

Legal Services

Principal Lawyer (Property & Planning) Job Description and Person Specification

August 2025

Job Description

Job Title:	Principal Lawyer (Property & Planning)
Service Area:	Assurance
Function:	Legal Services
Team:	Property and Planning Legal Team
Post number:	
Grade:	LBR 17
Hours/weeks: <i>E.g. 36 hours/52.14 weeks</i>	36 hours per week over 5 days
Base location:	London Borough of Redbridge
Reports to: <i>Job title</i>	Chief Legal Officer
Responsible for: <i>Job titles of direct reports</i>	A specialist legal team Lawyers, Senior Legal Assistants, Legal Officers.

Role purpose and role dimensions: <i>Overview of the job</i>	1. To be the Council's principal source of expertise in respect of the law relating to expertise in planning or property matters including, all landlord and tenant act matters, deeds of easement/wayleaves collective enfranchisement and leasehold extensions, right to buy transactions, planning agreements e.g. S106/278 agreements, Community Infrastructure Regulations, highways agreements and compulsory purchase orders and matters of appropriation and awareness of local government legislation governing the acquisition and disposals of land and consents from other public bodies and to provide advice, guidance and practical assistance on local government law generally and the law relating to specialist areas and related projects. 2. To be responsible for the provision of advocacy services at public inquiries, before tribunals, and in the civil courts in civil proceedings in relation to the area of specialism 3. To be in charge of the conduct of the Council's legal caseload in respect of the area of specialism and related project matters, including the negotiation and drafting of agreements, the conduct of appeals and inquiries, and handling enforcement cases in the Magistrates', Crown, County and High Courts. 4. To have conduct of the Council's most complex legal matters and advise at all levels of the Council together with draft, negotiate and bring the necessary documentation into effect. 5. To provide strategic and operational advice on the creation and maintenance of all relevant policies and documents required to be maintained by the Council. 6. To gather, appraise and disseminate information on proposed and new legislation, case law and developments in respect of the whole range of the Team's activities generally, and specialist area and related project law in particular. Where necessary to also report to relevant committees and clients on the practical effects on changes in the law. 7. To review and provide legal comments in cabinet/committee reports, preparation of reports for and attend and advise the Council's cabinet and committees, particularly the Regulatory Committee and any relevant advisory and scrutiny Committees. 8. To represent Legal Services at meetings with Councillors, inter-departmental meetings, and meetings with outside bodies, including partners of the Council, government departments and inter-agency meetings and, where appropriate, to recommend changes in Council policy and practice. 9. To prepare briefs to Counsel and cases for the opinion of Counsel and attend conferences with Counsel. 10. To tackle problems requiring extensive research and a wide working knowledge of the practice of law. 11. To instruct and work constructively with external solicitors and other consultants when appropriate. 12. When required by the Chief Legal Officer to assist in the other work of the Service.
Key external contacts: <i>Organisations</i>	Regular contact and liaison with external solicitors, barristers, the Planning Inspectorate, the Magistrates' Court, the County Court, and clients to include partner organisations.

Key internal contacts: <i>Job titles or groups of staff</i>	Directors, chief officers, heads of service, and councillors. Officers within the relevant departments of the council and any and all other departments as needs arise.
Financial dimensions: <i>Budgetary responsibility & amount. Equipment, cash, property etc. for which employee is responsible.</i>	The post holder is also required to assist in ensuring the department's delivery within budget and achieving income targets, and generating income through the Council's major projects. The post holder shall be a key strategist in protecting the council's financial and reputational exposure on all matters arising from the council's compliance with relevant laws.
Key areas for decision making:	The progress of relevant projects casework and advising clients on decisions to be made at critical stages. Leading lawyers in the progression of cases taking into account legal and tactical considerations and the interests of the Council. Managing the work of the team and monitoring the progress of same. Where need be leading on project work and guiding or assisting leading project officers and councillors both in person and in writing on taking and implementing decisions. There are potentially severe implications to the Council arising from the advice that may be provided by this post-holder on occasion both financially and reputationally. As such the post-holder should have experience in the relevant specialism and be able to advise and be able risk assess at the highest level.
Other considerations: <i>E.g. working patterns</i>	This is a full-time role requiring a presence in the office so that advice can be provided particularly at a high level, in person as well as in writing and sometimes within short timescales. The post holder is required to possess up to date knowledge of the law and practice in relevant areas of specialism and is required to be flexible in their work pattern when may be required and agreed with the Head of the Team. There may be a requirement to provide out of hours legal support.

