

JOB TITLE:	Director of Legal Services (including Statutory Monitoring Officer role)
GRADE:	Director

The Employer: The West of England Combined Authority

The West of England is an economic leader with an economy worth over £33 billion a year. With a population of over 1.1 million people, one of the highest rates of employment in the country, and over 45,000 businesses, the region competes on a global scale. The West of England is a place where highly-skilled people work, where ideas flourish, and where businesses grow. It's also a place that a diverse population of people call home.

The West of England Combined Authority was formed in 2017, to champion the region and drive clean and inclusive economic growth. As a result, significant powers and funding have been transferred to the region through the new Combined Authority and West of England Mayor.

Our aim is to deliver economic growth for the region and address some of our challenges, such as productivity and skills, housing and transport.

Covid-19 has had a big impact on the West of England, and we are leading the regional economic recovery, bringing people together to ensure our region remains a thriving, successful and innovative place to live and work. By joining the Combined Authority, you will be helping us with this important work.

The Authority is made up of three of the local authorities in the region - Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Building on a strong track record of partnership working in the region, the West of England Combined Authority continues to work closely with North Somerset Council. The Combined Authority also the accountable body for the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Combined Authority is an equal opportunities employer, in line with the Equalities Act 2010, and invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support they may need during the recruitment process.

Generic Job purpose

To lead the corporate direction of the Authority on delivering efficient, effective, professional services that are aligned to the organisation and political objectives.

As a member of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to contribute to the strategic leadership of the Authority, assisting and deputising for the Chief Executive in contributing to the effective and efficient management of the organisation to meet organisational objectives within agreed budgets.

Building and maintaining strong partnerships locally and nationally to support the new West of England Transport Authority, the post holder will be expected to lead on the development and delivery of key strategies, including the Local Industrial Strategy, Business Plan and Operating framework

Key Objectives

Effective strategic leadership

- Take full responsibility for leading and overseeing the strategic planning activity of the Directorate
- Drive strategic initiatives and support the development of long-term growth plans
- Support and advice the CEO, representing the views of the CEO internally and externally

Shape and deliver the Organisational and Political agenda

- Shape and guide the development of the services within the Directorate, ensuring that they integrate with strategic plans
- Develop, contribute to and deliver key priority strategies, initiatives and action plans
- Work closely with all the Strategic Directors in the organisation, and across the region, to create a joined-up approach to achieving organisational and political objectives.

Finance and resource management

- Drive the quality of the services within the Directorate and ensure effective deployment of resources
- Lead and motivate the directorate to deliver strategic excellence
- Ensure that financial objectives within area of responsibility are achieved and secure value for money
- Address and report adverse variances as appropriate
- Ensure commitment of partners to ongoing funded activity
- Secure and report on new funding streams as and when appropriate opportunities emerge

Partnership working

- Represent and promote the Authority within the region, working with others to achieve common goals
- Foster direct relations with key internal and external stakeholders

Team Management

- Foster effective communication, consultation and working relationships with employees and their representatives, particularly in the areas of work for which the post holder is directly accountable.
- Contribute directly to relevant Combined Authority meetings, Committees and other Members groups.
- Ensure that policies and processes are agreed and implemented to support delivery and that all legal and statutory obligations are met in relation to the relevant services and functions within the Directorate.
- Create high performing teams, demonstrating our values
- Manage the development of staff in the core team.
- Recruit new staff as appropriate
- Manage any issues around attendance and poor performance, as necessary.
- Champion the Authority's mission and values

Specific job purpose

To lead the strategic legal support required by the Combined Authority, providing monitoring and assurance to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Regional Mayor, ensuring transparency and legality of decision making.

To act as Statutory Monitoring Officer and Chief Legal Officer to the Regional Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and the Corporate Leadership Team in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

To provide service leadership to ensure the delivery of high-quality decision making, scrutiny, electoral, civic and councillor support functions in accordance with all legal and constitutional requirements.

To lead the Democratic Services service within agreed budgets, and in accordance with all Combined Authority policies and priorities, and ensure that they are efficient, focused, customer facing and accountable.

To be the board-level lead for all Democratic Services across the Authority

Specific duties and responsibilities

- Act as the Combined Authority's chief legal adviser on all matters, including employment law matters where appropriate, to provide and providing legal counsel to the board of directors, chairman of the board, chief executive officer and other senior management
- Arrange representation of the Authority in legal proceedings in Courts, Tribunals and Enquiries, legal advice to the Authority, Members and Officers to ensure that the Authority's policies and objectives are achieved lawfully and without challenge
- Lead all Legal Services and legal provision to the Authority
- Act as the responsible officer for all Democratic Services provision across the Authority, leading a small team to ensure the service is run in accordance with all legal requirements
- Investigate and report on any matters brought to the Monitoring Officer attention that may be illegal or amount to maladministration
- Be responsible for the conduct of councillors and officer, providing advice and guidance to ensure conduct is in line with the combined authority constitution and the law
- Attend all public meetings of the West of England Combined Authority to provide advice and guidance to the Regional Mayor on all matters relating to the conduct of these committees
- Ensure that the Combined Authority is operating within the legal and constitutional frameworks as required by the Combined Authority Order
- Ensure the management and maintenance of the Combined Authority's Strategic Risk Register and risk management policy in conjunction with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and the Chair of the Audit Committee
- Ensure the maintenance and yearly review of the West of England Combined Authority Constitution and the operational policies that support this, developing a programme to ensure Members and staff are aware of their responsibilities and legal framework in which they operate
- Monitor complaints and advise the Mayor, the Chief Executive and Members of any emerging areas of concern and potential actions to remedy

- Obtain internal and external legal advice to support the Governance function as appropriate
- Act as the Authority's Statutory Data Protection Officer
- To support the West of England Combined Authority's ambitious and inspirational goals for growth.

Core qualifications, knowledge and experience

- LLB or equivalent legal qualification/Qualified Solicitor or Barrister
- Strategic understanding of the directorate specialism, including key local government politics, political structures and culture
- In-depth knowledge and understanding to the link between constitution, governance, policy and strategy
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations, national policies and professional best practice
- Knowledge of public sector funding sources, finance procedures and budget management
- Proven experience of leading a legal service at senior level
- Significant experience of working as a Statutory Monitoring Officer
- Track record of providing legal advice and assurance to multi-disciplinary services within a large complex service-led organization
- Demonstrable experience of providing advice, guidance, governance and assurance to a strategic leadership team
- Proven experience within a complex political environment
- Comprehensive, up to date knowledge of legislation, practice and developments relating to the management of professional services in Local Government
- (D) Demonstrable experience of working within a local authority setting with Elected Members
- (D) Management qualification e.g., DMS, MBA, NVQ level 5
- (D) Member of relevant professional body
- (D) Relevant post-graduate qualification
- (D) Employment Law specialism knowledge

Core skills and competences

- Excellent communication, influencing and negotiation skills in a range of environments
- Ability to give appropriate, timely, targeted advice to support strategic decision making and ensure strong governance
- Ability to build partnerships internally and externally
- Ability to manage relationships and partnerships with a focus on the long-term, openly sharing to build trust, manage conflict and enable an understanding of the common ground.
- Ability to take a strategic approach, building coalitions or relationships to gain support over the long-term
- Demonstrable track record of leading and inspiring teams, motivating staff and developing a positive organisational culture
- Excellent interpersonal skills to command the confidence of colleagues, Members and external partners.
- Ability to balance logical and analytical approach to decision making whilst bringing innovative solutions to complex problems