
- To provide excellent customer service
- To work in a flexible manner and to be willing to undertake other duties as reasonably requested including outside of office hours
- Adoption and development of new ways of working

Main Duties

- Full responsibility for a variety of highly complex non-contentious legal matters including but not limited to the following areas of law:
- The conduct of non-contentious case work including the preparation of a variety of complex legal agreements relating to land and advising on all aspects of property
- Dealing with the Council's Property Portfolio including commercial conveyancing work, leases, and associated documentation
- The conduct of legal matters including all town and country planning law matters for the Council
- To represent the Head of Legal and other Executive Heads of Service by advising Members and Officers in public meetings including regular representation at Planning Applications Committee and other scrutiny committees which will involve attendance at evening meetings.
- Undertake legal research
- Lease renewals including the service of Section 25 notices and any related attendance in court

Leadership, including management and supervisory responsibilities

- To assist the Head of Legal as required by providing advice and assistance to junior members of the team

Financial Accountability:

- To assess the risk (including financial risks) to the Council associated with any legal work undertaken by you on behalf of the Council
- To recover costs associated with all work transactions wherever possible

Initiative & Independent Action:

- To work with the minimum of supervision in the majority of all complex legal casework and in accordance with the risk profiles relevant to this post

Planning, Organising and Prioritising

- To be able to work without supervision, planning work outcomes and prioritising work in accordance with legal or statutory timescales and according to deadlines set by the Head of Legal or client department or via a service level agreement

Communication

- To act as the Council's advocate when required and be able to advise officers and members on a wide range of complex legal matters relating to all council functions
- Attendance at council and officer meetings representing Executive Heads and Heads of Service as directed

Customer Service

- To ensure a high level of client care at all times and maintain effective client and member relationships

Health and Safety

- To comply with all health and safety requirements contained from time to time in the Council's handbooks or policies and any specific policies set for the service

General

- Attendance at officer and member meetings or working groups to advise on progress of matters or advising generally on legal matters
- To draft instructions to counsel and liaise with Counsel on legal matters under your supervision and direction
- To undertake any other duties as required by the Head of Legal as are within the level of the post and according to the post holders ability and experience.

This post is politically restricted under section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989