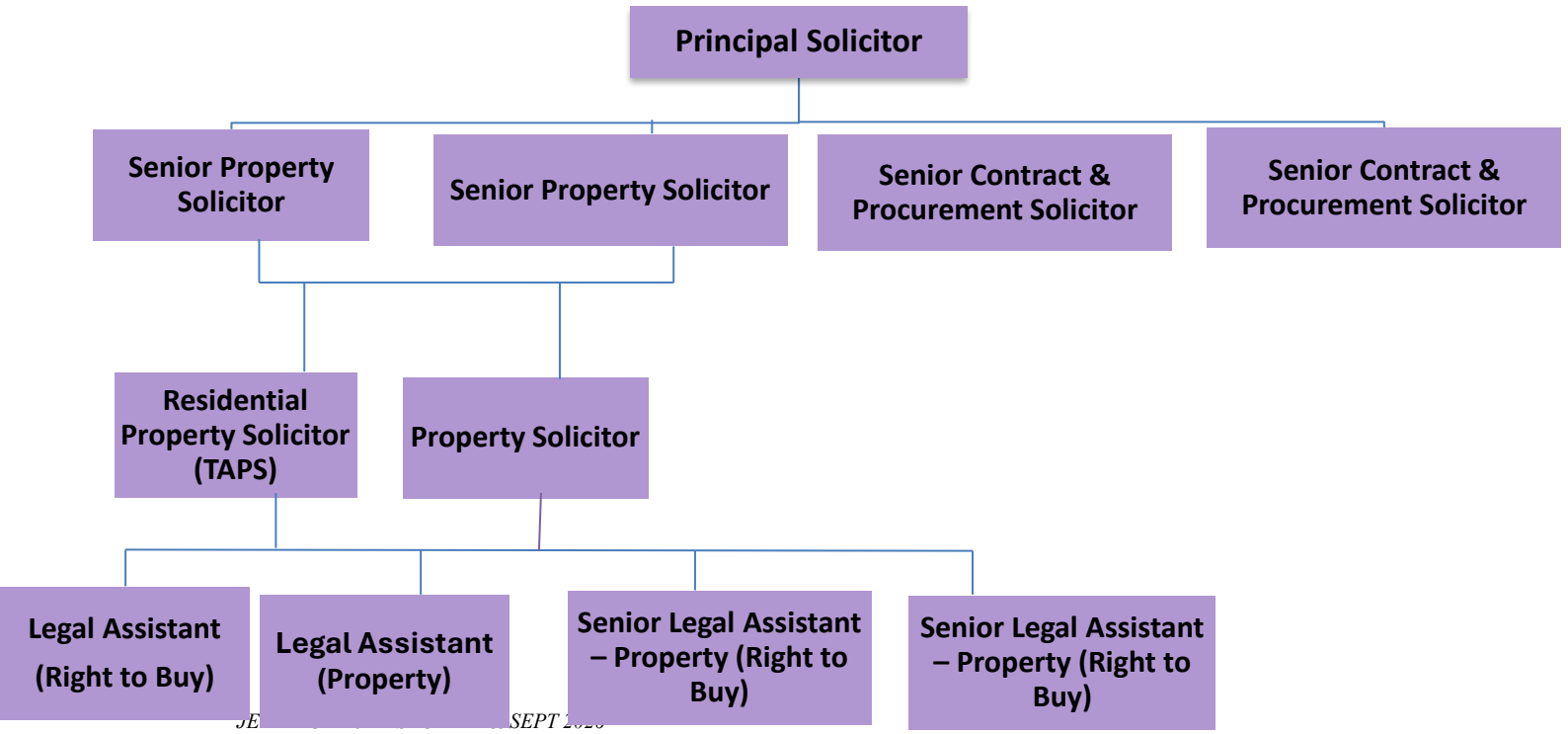
JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE:	SENIOR SOLICITOR - Property & Planning
POST NO:	PREF106105
DEPARTMENT:	Governance
SERVICE:	LEGAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Principal Solicitor
GRADE:	M5

PURPOSE OF POST:

To provide high quality legal advice in relation to property and planning matters which takes into account Council's business needs and objectives. The Postholder will manage a complex caseload of commercial and local authority property matters, including acquisitions and disposals, landlord and tenant matters, regeneration projects, strategic land transactions, planning enforcement and Section 106 agreementsThe Postholder will work closely with senior officers, external stakeholders and project teams, providing commercially focused legal advice while ensuring the Council's interests are protected and legal risks are effectively managed.

