

Job description

Deputy Head of Legal Services

Immediate team	Contract, Property and Information Governance teams
Service team	Legal and Democratic
Line manager's job title	Director of Legal and Democratic
Number of direct reports	Three
Salary and grade	£76,915 - £83,490 per year, Grade 11
Duration of role	Permanent
Hours per week	37 hours per week
Location	The designated office base is Abbey House, Abingdon. The councils operate in a truly flexible, and hybrid way where the focus is on outcomes not where you work.
Employing council	South
Probationary period	Six months
Notice period	Three months
Annualised hours apply	No
Date job description updated	July 2026

About the role and what we're looking for

This is a Service Manager position in the councils' structure.

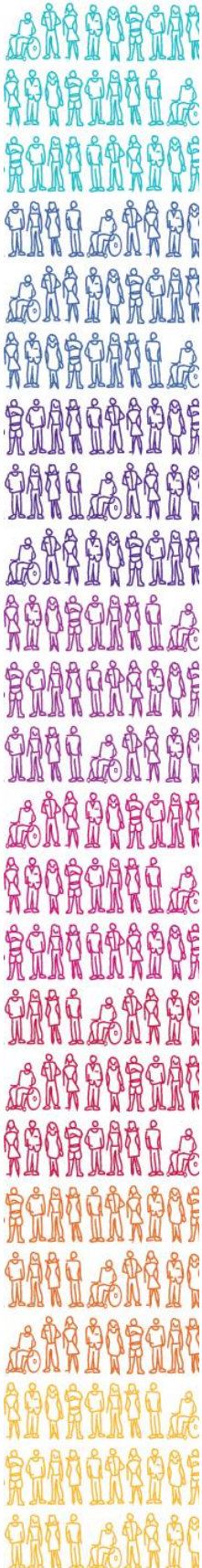
Job purpose

Main duties and responsibilities

Corporate management

To assist the head of service in providing strong and effective corporate governance and operational management for both councils through:

- working closely with all heads of service to help create and embed the necessary changes in culture and practice to meet the needs of both councils

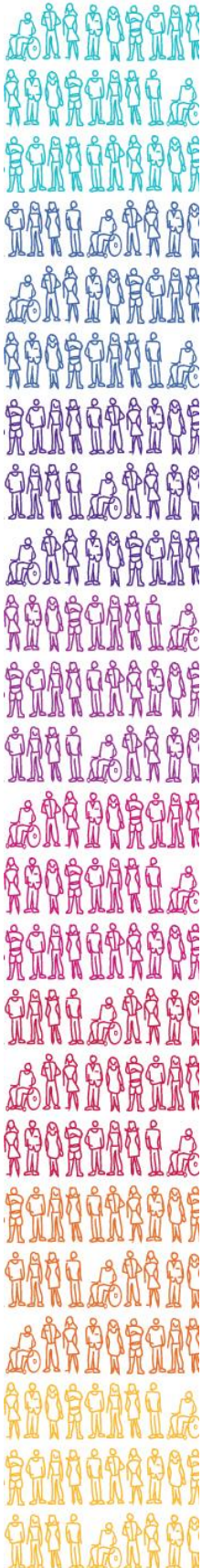


- contributing to the achievement of both councils' overall objectives by aligning the service, via its service plan, to identified corporate priorities
- working with colleagues across both councils to effectively and efficiently deliver joined-up programmes, projects, policies and initiatives
- establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with elected councillors, internal and external partners, stakeholders and communities in order to develop and improve services
- promoting a positive image of both councils
- assisting the Director in the strategic management of your service area

Service Management

To ensure strong and robust leadership and management of the service through:

- leading and inspiring colleagues within your service
- deputise for the Director in attending and actively participating in senior management team (SMT) meetings and events to help each council in meeting their objectives and ensuring that a corporate and co-ordinated approach is adopted and maintained in the provision of all services
- leading by example in modelling the conduct, behaviour and values expected of the councils' employees and establish a working environment within your service in which individuals and teams can excel
- participating in the appointment, development and appraisal of officers within your service
- assisting the Director to prepare and deliver the annual service and workforce plan which aligns with both councils' corporate strategies, objectives and priorities.
- delivering excellence across your service through the development of high performance, effective delegation, communication, cross-authority working and prioritising customer service and satisfaction.
- assisting the Director in the development of new approaches to service delivery, ensuring continuous improvement in performance, value for money and quality of service for customers
- ensuring performance management is embedded into the day-to-day work of the teams within your service. Performance reviews undertaken by the due dates and recorded as required by the review processes. Also ensure all service plan and workplan monitoring is undertaken by the due dates and entered onto the performance management system(s)
- taking responsibility for identifying training and development needs in discussion with the staff from the teams within your service; and

