



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE:	Head of Law
Grade:	MG3
Department:	Corporate Services
Location:	Various offices according to the needs of the service
Responsible to:	Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership and [Chief Counsel, Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames/ Chief Executive of Richmond and Wandsworth Councils/ Monitoring Officer of London Borough of Sutton/ Chief Executive of London Borough of Merton
Responsible for:	Overall responsibility for multi-disciplinary teams of lawyers and with a wider responsibility for the overall provision to a nominated Partner Council. Shared responsibility for the overall management of the practice, supporting and deputising for the Managing Director. Direct management of one or more Assistant Heads of Law
Post number:	TBC
Date:	April 2022

MAIN PURPOSE

- As part of the SLLP senior leadership team to ensure the South London Legal Partnership provides strategic and commercial legal services to all five authorities
- To play a lead role in developing the partnership ensuring it develops and maintains a reputation as the innovative future of local government legal services
- To be SLLP'S specialist lead for an area of law and to manage the provision of this area of law across the London Boroughs of Merton, Sutton, Richmond, Wandsworth and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, "the Partner Councils", making up the South London Legal Partnership (SLLP) and any associated arm's length delivery vehicles or additional contractors. The areas of law are:
 - Social Care and Education
 - Contract, Procurement and Information
 - Property, Planning and Employment
 - Litigation
- To be the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer for [insert council] and to be directly accountable to the chief executive and, where relevant, monitoring officer for that council, proving high level strategic and corporate governance advice to them and the elected members of that council.



- To ensure that the legal advice and legal services provided to those councils is cost effective and of the highest quality.
- To provide leadership to the a large team of lawyers in your legal area, setting the strategic direction for the team and ensuring that all elements of delivery are managed appropriately and maintained and also provide leadership to the wider service – particularly in the provision of services to the nominated local authority.
- To contribute to the Partner Councils’ corporate approaches to your area of law; providing strategic and business focused advice, both on the legal elements and the wider considerations of each local authority.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide high level legal advice to elected members, including full council, cabinet, committees and to Chief Officers and staff across all Partner Councils and to any other client of the SLLP
- To lead, manage and develop the Shared Legal Services in accordance with all five authorities’ policies and procedures, legislative and regulatory requirements, covering the provision of quality, cost effective, and customer-focused legal services.
- To lead and manage a team including assistant heads of law, principal lawyers, senior lawyers, lawyers and legal assistants in your area of law, allocating work, making arrangements for supervision and monitoring, providing advice, guidance and assistance as required.
- To be responsible for budget for your area (between 2.0M and 2.5M)
- To lead on the client relationship with all Partner Councils in relation to the work of your team including negotiation of the SLAs and to assure the delivery of support in accordance with those SLAs.
- To provide strategic legal advice within your specialist area – acting as a trusted expert and understanding the wider business implications of the advice requested.
- To be the lead lawyer for a Partner Council, being responsible for providing advice on governance issues, providing legal advice and support to Councillors, the Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive, and other senior officers in the authority.
- To act as Deputy Monitoring Officer as required for one or more of and to carry out the personal responsibilities required under section 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- To take a proactive approach to ensuring that the decision-making processes and governance of the relevant Partner Council are in accordance with best practice and the law.
- As a member of the senior leadership team, to contribute to the strategic management of SLLP



- To deputise for the Managing Director of the SLLP and the Director of Corporate Services as required
- To contribute at a strategic level in the Partner Councils and in the preparation and development of a wide range of corporate strategies and approaches, ensuring that the advice and support is providing beyond just legal services.
 - To work with Partner Councils to develop and implement best practice in a consistent and cost-effective manner across the five councils.
 - To develop strategies for bringing in new business and income to the service.
 - To manage the scarce resources of the councils to maximum impact in their legal area; ensuring that resources are invested where they can have the most impact.
 - To provide leadership across SLLP; ensuring that the values and vision of the practice are implemented.
 - To initiate and lead on learning and development of client departments across the Partner Councils.
 - Any other duties as requested by the Managing Director of the SLLP.



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PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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Qualifications and Experience

Professional and post specific requirements

- Qualified solicitor or barrister or chartered legal executive with experience working in local government law
- A solid track record of providing proactive, expert, timely and authoritative legal advice and support to senior leaders and key decision-makers at the highest levels
- A thorough understanding of the legal environment of local government
- Experience of the procurement/commissioning of external legal advice and associated services and the interpretation of such advice to aid internal decision-making
- Significant experience of corporate working with exposure to partnership development, contract negotiation and effective performance management
- Experience of staff management and ability to manage, inspire and motivate staff

Skills and Knowledge

- Significant personal gravitas with an ability to operate with confidence and credibility at the highest levels of all authorities
- An ability to use expert legal opinion to provide practical and innovative solutions to complex legal, contractual or service delivery issues
- Pragmatic and forward thinking with an ability to think 'outside the box'
- Intellectually powerful with a good degree of political nous and experience of operating in politically sensitive environments
- Ability to be able to travel to attend client officers or courts wherever the client's case is being considered and to be available to attend premises out of hours to attend evening meetings and in the event of emergencies or urgent management issues in relation to all authorities