

London Borough of Redbridge

Head of Litigation

About Redbridge

Redbridge is home to 311,000 residents, more than 350 local voluntary and community organisations and thousands of businesses. We are among the fastest growing parts of the country and the third most diverse London borough. Our communities are attracted by a mixture of excellent schools, relatively affordable housing compared to other parts of London, high quality open spaces and rapid transport connections into the heart of the city.

Our population is getting both younger and older - driving increased demand in both adults and children's services. A growing population has placed huge pressure on a housing stock built for a different era. The pace of change to meet these challenges is phenomenal.

Alongside our values of **Collaboration, Honesty, Excellence and Fairness**, we have an ambitious strategic delivery plan to make Redbridge a great place to live.

Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Litigation		
Accountable To:	Chief Legal Officer & Deputy Monitoring Officer		
Grade:	LBR??	Salary:	£??
Direct Reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Principal Lawyer 	Total Staff & Budget:	1 x Principal Lawyer £XXX

Purpose of the Role

- To act as the **most senior officer and be the lead responsible for the delivery of a high-quality, value-for-money legal service** with a focus on litigation.
- To provide **strategic legal advice and solutions to the Council, Members, and senior officers**, enabling the achievement of corporate priorities.
- To **lead, manage, motivate and develop the Litigation Services team**, ensuring the delivery of authoritative, solution-focused legal services.
- To contribute to the **strategic leadership and continuous improvement of the wider Legal Services department**.
- To uphold the Nolan [Seven Principles of Public Life](#).
- Ensure that both **internal and external communications in relation to the service are effective**, appropriate and improve and enhance the reputation of the service and the Council.
- Effective **resource management**, including prioritisation, resource allocation and controlled spending while investing and spending for long-term value as well as near-term cost/benefit.
- To model a **culture of openness, inclusivity, learning and public service** and assure effective teamwork and corporate working.
- Impartially engage in the **political interface** and overlaps of officers with councillors, codes, standards, protocols and respect.
- To observe good and effective **governance** across the organisation.
- To support a culture of **continuous improvement**, encouraging learning and curiosity.

Key Accountabilities

Litigation services

- **Lead and manage the Litigation Team**, ensuring aligned service plans, clear outcomes, and high performance while ensuring cases are properly risk managed, reflecting Council strategic priorities and objectives.
- To be a **member of the Legal Services Senior Leadership Team** contributing to the development and implementation of strategies and policies that ensure continuous improvement in all Council services.
- To **advise the Chief Legal Officer** of issues relevant to the service.
- To **deputise for the Chief Legal Officer/DMO or MO** as required.
- To **conduct a caseload of complex legal matters/high priority and/or sensitive cases** and to undertake advocacy as required.
- To **provide high quality legal advice in corporate and governance matters**, clear reports, attend committees and meetings and provide associated support and to co-ordinate and oversee such support when provided by others.
- Provide strong leadership, **coaching, and development for staff** to ensure professional growth and effective employee relations.
- Carry out **performance management, appraisals, and workforce planning**.

- To **manage budgets and income delivery targets** (including fee earning targets of the team), ensuring that resources are deployed effectively in line with agreed priorities in compliance with organisational requirements.
- **Accountable for service delivery** against the business plan, service plan and for delivery against the Service Level Agreement, budget, costs and quality standards.
- Comply with **Lexcel** Standards, embedding good practice.

Corporate working

- **Brief and advise, as required, Elected Members, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and other senior officers**, as appropriate.
- As directed to **represent the Council on legal issues at all levels both within the Council and externally**.
- Maintain **professional relationships with other local authorities, partner organisations, government departments, funders, and other relevant local, regional and national bodies**.
- Where appropriate develop **opportunities for partnership working** both within and outside the Council.

Politics and political interface

- Develop and maintain **effective working relationships** with elected Members.
- Promote a **culture of political awareness** amongst officers to help translate political will into appropriate future strategies and delivery of outcomes.

Good governance

- Work to ensure that **legal, financial, procedural** and other provisions governing the affairs of the Council, are properly observed and that appropriate action is taken to protect the best interests of the Council.
- To **manage the budget** within delegation in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations.
- Work to ensure that **risks** associated with Council activity are effectively mitigated, including the risk of fraud and corruption.