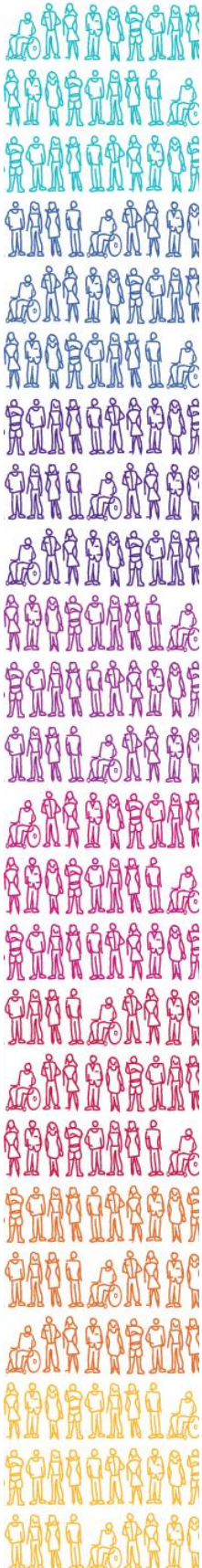


to encourage participation in any training and development activities. This to include coaching, mentoring and evaluation of all training undertaken

- assisting the Director to plan, monitor and manage the service team's budget to achieve financial and performance targets and work with the Director to ensure budgets are aligned to both councils' corporate strategies, objectives and priorities
- encouraging shared working arrangements and partnerships with and between councils, internal and external service providers and other councils and agencies to deliver high quality, cost-effective and customer-focused services
- maintaining an awareness and understanding of new legislation and/or best practice, relevant to your service, interpreting the resulting implications and developing appropriate policies, procedures and practice to ensure that both councils comply with their statutory obligations, as well as to secure performance improvement and increased customer satisfaction
- supporting HR processes, such as investigations or hearings, where requested or required, for own or other services
- to cover the duties of the Director, if required i.e. when they are unavailable through sickness, annual leave or has conflicting appointments
- ensuring both councils' policies and procedures, particularly health and safety, equal opportunities, customer care, emergencies, security, work standards are embedded throughout the teams within your service
- ensuring that diversity and equality are embedded within the behaviours and practices of the teams within your service
- ensuring that consideration and appropriate action is taken in regard to the welfare and wellbeing of employees within your service
- representing either council equally or without bias to all outside bodies
- avoiding any conflicts in connection with the policies and activities of each council which may be different because of being led by different political parties
- undertaking all such duties and responsibilities determined by the Chief Executive or Director commensurate with the nature of the post

Specific to this service

- To be the Deputy Monitoring Officer
- To line manage the Property and Contract teams and ensure good legal support from those teams to and across both Councils.
- Work with the Monitoring Officer to ensure excellent governance arrangements are in place in both councils, continuously monitoring

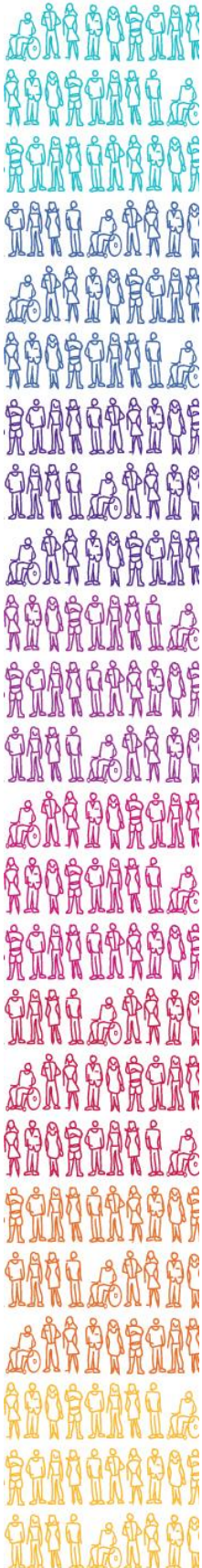


governance, assisting with preparation of the annual governance statement and identifying opportunities for improvement

