

## **Appointments Board – 12 April 2011**

### **Head of Legal and Constitutional Services**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to ask the Appointments Board to:

- (a) Agree the job description at Appendix 1 for the post of Head of Legal and Constitutional Services, a re-designation of the post of Assistant Director (Legal and Constitutional Services).
- (b) Make a temporary appointment to this post.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree the job description at Appendix 1 for the post of Head of Legal and Constitutional Services,
- 2.2 To appoint to this post temporarily whilst a review of management structure takes place.

#### **3. Report background**

- 3.1 The post of Assistant Director (Legal & Constitutional Services) has fallen vacant. I am intending to carry out a review of management structure as soon as is practicable, as would be expected when any senior role falls vacant. In order to ensure strong leadership in the meantime, I am proposing to make some minor changes by re-designating the role as Head of Legal & Constitutional Services (this is consistent with other posts at this level reporting to me such as Head of Business Change and Head of People Services) and re-drafting the job description. The main duties of the role would remain the same temporarily.
- 3.2 I have asked the four direct reports to this post whether they would wish to be considered to act up into the senior post with a deadline of 8 April 2011. I have asked anyone interested to produce a short note setting out what contribution they believe they would be able to make in this role. The Board will be asked to make an appointment from any expressions of interest received. The job description is also subject to consultation and any proposed changes will be reported to the Board at the meeting.
- 3.3 The Council, at its meeting to be held on 18 April 2011, will be recommended to designate this post as Monitoring Officer.

#### **4. Resource and legal considerations**

- 4.1 The management review mentioned above may lead to financial savings. This report is cost neutral.

- 4.2 Necessary authority has already been given to the Head of Law (Contentious) to ensure that all delegations in the Constitution to Assistant Director (Legal and Constitutional Services) can immediately be fulfilled by him. He is also Deputy Monitoring Officer and so able to act in that capacity until a formal designation to that role is made by Council.

**Background papers:**

none

**Author**

Rory Borealis

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Handwritten signature of Rory Borealis in black ink, consisting of the letters 'R' and 'B' followed by a stylized flourish.

Rory Borealis

Executive Director (Resources)

5 April 2011



# Walsall Council

# JOB DESCRIPTION

**JOB TITLE:** Head of Legal and Constitutional Services

**JOB NO:**

**SERVICE AREA** Resources

**SECTION** Legal & Constitutional Services

**LOCATION** Any council premises

**GRADE** Assistant Director

## PURPOSE OF JOB:

**The purpose of this job is to provide strong and focused leadership for Legal & Constitutional Services and to ensure the provision of high quality advice on legal and constitutional matters to councillors, the Corporate Management and managers and staff across the organisation.**

**The main accountabilities within this purpose are:**

1. To ensure that the council acts within the law at all times and to be the principal legal advisor to the Council. To this end, this post may be designated to fulfil the requirements of the statutory Monitoring Officer role. This role is designated by the full Council and may rest with this post or another post as the Council sees fit from time to time.
2. To ensure that the council's decision-making processes are fit for purpose and that the Council's Constitution is upheld effectively.
3. To provide accurate and user-friendly legal and constitutional advice to councillors at formal meetings and elsewhere
4. To provide customer-focused legal and constitutional advice to the Corporate Management Team and managers and staff across the council.
5. To ensure excellent practice across the council in support of the council's decision-making processes,
6. To ensure that the council runs elections and electoral registration effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements.
7. To provide the Returning Officer with necessary advice to ensure that he is able to fulfil his duties effectively.
8. To uphold and promote high standards of probity and ethical behaviour across all of the council's activities.
9. To provide a customer focused and cost efficient service across all areas of responsibility.
10. To provide strong personal leadership to contribute to the council's strategic agenda and the delivery of cultural change.
11. To make a strong contribution to the Resources Directorate as an effective member of a collaborative management team and leadership team, ensuring the delivery of the Right, Fast and Simple Operating model.

## RESPONSIBILITY LINKS

Reports to: Executive Director (Resources)

Responsible over: Head of Law (Contentious); Head of Law (Non-Contentious); Constitutional Services Manager; Electoral

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Working outside of standard office hours may be required. There is a requirement to work flexibly at all times with due regard to prevailing workloads and priorities. Attendance at evening and other out-of-hour meetings as required, including Cabinet, Scrutiny and other relevant meetings.

Politically restricted under Local Government & Housing Act 1989.

