

Role Profile

Reference Number	
Role Title	Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer
Directorate	Enabler Services
Function	Legal
Reports to	Director – Enabler Services (Dotted line to Chief Executive)

Role Purpose

As a member of the Extended Leadership Team, the role holder will provide leadership, direction and insight to shape and develop a high performing, efficient, enabling and fair Council.

The role holder will translate the Council's strategy and corporate plan into a specific strategy for Legal Services and then lead the implementation of that strategy, using available resources, to protect the organisation and ensure its proper conduct and legal administration and enable the organisation to deliver excellent and inclusive services that empower the residents and communities of Westmorland and Furness to thrive and flourish.

Accountabilities

- Be an active member of the Extended Leadership Team, supporting the Senior Leadership Team to shape and develop an innovative, ambitious and inclusive new Council that delivers an excellent Legal service for the whole council through an ambitious, integrated and successful enabling function.
- Exercise the statutory responsibilities as the Monitoring Officer of the Council of the authority in a manner that enhances the overall reputation of the Council with responsibility for the provision of expert legal advice to safeguard, so far as is possible, Members and Officers whilst acting in their official capacities, from legal difficulties and/or criminal sanctions.
- Lead the development and implementation of governance frameworks that protect the organisation and enable it to minimise risks and operate within and comply with all legal, constitutional and democratic requirements. This includes responsibility for Legal Services, Democratic Services, Member development, Elections, Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and responsibility for oversight of the Coroner's service ensuring sufficient support for an effective service.
- As Senior Information Risk Owner for the Council, be responsible for Information Governance across the organisation, including robust management of the risks involved in handling of information and compliance with GDPR requirements.
- Work with Departments to put proper governance/transparency at the heart of service design and decision making, removing barriers and enabling staff to be imaginative and innovative, collaborating with stakeholders across departmental and organisational boundaries to design joined-up services that are efficient, effective and enable residents and communities to thrive.
- Lead the development and implementation of the Legal and democratic function's strategy, plans, objectives, policies, systems and processes to deliver council priorities, ensuring they meet internal and external reporting requirements and comply with external legislative and regulatory frameworks.
- Inspire, motivate and develop functional leaders and staff, to create a modern, compassionate and learning culture that enables staff to perform at their best and therefore both deliver excellent services to residents as well as retain and attract the best talent for the Council.
- Ensure the Legal function uses all available resources in the most efficient and effective way that represents excellent value for money, managing functional budgets and ensuring services are continuously improved to see if they can be delivered in a more cost effective and streamlined way.
- Identify trends and developments in Legal and Democratic Services, anticipating future issues, promoting innovative and creative new approaches that illustrate an understanding of the 'system wide picture', and positively challenging current thinking to deliver an outstanding experience for all of W&F.
- Foster and cultivate long term constructive relationships with a range of stakeholders at both a local and national level, to position W&F at the centre of relevant networks and be at the front for new opportunities that will deliver efficient and effective enabling services for the Council.

- Work with the Cabinet and the relevant Member portfolio holder as the Council's expert on Legal and democratic matters, to provide advice, guidance, clarity and insight into functional delivery and performance.

Knowledge / Skills / Experience required

- Seasoned professional in Legal and Democratic Services, with a breadth of understanding of all areas that the role covers and experience of being the designated Monitoring Officer for a Local Authority.
- Experience of shaping Legal and Democratic Service strategy and objectives, covering a range of services and activities that have shared objectives.
- Experience of leading a function or department within a complex and diverse organisation.
- In-depth understanding of regulations/legislation and best practice within the Legal and Democratic Services arena and the wider sector, with a thorough understanding of national and local government developments, policy, and emerging trends.
- Able to use leadership skills to build an understanding of the agendas or motivations of others in order to keep them positively engaged.
- Able to foster an innovative mindset that drives an ambitious and inclusive way of working and empower staff to see continuous learning as a positive that drives better solutions and outcomes.
- Strong organisational and political acumen, with the ability to work with elected Members and interest groups to build consensus and shape services.
- Solicitor, Barrister or Fellow (or equivalent) of the Institute of Legal Executives qualified to practice, and/or leadership and management qualifications with demonstrable continuing professional development (Membership of relevant professional bodies desirable).
- Experience of creating long lasting relationships and being able to work across departmental and organisational boundaries to collaborate with and influence key stakeholders, building support for ideas and initiatives behind the scenes to support the implementation of solutions across other public bodies, government, the private sector and the third sector.
- Excellent commercial acumen and financial management skills.

Context and Scope

As a new unitary Council, the post holder will need to make a considerable contribution to shaping a new organisation that will deliver modern, agile, inclusive services and outcomes for the residents and communities across W&F. The Council will consider and assess different models of service delivery and by acting as a facilitator, will work closely with residents and communities so they can identify what they need to thrive and be resilient and explore how services may be delivered, be they by the Council or partner organisations or through doing more for themselves.

The Council will be bringing different cultures and ways of working together from former legacy organisations, while forging ahead in setting out its own aspirations and vision for how it wants to deliver services to the communities of W&F. While there will be many things that feel similar on day 1, this will not be business as usual and the organisation will not stand still, going through significant transformational change. The role holder is part of the extended leadership team that needs to create a safe and inclusive working environment that provides staff within their function with the confidence to continue to deliver services during the transition and transformation of the new W&F council from previous councils' models.

As a leader in this organisation, the post holder will need to thrive in an environment of constant change and some ambiguity. They will be a need to be both stable (resilient, reliable, and efficient) to keep delivering safe and effective services and dynamic (agile, nimble, and adaptive) to transform and continually learn and develop.

Traits, motives and competencies

TBC

Contribution to Council Performance

TBC