- to ensure that effective legal advice, within the areas of responsibility, is available to both councils, the Cabinets, committees, sub-committees, panels and working groups; including obtaining external legal advice and opinion where appropriate in consultation with the Director.
- To manage and mentor a trainee solicitor, where appointed by the Council, and ensure that they carry out work sufficient of a sufficient level to satisfy the Practice Skills Standards

The duties may vary from time to time without changing the nature of the post or the level of responsibility and the post holder may also be required to carry out any other duties appropriate to the grading of the post.

About you



Your essential qualifications

- The post holder will need to be a qualified solicitor, barrister or Legal Executive with a relevant legal professional qualification and evidence of continued professional, managerial and personal development.
- Substantial post qualification experience
- Local government experience

Your essential skills, knowledge and experience

- Proven successful line management experience in a legal or governance function within local government
- In-depth knowledge and experience of practice in one or more legal disciplines relevant to local government
- Experience of planning, monitoring and managing budgets
- Proven experience at a senior level within legal services, preferably within local government, successfully implementing organisational and cultural changes.
- High degree of political sensitivity and awareness

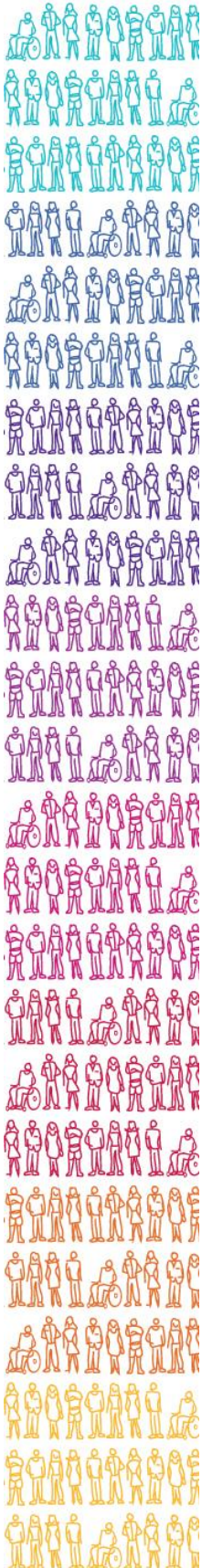
If you have the following experience or qualifications – it's a bonus.

- Contract and property law knowledge
- Management qualification
- Local government experience preferred.

Your style and behaviours

Your approach at work needs to mirror our vision and values which are detailed below. In particular for this role, the following points are essential:

- a corporate leader and successful line manager who is energetic, determined and positive to develop the joint working arrangements of the councils.
- excellent leadership and line management skills, including the ability to delegate appropriately, empowering Team Leaders and employees to effectively deliver operational duties, tasks and goals.
- the ability to provide professional advice confidently and tactfully, expressing a viewpoint and providing service direction.
- the ability to handle competing priorities and a challenging workload in a complex political environment.
- well-developed communication and networking skills
- strong personal commitment to the delivery of first-class services.
- An inclusive team player who can foster partnerships, work collaboratively across boundaries and achieve performance and results through others.
- the ability to motivate staff within a team to perform at the highest level possible.
- the ability to act in such a way that ensures the integrity of both



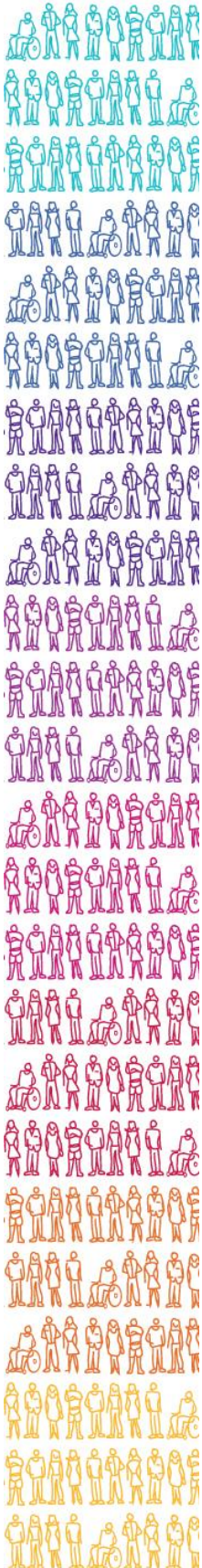
councils and to recognize potential conflicts.

