

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Senior Commercial Lawyer
MANAGED BY:	Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer
GRADE:	13

THE ROLE

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority is seeking to appoint a Senior Commercial lawyer to join the Legal team.

Reporting into the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Senior Commercial lawyers are the principal legal advisors to the Authority on a range of high value (multi-million pound) projects, programmes and workstreams all of which are of regional, if not national strategic significance.

You will understand what it means to operate with a high degree of autonomy, operating as a legal business partner for our client services, thoroughly embedding yourself in their plans and operations and playing a key part in ensuring their success. You will be expected to confidently lead on providing legal advice and assistance ensuring a compliant, risk measured, and pragmatic approach is taken to project delivery against challenging timescales and across a wide range of complex and high-profile projects.

Your main specialism will be procurement and commercial contracts and you will also have a good understanding of the legal and practical requirements that apply to grant funding operations. Experience in transport, regeneration/development and/or information law is advantageous, as well as corporate governance experience in a local government environment. You will have a broad legal foundation, sound research skills and the self-awareness to enable you to work safely across areas outside of your specialisms. You will be able to provide legal advice and assistance directly but will also be expected to procure and then manage the provision of external legal support where necessary to give the client a complete, “one touch” legal service.

Previous local or central government experience is advantageous (either in-house or as a regular client base), but not essential. However, you will be expected to navigate and advise on internal clearance and decision-making processes. You will also have or be able to rapidly develop a keen awareness of key events and issues on the local, regional, and national stage which will affect our priorities, ability to

deliver and our relationships with key partners.

You will also be expected to deputise for the Head of Legal Services when necessary, attending internal and external meetings at the highest level, and advising high-profile meetings of the authority's committees. You will have significant post-qualification experience acting at a senior level, ideally with team or service management experience. You will be comfortable with financial planning and budget management, and with generating, interrogating and utilising management data to assist the Head of Legal Services in service planning and delivery and in reviewing the effectiveness of corporate governance policies and controls.

This is a politically restricted post.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The postholder will be required to:

Client Advice and Assistance

- Act autonomously and with confidence, quickly grasping the detail of complex projects and programmes, operating as the principal project or programme legal advisor/legal business partner providing holistic advice across the full range of legal, statutory and due diligence issues, procuring, and managing specialist external legal resource where required.
- Provide expert guidance and support on internal and external governance controls, consultation, engagement and decision-making requirements and processes, delegated powers, due diligence, and contract/document completion processes ensuring all such considerations are planned for and actioned correctly and in a timely manner.
- Ensure the correct balance is struck between pace and compliance, advising on, and managing risk to ensure the effective and timely delivery of the Metro Mayoral priorities.
- Provide comprehensive legal advice, support, and constructive professional challenge to the Authority's projects from inception to delivery, into business-as-usual operations and, where applicable, close-down evaluation and review.
- Advise and assist on procurement law and procedure to deliver safe, compliant, and timely procurements in the changing environment post Brexit across the full range of the Authority's functions.
- Advise on the safe and effective utilisation of grant funding dealing with subsidy control issues and striking the right balance between risk and rapid delivery.

- Draft and negotiate complex legal agreements, being comfortable with industry standard contracts and bespoke drafting, to ensure the timely delivery of the Authority’s objectives whilst protecting its interests.
- Provide legal and strategic advice to the Authority in dealing with information requests, complaints or other challenges and in dealing with priority correspondence, whilst deriving and embedding continuous organisational learning and improvement from the same.
- Advise on legal matters affecting a public body more generally at both an operational “day to day” basis, but with particular regard to developments at a national level likely to affect the organisation’s governance requirements, future funding streams, interactions with its partners and stakeholders, powers, remit or purpose.

