

Senior Leader Role Profile

Post Title: Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Date: April 2026

Term: Permanent

Tier Level: One

Reports to: Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)

Purpose of the Role

The Monitoring Officer provides senior leadership and statutory oversight for the legal, governance and democratic functions of the Cumbria Combined Authority (CA). The role ensures decision-making is lawful, supports high standards of conduct, develops and maintains the CA's Constitution, and guides the organisation through its formation and early operation.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & Governance

- Act as the CA's most senior legal adviser, ensuring lawful, ethical and effective decision-making.
- Lead legal, governance and democratic services.
- Develop and maintain the Constitution, governance framework and compliance systems.
- Provide strategic advice to the Mayor, Members and senior officers.
- Ensure effective liaison with the Scrutiny Committee, supporting transparency, good governance and robust challenge.
- Provide clear, evidence-based reports and advice to scrutiny members, enabling them to effectively hold decision-makers to account.
- Manage budgets across legal and governance ensuring value for money.

Operational Delivery

- Ensure compliance with all statutory duties, including data protection and information governance.
- Lead and oversee the Members' Code of Conduct and Standards framework, ensuring systems for complaints, investigations and determinations are fit for purpose.
- Promote and embed a culture of high ethical standards across the organisation, providing guidance to Members and officers on conduct, probity and accountability.
- Lead the set-up and transformation of core CA governance and democratic processes.

- Oversight for all key contracts, commercial arrangements and commissioning activities, ensuring compliance with procurement law and the CA's Contract Procedure Rules.
- Establish robust contract management and assurance processes, enabling transparent, well-governed and value-for-money contractual relationships.
- Advise on complex commercial negotiations, risk allocation and dispute resolution.
- Oversee legal and democratic assurance, and manage relationships with key partners (e.g., Westmorland & Furness Council, Cumberland Council).
- Lead major projects supporting the establishment and development of the CA.
- Ensure robust decision-making, documentation and evidence of compliance.

Communication & Influence

- Present complex legal and governance matters clearly to diverse audiences.
- Influence senior stakeholders and negotiate in sensitive or complex situations.
- Represent the CA at internal, regional and national forums.
- Respond to media enquiries and safeguard the CA's reputation.

Partnership & Corporate Working

- Build strong, collaborative relationships with Members, staff, partners and communities.
- Support regional partnership work and shared initiatives.
- Contribute to the corporate planning and strategic direction of the CA.

Systems, Data & Reporting

- Provide accurate data and reports for Members, Committees and leadership teams.
- Use systems to support quality assurance, record keeping and governance processes.
- Analyse complex information to support transformation and decision-making.

Strategic Leadership

- Implement national legislation and best practice.
- Develop modern business processes and support continuous improvement.
- Lead policy, guidance and procedure development.
- Provide senior leadership to ensure alignment between political and organisational priorities.

Knowledge, Skills & Experience (Essential Summary)

Knowledge

- Degree-level education or equivalent experience.

- Qualified solicitor or barrister (or equivalent).
- Strong knowledge of local government law, governance and democratic processes.
- Understanding of statutory requirements including equality, data protection and confidentiality.

Skills

- Strong leadership and change management capability.
- Excellent communication, influencing and negotiation skills.
- Strategic thinking and sound professional judgement.
- Political awareness and ability to work in complex, devolved environments.
- Effective budget, resource and risk management skills.
- Strong IT and data literacy.

Experience

- Senior-level leadership experience in legal and democratic services.
 - Extensive post-qualification legal experience.
 - Experience of partnership working at senior level.
 - Proven track record of managing resources, budgets and performance.
 - Experience presenting to Members and senior leaders.
 - Experience delivering transformation or organisational change.
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Other Requirements

- Ability to work the hours that are reasonable and necessary to fulfil the requirements of the post.
- Ability to travel across Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland and attend meetings outside of the region.
- This is a politically restricted post as defined by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.