- able to support staff through periods of change, ensuring they understand both councils' perspective and stance.
- to communicate in a clear manner, seeking the views and opinions of others.
- demonstrates an assertive approach to scheduling tasks and activities for the team and self.
- able to identify and then provide solutions to problems.
- prepared to change own and team plans in the short and medium term to fit in with organisational needs and changes.
- tough approach when dealing with staff 'under performance' issues.
- able to identify success and provide praise and recognition accordingly.
- approachable with good listening skills.
- proven and successfully applied business and financial acumen.
- a track record of operating in a political context and winning the respect, trust and confidence of councilors, staff, customers and partners is desirable.
- ambitious, energetic and highly motivated
- visible, approachable and accessible, with high standards of both personal and professional ethics and credibility
- aware of own strengths and weaknesses and committed to addressing areas for development.
- resilient, determined and confident.
- awareness of equality and diversity and how they can impact on the service and team.
- demonstrates a commitment to self and staff development.
- experience of adopting new and innovative ways of doing things
- willing to travel, as required.

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• Work related requirements:

This role has been identified as public facing in accordance with Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2017; the requirement to fulfil all spoken aspects of the role with confidence in English applies.	Yes
Politically restricted post	Yes
DBS check required	Yes
Full driving licence and use of a car for work	Yes
This role requires you to drive a company vehicle for work	No



About us

Our Vision

We are customer focused and approachable. We are honest and open and are committed to providing high quality cost-effective public services.

Our Values



Working Together

We are a committed professional team, who embrace change and help one another improve



People and Planet

We care about each other and the environment we share



Respect

We act with integrity, and champion diversity and inclusivity



Accountability

We take ownership, do what we say, strive for clarity and welcome feedback



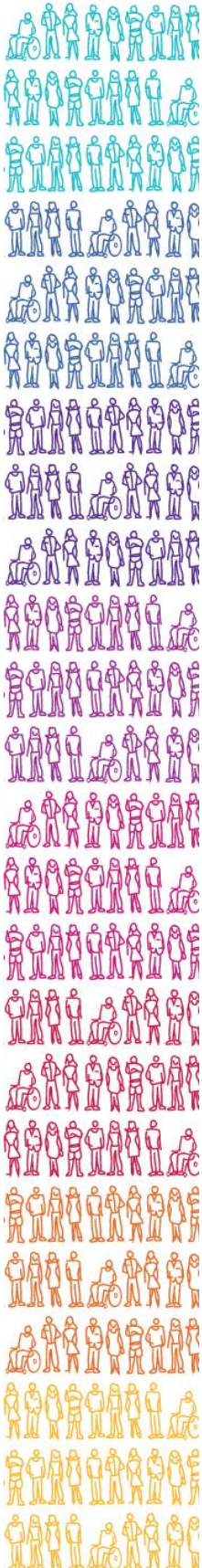
Approachability

We are open, honest and accessible

Our vision and values are important to the councils, and we expect you to support them and embed them in the way we work.

The benefits we offer

- 35 days **annual leave** per annum. You also have all the bank holidays to look forward to and time off between Christmas and New Year.
- **Salary pay awards** – most jobs give scope for a pay increase after six months or the following April (depending on your start date) and we also review salaries each April
- **Flexible working** – a flexible approach to work that our employees love!
- A generous career average **pension** scheme which includes life



insurance of three times your salary

- The opportunity to **purchase a bike** through Cyclescheme (cheaper than directly through a store) so that you can cycle to work!
- Various schemes to **keep you healthy** (reduced gym membership, free swims, free eye tests for DSE users and more)
- We give you two days per year to **volunteer** within the local community.
- A range of resources, support, and activities to help you maintain your **wellbeing** including a monthly wellbeing hour in addition to the ability to work flexibly and annual leave.

How to apply

Having read about our role if you have any questions, please email Legal and Democratic Team at Nick.Bennett@southandvale.gov.uk

If this job excites you, please complete our online application at <https://myrecruitment.southandvale.gov.uk/>

We look forward to hearing from you.