Key accountabilities and result areas:	Key elements:
Advising in respect of legal and related project matters to clients and also the collective progress of matters and matter types over periods of time.	This will involve: 1. Case management of all matters and where necessary supervision or guidance of other lawyers conducting such work to ensure matters are progressed appropriately and that clients are appropriately advised and in a timely manner. 2. Recording of data and management information and periodically reporting of same to the Head of the Team, client departments and others when necessary.
Advising Officers and Members on the development of policy in the areas of law and their implementation.	This will involve: Ability to work with relevant lead departments in planning for and delivering revisions to existing policy or implementation of new policy. At a councillor level this shall also involve preparing and conducting training sessions at least annually or at other periods as may be considered necessary by the Chief Legal Officer. At an officer level and other client level this shall also include periodic written legal updates.

Delivering professional supervision and guidance to staff within Legal Services when they are working matters that fall within the post-holder's remit.	This will involve: Knowledge and experience in supervising staff. Ability to share knowledge, guide and support those staff being supervised and where need be to train them in the relevant field of expertise.
Leading on the creation and maintenance of case management documents, precedents, protocols for use within the department.	This will involve: Detailed Knowledge of relevant law processes, an ability to remain up to date within the field of expertise and the ability to create or develop workable tools for use in delivering these services.
Advising Members at Committee or at other fora.	This will involve: Knowledge and experience of Local Government Governance, relevant standards required of councillors and others taking part in the Council's decision making processes.
Representing the Council at external meetings and at hearings.	This will involve: The post holder shall be required to instruct and liaise with other professionals in the areas of expertise, such as barristers, experts, surveyors, planning and highways officers and so must demonstrate the skills necessary to be able to progress and finalise litigious matters. The post holder shall also be required to represent the Council and carry out advocacy before any relevant court, tribunal or other competent authority.
To play a key role in the development, operation, maintenance and keeping of financial records and financial monitoring to assist in ensuring effective budgetary performance. To also assist in maximising resources and advising on the generation of income	This will involve: Experience and ability in providing statistical and financial data periodically to the Head of the Team. Where called upon to assist in developing or implementing service level agreements with client departments and Council partner organisations. Ability to advise on beneficial return on resources and finances particularly in respect of more complex matters.
To contribute as an effective and collaborative member of the team	This will involve: ▪ Taking responsibility for continuing self-development and participating in training and development activities. ▪ Participating in the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of the service plans. ▪ Supporting and contributing to value for money, service efficiencies and improvements.
Flexibility	This will involve: ▪ The above-mentioned duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. From time to time you may be required to undertake responsibilities outside the normal remit of your Job Description as required by the line manager, and are broadly within your grading level and competence.

Person Specification

Job Title:	Principal Lawyer (Property & Planning)		
<i>Method of candidate assessment: A = Application form I = Interview T = Test. Weighting: 3 = most important, 2 = least important</i>		A - I - T	Weighting
Minimum education/ qualifications:	Solicitor, Barrister, FILEX or similar legal qualification and authorised to conduct legal work.	A	3
Minimum experience/ knowledge/ skills:	1. Knowledge and experience of conducting legal matters in relevant areas of the law; 2. Advocacy experience in relevant areas of the law; 3. Experience of advising in a local government environment; 4. Knowledge of Local Government Governance and probity; 5. Ability to work as part of a team and to offer supervision and support to other lawyers and junior personnel; 6. To deal with complex matters requiring extensive research and drafting.	A I A I A I A I A I A I	3 3 2 2 3 3
Minimum competencies: Customer focus	Identifies and develops service delivery in line with the needs and strategic plans of the council.	A I	3
Communicating and influencing	Good communication skills both oral and written	A I	3
Building relationships, working together and in partnership	Ability to make and maintain good client relationships	A I	3
Respecting & implementing diversity	Awareness of the diversity requirements	A I	3
Planning, organising & achieving results	1. To prepare and implement strategies for the effective management of relevant legal work and the staff conducting it. 2. Experience of strategic and operational advice on the creation and maintenance of all relevant policies.	A I	3
Leadership	Leads the work of a specialist legal team	A I	2
Managing and developing people	Experience of supervising other lawyers and junior personnel.	A I	3
Special conditions:			
Signature of Employee:	Name:	Date:	