Public Ethics

- Ensure that fairness is observed in **equal treatment, equal opportunity, relational equality, and equity**.
- To **ensure that the services provided are flexible to meet the changing needs of the Council, its users and its multi-cultural community**, whilst fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

Continuous Improvement

- Ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to **secure client feedback** to inform the development and delivery of services.
- Support a culture of **continuous improvement and innovation**, identifying opportunities for **income generation**, with plans for the effective implementation of **efficiency savings**.
- To ensure the ongoing **monitoring and improvement of technical skill** of the team.

Other Duties

- Support the Chief Executive in relation to **emergency planning** and resilience, providing support for the co-ordination of all measures to manage an emergency affecting the Council during the response and recovery phases.

- Demonstrate commitment and support for **safeguarding** the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.
- Ensure all duties are carried out in **compliance** with the Council's financial regulations, policies for Diversity, Equal Opportunities, Risk Assessment, Health and Safety and all relevant statutory or professional requirements.
- Perform **any other duties** imposed by law, or which the Council may reasonably require.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Qualified Solicitor or Barrister (or equivalent) with substantial post-qualification experience in civil litigation.
- Qualified to Degree level (or equivalent experience).
- Membership of a relevant professional body
- Evidence of continuous professional development.

Knowledge

- Excellent knowledge of **relevant legislation and the legal framework for local government finance, decision making and executive functions.**
- Demonstrable knowledge of the **practice, procedures, legal framework and developments in the portfolio** of work undertaken by the team.
- Clear understanding of **risk management in relation to casework and broader corporate projects** and initiatives.
- **The statutory role of local authorities and the role of the council's core statutory officers** in assuring probity and propriety.
- **National and regional policy issues** which relate to local government.
- **Good governance principles** in the corporate and public sector, as well as internal processes of scrutiny and formal checks and balances.
- **Local Government financial management.**
- An understanding of the political **make-up of the Council and its committees**, the responsibilities of councillors in their various decision-making, scrutiny and community leadership roles.
- Relevant statute, including **Civil Contingencies Act (2004), Social Value Act** and local authority responsibilities.
- Local authority **safeguarding duties & responsibilities.**
- **Health & Safety** legislation.

Experience

- Significant experience of **providing advice and interpretation of legal issues** in relation to job portfolio.
- Experience of working in an **organisation of comparable complexity and scale.**
- Substantial and consistent **managerial achievement** at senior level.
- Track record of **operating, managing and leading strategically to identify, initiate and oversee corporate projects** and policy development.
- Experience of **deputising for senior colleagues.**
- Experience of **advising on information governance law** such as data protection issues and FOI.
- Inclusively **leading and motivating a diverse team.**
- Effective **budget management.**
- Effective **performance management:** reported metrics of relative cost-effectiveness to comparators.
- Working successfully in **partnership and building strong relationships** with government, public agencies, private sector, **voluntary bodies**, statutory and non-statutory bodies.
- Working in and adapting to a range of **political environments.**
- Creating a **positive culture of learning and improvement.**
- **Developing a street-level understanding** of a local area (its wards, districts, boundaries, and connections).
- Personal leadership in the achievement of **equal opportunity** in both employment and service delivery.

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to handle **complex and high-risk legal matters** within your area of responsibility through use of high levels of professional skill, knowledge and judgment.
- A high degree of **openness, honesty and personal integrity** with an ability to engender trust & confidence amongst peers, staff, residents & stakeholders.
- Ability to **manage calmly and with clarity of purpose** in highly visible and accountable circumstances.
- **Political acumen and sensitivity**, with the ability to develop productive working relationships with elected members.
- Have a clear, understandable and confident **communication style** and **negotiation skills** that foster team working and improves organisational effectiveness.
- Able to **de-escalate tensions and de-personalise conflict** between individuals and parties
- Able to balance **management grip and empowerment** commensurate to risk and its mitigation through internal controls.
- **Personal resilience** with the capacity to cope with ambiguity, uncertainty and pressure and the ability to work under public scrutiny whilst maintaining a sense of perspective.
- Personal commitment to **continuous improvement and the development of others**.
- Ability to meet **tight deadlines and prioritise** workloads.

Additional Information

- The role will involve irregular working patterns and will require the post holder to be able and willing to work during these periods, including evenings and occasional weekends.
**The salary scale is inclusive and recognises the volume of work in addition to and outside the Council's normal office hours required by the post*
- This post falls within the 'politically restricted' category under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The detail of the restrictions this places upon you are as outlined in the Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment.