



Candidate Pack

Director of Legal & Democratic Services



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Welcome

Letter from Kevin Foster, Strategic Director - Corporate Resources

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Legal and Democratic Services at Woking Borough Council.

This role will be integral to the Council's response to the Government intervention and to ensuring that the authority operates effectively in the future. Woking is in a unique 'turnaround' position which – whilst clearly challenging – also provides a fantastic opportunity for the right candidate, motivated by the opportunity to make a tangible impact on the future of Woking Borough Council and Woking itself.

Alongside acting as the Council's Monitoring Officer and managing the operational work of the Legal, Democratic Services and Marketing & Communication teams; this post leads on delivering the Governance and Assurance workstream of the Council's Recovery Plan. This theme aims to ensure that there is effective governance, risk management and scrutiny arrangements in place at the Council and that rounded decisions are taken on the basis of appropriate evidence and analysis.

If you feel this is a challenge you can meet and have the drive and experience, then I look forward to receiving your application.

Your faithfully,



Kevin Foster
Strategic Director – Corporate Resources



Advert



Director of Legal & Democratic Services

up to £108,000

Woking is facing a financial challenge on a scale which is unprecedented. However, we have been working effectively with Commissioners in developing an Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP), which will put in place the appropriate systems, processes and skills to ensure the effective management of the Council in the future.

Alongside acting as the Council's Monitoring Officer and managing the operational work of key teams, this post will lead on delivering the Governance and Assurance workstream of the Council's IRP. This will ensure that there is effective governance, risk management and scrutiny arrangements in place at the Council and that rounded decisions are taken on the basis of appropriate evidence and analysis.

This role will be integral to the Council's response to the Government intervention and to ensuring that the authority operates effectively in the future. Woking is in a unique 'turnaround' position which – whilst clearly challenging – also provides a fantastic opportunity for the right candidate, motivated by the opportunity to make a real and tangible impact.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact
Rob Naylor or Ben Cox on 0121 592 2165.

For more information and to apply please visit
www.fairfield.co.uk/woking

Closing date: **Midnight 6th September 2024**

Færfield



WOKING
BOROUGH COUNCIL

About Woking

Located in the heart of Surrey, 30 miles south-west of London, Woking is a modern and vibrant borough containing a thriving town centre, attractive waterways and beautiful countryside dotted with charming villages. The town centre benefits from convenient, high quality and accessible shopping, the latest entertainment facilities, special cultural events and a superb range of dining options across a range of cuisines. Excellent transport and infrastructure links, strong communities, and a healthy and economically active population make Woking a desirable and attractive borough in which to live, work and play.

As has been widely reported, Woking Borough Council (WBC) is facing a financial challenge the scale of which is unprecedented. This is due to historical commercial and regeneration investments leading to unsustainable levels of borrowing. WBC's current debt exceeds £2 billion, whereas its net revenue budget is c £20m.

On 25th May 2023, the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities exercised his powers under the Local Government Act 1999 to intervene in WBC. The Secretary of State considered that the Council had failed to meet its 'best value duty'. The intervention is formed of a set of actions which the Council is directed to take, and the appointment of Government commissioners who have been given powers over certain functions.

However, despite this challenging context, WBC is working effectively with Commissioners and has developed an Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). The IRP sets out how WBC is responding to Government directions and seeking to put in place the appropriate systems, processes and skills to ensure the effective management of the Council in the future.

This role will be integral to the Council's response to the Government intervention and to ensuring that the authority operates effectively in the future. WBC is in a unique 'turnaround' position which – whilst clearly challenging – also provides a fantastic opportunity for the right candidate, motivated by the opportunity to make a tangible impact on the future of Woking Borough Council (and Woking itself).

Alongside acting as the Council's Monitoring Officer and managing the operational work of the Legal and Democratic Services teams, this post leads on delivering the Governance and Assurance workstream of the Council's IRP. This theme aims to ensure that there is effective governance, risk management and scrutiny arrangements in place at the Council and that rounded decisions are taken on the basis of appropriate evidence and analysis.



Job Description and Role Profile

Job Title: Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Pay Grade: W10

Directorate: Corporate Resources

Team: Democratic & Legal Services

Reporting to: Strategic Director – Corporate Resources

Job Purpose:

- Ensure arrangements are in place for the effective management and delivery of corporate, electoral, member, legal services, marketing and communications ensure lawfulness and fairness in the Council's business and decision-making processes.
- Accountable for the management, delivery, performance and development of employees in Legal and Democratic Services and Marketing and Communications and lead on policy developments in these areas.
- To support the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) in its responsibilities to report on the business of the Council, communicate decisions, achieve results and provide advice and guidance to the Council, its Committees and the Executive.
- To undertake delegated authorities as detailed in the Council's Constitution.
- To be responsible for the delivery of the Governance and Assurance theme of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Main Tasks:

- Adoption and development of new ways of working in line with the Councils Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- To act as the Council's solicitor and manage its Legal, Elections, Democratic Services and Marketing & Communications functions.
- Subject to appointment by full Council, to act as the Council's Monitoring Officer under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Section 5 and to report directly to the Council on any matter within the Monitoring Officer's statutory remit.
- Maintain an up-to-date version of the Council's Constitution and ensure it is widely available for consultation by members, staff and the public and is applied in practice.
- Ensuring lawfulness and fairness in decision making. After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and Chief Finance Officer, report to the full Council or Executive in relation to executive functions if it is considered that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or if any decision or omission has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report is considered.
- Advise whether decisions of the Executive are in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework and provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions. To highlight any maladministration, financial impropriety as well as any probity and Budget and Policy framework issues to all Councillors.



- Contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- Proper officer for access to information. Ensure that executive decisions, together with the reasons for those decisions and relevant officer reports and background papers are made publicly available as soon as possible. Act as the Council's Freedom of Information/Data Protection (Fol/DP) officer and provide advice and guidance to the Council and staff on its application.
- Proper officer: acting as the same for miscellaneous prescribed purposes under the Local Government Act 2000 and relevant statutory instruments.
- Maintain a register of Councillors' and officers' interests and register of gifts and hospitality received by them.
- Communicate effectively with internal and external partners to enable greater understanding of the Council's activities and plans.
- Liaise with and advise elected Members on all aspects of the section's work and prepare and present reports accordingly.
- Manage the section's expenditure to ensure costs are maintained within budgets and constantly seek ways to reduce costs and provide best value.
- To provide the service in accordance with the Council's Vision.
- To work effectively with colleagues in delivering a high quality service through excellent team working and good communication.
- To provide excellent customer service.
- To work in a flexible manner and to be willing to undertake other duties as reasonably requested including outside of office hours.
- Such other duties as may be required from time to time at a level appropriate to the post.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Director of Legal & Democratic Services

Criteria	Standard	E/D	Measure
Education & training	• Educated to degree level or equivalent.	E	A
	• Relevant professional legal qualification.	E	A
	• Evidence of continuing professional development preferably with a professional qualification in a relevant discipline.	E	A
Experience	• Experience of working in an organisation where partnership working is crucial to delivering success.	E	A, I, P
	• Experience of leading/managing legal services at a senior level in local government.	E	A, I, P
	• Experience of advising Councillors regarding the constitution, standing orders, register of interests and code of conduct.	E	A, I
	• Experience of democratic administration activities at a senior level in local government.	E	A, I
	• Experience in successfully developing and implementing relevant strategies and projects.	E	A, I, P
Special Skills	• Ability to build productive relationships with external organisations and stakeholders.	E	A, I
	• Strategy development and delivery skills.	E	A, I, P
	• The ability to manage, plan and deliver a wide ranging workload and work under pressure.	E	A, I, P
	• Problems solving and analytical skills.	E	A, I, P
	• The ability to work effectively as part of a team.	E	I



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. • Project management skills. • Proficient Microsoft Office skills. 	E D D	I, P A, I A, I
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A willingness to adopt an enthusiastic and flexible approach and to contribute to the work of the Council. • Positive attitude to public service. • Commitment to continuous improvement. 	D E E	I A, I A, I
Special Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the local government legislation and the ways in which the council works. • Understanding and interpretation of central government policies that affect local government. • To learn from and apply lessons from other private / public bodies. 	E E D	I I I

E = Essential, D = Desirable

A = Application form, I = Interview, P = Presentation

Candidate Screening:

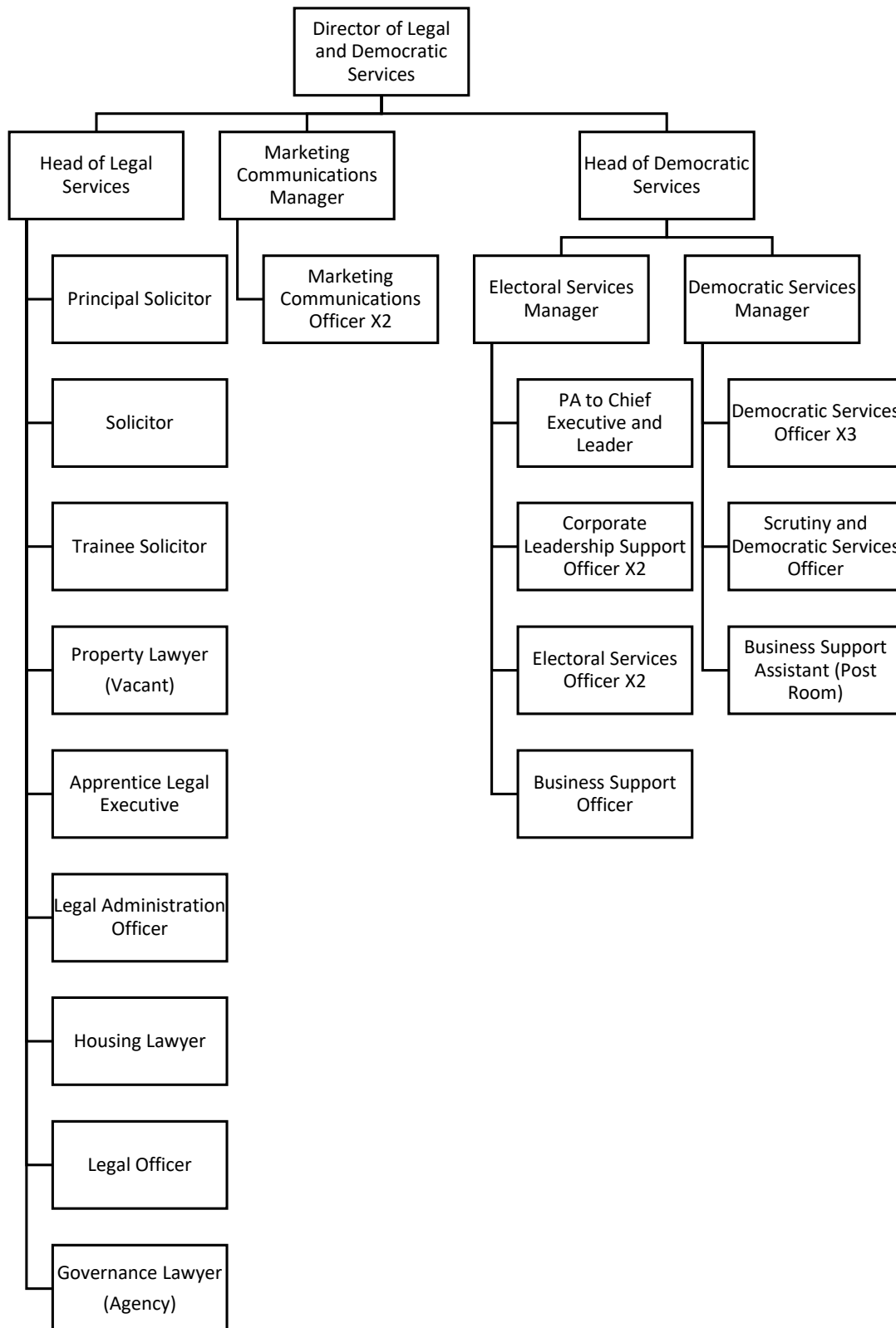
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 doesn't apply

Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure: Standard

Date: July 2024



Structure Chart



Application Process

Closing date for applications: Midnight 6 September 2024

Preliminary Interviews (via Teams): w/c 16 September 2024

Assessment Centre & Final Interviews: w/c 7 October 2024

For a confidential discussion about this role please speak to:

Rob Naylor

Tel: 0121 312 3755

Email: rnaylor@faerfield.co.uk

Ben Cox

Tel: 0121 312 3755

Email: bcox@faerfield.co.uk

To apply, please go to the link below:

www.faarfield.co.uk/woking