## **MAIN ACTIVITIES:**

### **GENERIC CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITIES (ALL POSTS)**

1. Contribute to the management of staff and services of the Council in a manner that builds ownership and commitment and promotes a strong performance culture that connects strategies to action, provides accountability and deliver results. To lead projects as required.
2. Lead areas of activity and promote effective cross-directorate working so as to deliver integrated solutions that optimise the use of resources and achieve Best Value and continuous improvement.
3. Ensure that the services provided are fully compliant with Council strategy, vision, aims, objectives and priorities and play their part in achieving these. This includes compliance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Where applicable, to manage budgets and other resources.
4. Develop and promote effective partnerships with government departments, professional bodies and other organisations to promote the Council's interests and build its reputation.
5. Through personal commitment and clear action, the postholder will promote the Council's employment policies, with particular reference to diversity, equality of access and treatment in employment, service delivery and community involvement. To support/develop a working culture within these services that reflects the corporate vision.
6. The postholder will promote the Council's Health and Safety at Work policies and ensure these are implemented effectively within his/her areas of responsibility.

### **GENERIC SERVICE DELIVERY ACCOUNTABILITIES (ALL POSTS)**

#### **A. Services**

1. To develop/support and promote a strong customer-focussed performance culture within the service team, ensuring the provision of cost effective, efficient, high quality services to the Council, its members and its departments in line with their identified needs.
2. Ensure services are provided to the highest possible standards within the resources available. To implement effective systems for setting targets, managing performance, reporting systems, identifying and overcoming weaknesses and delivering sustained improvements.
3. To ensure services proactively support internal and external partners in areas of their work which have a relevant dimension. Where applicable, to negotiate service level agreements with client departments/project coordinators/partners to ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and that the outcomes for the postholder's services are achievable. To provide analyses and reports as appropriate.
4. Provide clear, balanced and accurate advice and guidance to the senior management team on issues arising within the postholder's areas of responsibility.
5. To ensure that all data pertaining to the delivery of the service is accurate and that the monitoring and review of processes and practices relating to data is timely and robust. Where significant issues are identified appropriate

remedial action is taken to address them.

**B**      People

1. Provide leadership and a strong sense of direction and purpose within the team(s) for which the jobholder is accountable.
2. Manage the selection and deployment of people for whom the jobholder is responsible to maximise their contribution to corporate and team goals.
3. To manage the performance of the service team(s) for which the jobholder is responsible, and to respond and deal with weak/poor performance. To develop appropriate performance indicators as required.
4. To promote the development of a confident learning culture within all service areas for which the jobholder is responsible, including the requirement that all staff have and achieve personal/professional development plans that are integrated with the Service Plan. Manage the personal development scheme/strategy with respect to staff within the postholder's team in accordance with the council's Policies..
5. The postholder is responsible for his/her own self development on a continuous basis and for developing and maintaining a substantial body of up-to-date knowledge of the specialist area and a detailed generalist knowledge across a wide spectrum of related fields, and as such will be expected to undertake suitable development and training.
6. To enhance own performance, working constructively with the line manager to identify personal strengths and agreeing action in relation to development needs.

**C**      Quality

1. To support the development of a culture of continuous quality improvement within the services for which the jobholder is accountable, providing advice and encouragement for the implementation and monitoring of quality policies, standards and systems.
2. To promote the importance and benefits of quality and to lead the continued achievement of quality standards including Investors in People and other relevant quality accreditations.
3. To ensure that output and quality of work is of the highest quality and accords where appropriate with current regulations/legislation/Council standards.
4. To promote/lead in the development and implementation of new ways of working and modernised service delivery including the use of e-working.

**D**      Resources

1. To negotiate and/or manage the financial resources required to support the Business Plan and to manage service provision within the allocated budget.
2. To manage the effective planning, deployment and control of the resources available so as to enable the achievement of agreed targets, objectives and standards. To restructure services as necessary to ensure resources are deployed to optimal effect.
3. To maximise opportunities for external funding in so far as these are compatible with agreed Business Plans and corporate objectives.
4. To manage and monitor all service budgets as appropriate and ensure probity and stringent financial control is implemented ensuring maximum cost efficiency in all aspects of management and administration.

**E**      General

1. The postholder must also undertake other duties within his/her competence or otherwise appropriate to the grading of the post.

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the post as required.

2. This job description sets out a summary of the key features of the role. It is not intended to be exhaustive and will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate for the role.
3. The areas for which the jobholder is responsible will be kept under review and may change over time in response to emerging priorities and organisational development.

**Last Revised: 4 April 2011 by Rory Borealis, Executive Director (Resources)**

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