

## Kent County Council

### Job Description: Principal Democratic Services Officer

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<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Strategic and Corporate Services</b>
<b>Division:</b>	<b>Governance, Law &amp; Democracy</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Sessions House, County Hall</b>
<b>Grade:</b>	<b>KR11</b>
<b>Responsible to:</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>

#### **Purpose of the Job:**

To assist the Council in complying with governance arrangements by leading on advising Members of the County Council, Corporate Directors and senior officers on matters related to Council governance and organising and supporting all meetings of the Council, Executive, overview and scrutiny committees to ensure they function in accordance with the requirements of law and the Council's constitution.

To provide an effective and efficient governance and administration support service for other meetings, decision making processes and independent appeals process, as appropriate.

#### **Main duties and responsibilities:**

To support effective the management of formal governance arrangements and lead on the servicing of Council meetings, briefings, Cabinet, boards, overview and scrutiny and other committee and Council meetings in accordance with legal, constitutional and procedural requirements, which will include a number of the following on a regular or irregular basis:

- Supervising Democratic Services Officers
- Advising Members and Senior Officers in writing on committee procedure and related governance matters
- Reviewing, researching and advising on appropriate governance processes for formal Council activity
- Compiling and drafting agendas
- Checking the content and format of reports and other documents and advising officers and Members accordingly
- Collating, printing and despatching agendas and reports
- Attendance at meetings (physical and virtual), associated minute taking and recording of decisions; including advising members and officers of the Council on Committee procedures and practices, and ensuring that decisions are taken lawfully and in accordance with the Constitution and accurately recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

- Publishing Cabinet Member decisions
- Ensure venues, equipment, refreshments are booked and witnesses and other guests are invited as necessary
- Securing agreement to the formal record
- Initiation and implementation of actions arising from committee decisions including the preparation of statutory/public notices for inclusion in the press and on the Council's website
- Administration of the Council's call-in procedure

Key responsibilities:

To supervise and line manage (as required) Democratic Services Officers within the team.

To take a proactive approach to the provision of support, guidance and advice to Members and officers on the correct procedures for the taking of decisions by or on behalf of the Council to ensure that all decisions are lawful, properly publicised and free from the risk of successful challenge (including overseeing management of the Council's Forward Plan).

To contribute to and actively support the modernisation and improvement of the Council's democratic processes.

Clerking and arranging meetings of such other public bodies as may wish to contract with the Council for the provision of that service, ensuring that the business of those bodies is discharged in a lawful and correct manner, e.g. the ACCESS Joint Committee and Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. Such external clerking activity will require travel to relevant non-KCC venues.

Clerking of the statutory independent panel process to hear education admission, exclusion and home to school transport appeals to ensure all appeals are conducted in a timely manner and in accordance with relevant legislation and national Codes of Practice.

To have a good awareness of the Council's Strategic Plan and policies adopted in support of the strategy and plan combined with an understanding of how these impact on or require formal governance processes facilitated by Democratic Services.

To keep abreast of any major developments within the Council with particular emphasis on those issues that directly impact on Democratic Services.

To keep abreast of changes in legislation, national and local guidance and regulations and best practice that impact on democratic services.

To demonstrate a commitment to personal development.

To fulfil the requirements of the Council's Diversity Policy and procedures ensuring that principles are adhered to.

To participate in arrangements made under the County Emergency Plan and to respond when called upon in an emergency at any time including attendance out of normal working hours at County Hall if required.

To undertake any other similar or reasonable duties commensurate with the level of the post as required by the Democratic Services Manager.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what his/her main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

Kent County Council  
 Person Specification: **Principal Democratic Services Officer**

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The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	<b>CRITERIA</b>
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The post holder should hold a degree or equivalent qualification plus an appropriate professional qualification.</li> </ul>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate extensive and successful experience of democratic services or similar work, in a local authority or other public body.</li> <li>Experience of supervisory and / or line management roles.</li> <li>Experience clerking high profile and complex committees.</li> <li>Experience organising and prioritising work.</li> <li>Experience of giving advice confidently and authoritatively to senior individuals and groups (both privately and in public).</li> <li>Knowledge of legislation relevant to role as Principal Democratic services Officer, as set out in the Job description.</li> </ul>
<b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to undertake the work associated with this role with the minimum of supervision and to exacting standards and deadlines.</li> <li>Able to demonstrate excellent negotiation, presentation and management skills.</li> <li>Good IT competence including MS Office, Modern Gov and Impulse.</li> <li>Assertive, persuasive, flexible and diplomatic</li> <li>Political awareness and sensitivity</li> <li>A good team player with the ability to take ownership of and work independently on specific projects</li> <li>Have a high level of both written and oral communication skills.</li> <li>Able to demonstrate can deal directly with stakeholders including all elected members, officers at all levels of the organisation and partners.</li> </ul>

<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound knowledge of Local Government Law, governance arrangements and practices. An essential component of this post is for the holder to have the knowledge and ability to give clear, accurate and timely advice at Committee and other meetings of the Council or in writing to relevant Members and Officers of the Council.</li> </ul>
<b>BEHAVIOURS AND KENT VALUES</b>	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge</li> <li>• We are curious to innovate and improve</li> <li>• We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</li> <li>• We are strong together by sharing knowledge</li> <li>• We are all responsible for the difference we make</li> </ul>