

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Democratic Services Officer – KR8*

Directorate: Strategic and Corporate Services

Unit/Section: Governance and Law

Grade: KR8

Responsible to: Democratic Services Manager

Purpose of the Job:

To organise and support 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 administrative support service for other meetings, decision making processes and independent appeals process, as appropriate.

Main duties and responsibilities:

To undertake the servicing of council, 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:

- Compiling and drafting agendas
- Checking the content and of reports and other documents to ensure that they comply with legal and governance requirements and liaising with officers and Members accordingly
- Collating, printing and despatching agendas and reports
- Attendance at meetings, associated minute taking to produce an accurate record of the decisions made at the meeting.
- 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.
- Liaising with Directorate Governance Officers and ensuring that cabinet member decisions are published in accordance with legal and KCC governance requirements –
- Ensure venues, equipment, refreshments are booked and witnesses and other guests are invited as necessary
- Checking that formal record of decision has the necessary directorate approval by liaising with Directorate Governance officers
- Initiation and implementation of actions arising from committee decisions

In relation to all of the above tasks it is expected that the post holder will seeking advice from senior/experienced colleagues as necessary.

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,

To contribute to the modernisation and improvement of the council's democratic processes.

Contribute to the work required to plan for County Council Elections and in relation to a range of support services to Members, including induction and other learning and development to ensure that Members are supported to perform their official roles.

Contribute to the clerking 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.

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 general awareness of the Council's Strategic Plan and policies adopted in support of the strategy and plan and to keep abreast of 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.

The Career Grade will be applied across all Democratic Services Officer utilising the below requirements:

KR8 level will be the starting point for staff appointed with general administrative experience but not specific experience in a local authority democratic services team

Progression to a KR9 level will be achieved when the following criteria has been achieved:

- Achieving the ADSO qualification and;
- On behalf of the General Counsel, act independently to advise Members, and Independent Panel Members, both within and outside of formal meetings settings.
- In consultation with the Democratic Services Manager, develop processes for the servicing of Committees consistent with elected Members wishes, particularly concerning access to, and the presentation of information and the co-ordination of items between Committees.
- Provide advice to Officers and Members in relation to the executive and non-executive decision making process.

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Person Specification: *Democratic Services Officer Career Grade*

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.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good general education to A-Level or equivalent • Excellent standard of written English
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable relevant experience in office administration preferably within a local authority or other public body • Experience of clerking high profile and complex committees. • Experience of organising and prioritising work • Experience of giving advice confidently and authoritatively to senior officers and Members on all matters relating to committee administration and local authority decision making processes • Knowledge of the legislation relevant to the role as Democratic Services Officer as set out in the Job Description, e.g. Access to Information.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A “can-do” flexible approach to work • Ability to use initiative whilst under pressure • Ability to give advice confidently on constitutional and procedural matters • Good IT competence including MS Office, Modern Gov and Impulse • Assertive, persuasive, flexible and diplomatic • Political awareness and sensitivity • A good team player with the ability to take ownership of and work independently on specific projects
BEHAVIOURS AND KENT VALUES	<p>Ability to demonstrate the 8 Kent competencies and behaviours as appropriate for KR2 to KR12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Truth and judgement • Conversation and Compassion • Empowerment and Enterprise • People and Partnerships • Character and Courage • Outcomes and Delivery • Radicalism and Urgency • Tools and Professionalism <p>Kent Values:</p> <p>Open</p> <p>Invite Contribution and Challenge</p> <p>Accountable</p>

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- Attendance at meetings, 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

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.

To contribute to the modernisation and improvement of the council's democratic processes.

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