Work and Team Management

- Be responsible for their own workload, managing allocations across the team, maintaining quality and cost control over a portfolio of external legal work and supporting the Director in respect of constantly developing and evolving the how the authority’s legal and governance functions are discharged.
- Provide support/Line manage as required to more junior members of the Legal & Governance team including junior/trainee solicitors or legal executives, information governance officers and democratic services colleagues to develop their skills and competencies.
- To manage legal budgets and costs associated with your own caseload and any external caseloads you are responsible for overseeing, ensuring both quality, timeliness, and value for money.
- Show a genuine and constant commitment to “living and breathing” the Authority’s values and demonstrating the associated behaviours.

Ambassadorial Role

- Represent the Combined Authority with a range of stakeholders, including four Unitary Councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the private sector in a professional and diligent manner.
- To represent and promote the work of the Combined Authority and the wider West of England Region, locally, regionally, and nationally, as required.
- To present (and help others present) complex information, legal or

statutory considerations and strategy advice to the corporate leadership team, Metro Mayor and other key meetings or stakeholders in a variety of formats as required, ensuring this information is clear and able to be understood so that it supports effective, high-quality decision making.

Supporting the Director/Monitoring Officer

- Stand in the shoes of the Director, when necessary, in project meetings with external partners to provide advice which enables key decisions to be made to keep projects on track and within risk tolerances.
- Provide advice on constitutional and corporate governance issues, to senior leadership, politicians, and (where appropriate) senior external partners and stakeholders.
- Work with other members of the Legal & Governance Directorate and other key corporate services such as the Commercial and Procurement Team to make open, honest and effective decisions within (and continuous improvements to) the Authority's formal governance structures.
- To deputise for the Director as required in internal meetings such as CLT, Corporate Governance Board, Commercial Panel or any of the authority's committee meetings or briefings.
- To act as Deputy Monitoring Officer when required to do so in the absence of the Director. To, at all other times, act as the "eyes and ears" of the Monitoring Officer to identify, deal with or escalate matters of probity, conduct, corporate governance, lawfulness or maladministration.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Qualified Solicitor or barrister or CILEX with significant post qualification commercial experience.
- Currently practising and qualified solicitor, barrister or chartered legal executive.
- Evidence and commitment to continuous personal and professional development.
- Knowledge of the key issues facing the West of England Region.
- Knowledge and understanding of operating professionally and confidently in a complex political environment.

- Knowledge of the legal framework, the role, function and statutory powers of the Combined Authority.

Experience

- Significant post qualification experience in commercial work, with significant experience in at least three of the following areas: public procurement, commercial contracts, regeneration, transport, adult education & skills, net- zero/climate/environment, information technology.
- Experience of autonomously managing own legal caseload as a principal lawyer.
- Experience of drafting legal clauses and legal agreements to govern the commercial contractual relationships with third parties.
- Experience of operating at a senior level in own discipline.
- Experience of working, influencing and advising on contracts and structuring often complex legal transactions.
- Experience of working with, influencing and negotiating with external and internal stakeholders at all levels.
- Experience of operating effectively and collaboratively as part of a team and supporting colleagues from other departments.
- Experience of management of budgets and achieving value for money.
- Experience managing/supervising other legal professionals.

Skills and Competencies

- Good knowledge of procurement law and experience of drafting all forms of contracts and letters of understanding.
- High standards of professional and strategic awareness and conduct.
- Ability to make risk-based legal judgements and articulate these clearly to enable sound decision making at a leadership and political level.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to deliver a proactive service and continuously improve.
- The ability to negotiate, influence and to be able to engender confidence, trust and respect.
- The ability to prioritise work against competing demands to meet deadlines.
- An understanding of and a personal commitment to delivering a high-quality legal service and ensuring service standards are met.

DESIRABLE

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Specialist legal qualification and previous public sector experience.
- To have worked on a major development project.
- Membership of (or eligibility to join) a recognised and relevant professional body.
- A positive, flexible and responsive individual, with a creative approach to problem solving.
- The ability to work effectively as part of a project delivery team.

- A commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities.
- Experience of working in the public sector.