

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Senior Planning Lawyer	Grade:	PO8
Reports to (Designation)	Principal Lawyer – Place	Grade:	SMG3
Directorate:	Chief Executives	Section	Legal - Place

Main Purpose of the job:

To handle the more complex planning, highways, transport, administrative law and environmental work arising in the Team and to deputise for the Principal Lawyer as appropriate.

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

1. To ensure that legal advice and assistance is provided efficiently and expeditiously, both personally and by other staff within the Team.
2. Manage and co-ordinate the work of staff and provide advice, guidance and direction as necessary.
3. Deputise for the Principal Lawyer as required.
4. Manage a group of staff within the Team on a day to day basis, as required by the Principal Lawyer.
5. Undertake, as required, a varied and wide ranging personal caseload of the more complex planning, highways, transport, administrative law and environmental work, advice, assisting the Litigation team and external counsel with litigation and public inquiries and preparation of documentation.
6. Assist in the preparation of and appear before any public inquiry arising out of or in connection with the caseload on the Council's behalf.
7. Deal with the preparation of the more complex or unique forms of documents, reports and agreements, briefs to Counsel and any other documentation arising out of or in connection with the caseload. Advise on any matters of relevant law.
8. Act as legal advisor to members and officers in connection with procedures or matters arising from or in connection with meetings of the Council, Mayor and Cabinet, Planning Committee and any other Committees and participate in the formulation of policy proposals for presentation to Council, Mayor and Cabinet, Planning Committee, any other Committee and/or Directorates. Deal with Ombudsman cases and complaints.
9. Attend meetings of Council, Mayor and Cabinet, Planning Committee and other Committees as directed, to give such legal and general advice as may be necessary. Draft

and/or contribute to reports to Council, Mayor and Cabinet, Planning Committee and other Committees as directed on specific items connected with own work. Scrutinise reports drafted by other officers for Council, Mayor and Cabinet, Planning Committee and other Committees as directed on specific items connected with own work and provide legal implications for those reports, making other comments on the reports as appropriate.

10. Introduce new procedures, as required, arising from new legislation, improvements in efficiency or otherwise, in consultation with clients and the Principal Lawyer and prepare any necessary documentation.
11. Keep abreast of all current legislation, case law and professional requirements and inform and instruct members, clients, legal services and others as necessary. Present training courses and seminars for members, clients, legal services and others as necessary.
12. Undertake Performance Evaluation Scheme interviews on a regular basis for staff managed by the Senior Lawyer and ensure that adequate training and development is provided to those staff.
13. Assist the Principal Lawyer in respect of Service Level Agreement negotiation and liaison with clients and external bodies.
14. Promote the image of and assist in marketing Legal Services.
15. As required, co-operate and assist with any external review of Council performance, including by the Audit Commission and/or external inspectors and/or auditors.
- 16.
17. To advise on the relevant risks and potential benefits associated with planning and highways matters to ensure that they are identified and managed proactively and in accordance with Legal Services' Risk Procedure.

18. **GENERAL**

- (i) (i) To carry out such other legal work and other tasks as required by the Principal Lawyer or the Director of Law and Corporate Governance from time to time including work within other unrelated legal fields which can reasonably be regarded as within the nature, duties and responsibilities of the grade of the post any other duties which may fall within the purview of the post.
- (ii) Carry out the responsibilities of the post with due regard to:-
 - (a) the Council's equal opportunities policies;
 - (b) health and safety requirements;
 - (c) the need to promote the Council's Core Values and Legal Services' Objectives;
 - (d) professional accountability to the Director of Law and Corporate Governance.
- (iii) Be able to undertake advocacy within the courts and at public inquiries.

19.INTERNAL CONTACT

Advise Committees, Chairs, Members and Officers when required and contact all departments up to and including the Chief Officer level, including the Chief Executive to give advice as necessary.

20.EXTERNAL CONTACT

Frequent contact with solicitors in private practice, Officers of the Courts, Government Departments, local authority associations, other professionals and consultants, members of the press or public, and other statutory and local authorities as necessary over the range of work undertaken.

All employees are required to participate in the Performance Appraisal schemes and to undertake appropriate training and development identified to enhance their work.

THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.

Number of fully managed staff:1

Title:	Planning Lawyer	Grade	PO4/5	No of posts 1
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Number of partially managed staff: Maximum 0

Title:	Grade	No of posts
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Senior Planning Lawyer

POST NO:

DEPARTMENT: Legal

GRADE: PO8

Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person, but are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

Equality & Diversity

- Commitment to implement the Council's Equal Opportunities policies **S**
- Awareness of Equal Opportunities issues **S**

Customer Care

- Commitment to the highest standards and continuing improvement of customer care and enhancing client relations **S**

Knowledge

- Advanced and substantial knowledge of the particular area of law and knowledge of its application in a local authority context **S**
- Advanced and substantial knowledge of the particular area of law and knowledge of its application in a local authority context **S**
- Knowledge of progressive strategic and operational management practice **S**
- An advanced understanding of the issues facing local government and an ability to rise to them **S**
- Knowledge of practice and procedure in Courts, tribunals and Inquiries **S**

Aptitude

- Ability to use own initiative and experience to analyse problems, exercise proper professional judgement without reference to others
- Capability to work positively and imaginatively in conjunction with others at the most senior level in the authority and with partners to prepare and promote the Council's policies and generally to deal with issues progressively
- Ability and willingness to carry out special tasks and/or projects contributing to or leading multi-disciplinary teams as necessary
- Ability to work under substantial pressure
- Robust but creative approach in relation to interpretation and application of the law

Skills

(Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested)

(To Be Tested – S)

- Articulate and confident in oral and written presentation
- Ability to present written information succinctly, accurately and clearly.
- Ability to draft complex and unusual legal documentation and deal with complex matters
- Ability to guide, supervise, advise and train less experienced staff
- Ability to assess priorities and meet conflicting deadlines

Experience

- Substantial practical relevant experience of the appropriate area of work set out in the job description **S**
- Experience of undertaking an extensive and varied legal caseload proficiently at a senior level **S**
- Experience of managing staff and of ensuring performance of work programmes and objectives within strict statutory and other timescales **S**
- Advocacy experience in Courts, tribunals or inquiries, where appropriate or advising local authority committees or equivalent. **S**

General Education

- Solicitor, Barrister or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (or equivalent qualifications) or demonstration of equivalent competence **S**

Personal Qualities

- Dependable, self reliant and self-motivating
- Ability to work as part of and lead and motivate a team of staff. **S**
- Ability to contribute proactively to the management of the service through the management team and otherwise.
- Ability to anticipate problems and to develop appropriate solutions
- Ability to liaise effectively with clients and to control clients' work programme requirements
- Commitment to service excellence **S**
- Complete flexibility of approach to service provision **S**

Circumstances

- Ability on occasions to work outside normal working hours

DBS Disclosure Required? **No** ☐ **Basic** ☐ **Enhanced** ☐

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)

Physical

- Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post
- Proper standard of dress/appearance for Court attendance
- Ability to travel to locations within and outside the Borough