TEAM CHART:



PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES: **%**

1. Provide high-quality pragmatic legal advice and guidance to officers and elected Members on a range of complex property and planning matters, developing innovative and legally robust solutions that support the Council's strategic objectives and decision-making. 15

2. Manage a varied and complex portfolio of high-value property and land transactions, commercial property matters including acquisitions, disposals, landlord and tenant matters, leases, licences, easements, development agreements, regeneration projects, and other land transactions. Undertake routine planning enforcement and Section 106 agreements work as required. 40

3. Lead and manage complex property transactions, land matters and strategic projects, applying extensive knowledge of English, property, conveyancing and land law, supported by demonstrable knowledge of planning law. Exercise significant professional autonomy in negotiating, drafting and completing complex legal arrangements, identifying and managing legal, commercial and reputational risks, and providing authoritative, pragmatic advice to officers, Members and stakeholders to support the Council's operational, regeneration and strategic objectives. 20

4. Prepare reports for and attend meetings of the Executive, Committees, Sub-Committees and other Members and Officer bodies, and provide legal and procedural advice on complex and high profile matters to ensure decisions are lawful, robust and capable of implementation in accordance with the law. 5

5. Exercise professional judgement in identifying matters requiring specialist legal advice, and, where appropriate instruct brief and manage external counsel and Solicitors (as may be approved by the Head of Legal Services or the Principal Solicitor to ensure value for money, effective case management and high-quality outcomes. 5

6. Deliver training, guidance and legal updates to officers and stakeholders on relevant legislative regulatory and policy developments, promoting compliance, best practice and informed decision-making across the Council.

7 Provide mentoring, supervision and technical support to junior solicitors, legal officers, trainees and paralegals, support work allocation within the team and case management across the team, ensuring high-quality legal services are delivered. Deputise for the Principal Solicitor as required and contribute to the effective management and leadership of the Team and to the service planning, innovation and modernisation initiatives within Legal Services 5

8. Maintain expert knowledge of developments in property law, planning law, local government legislation and government policy, advising on their implications for the Council's property portfolio, projects and strategic objectives. Drive continuous improvement by developing and implementing efficient working practices that support the effective, responsive and cost-effective delivery of legal services 5

DIMENSIONS:

Supervisory Management: The postholder will provide day-to-day supervision, mentoring and technical guidance to Junior Solicitors, Trainee Solicitors and Legal Officers, supporting their development and contributing to the effective delivery of the team's objectives.

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Financial Resources: N/A
Physical Resources: Laptop etc.

Other: The post holder will be responsible for assisting in effecting transactions on a wide range of investment property transactions for the Council and its wholly owned companies' helping to secure rental income, realise capital receipts and mitigate risk. The role will also contribute to the delivery of major capital projects and the Council's Property Disposal Programme influencing key commercial and financial outcomes.

CONTEXT:

The Property Planning, Highways, Procurement and Contracts Team provides a comprehensive service to all Council Services and the Council's wholly owned companies. The Postholder will play an important part in supporting this work, majoring on property but also dealing with planning and will handle his/her own case load in accordance with corporate, departmental and service guidelines, with a minimum of supervision.

In addition to the main responsibilities the Postholder will be expected extensively to assist the Principal Solicitor with the development of the Property Planning, Highways, Procurement and Contracts Team . This role will include elements of organising and planning the work of the Team and, particularly, the coaching, guidance training and supervision of more junior members of staff. The Postholder will be required from time to time to represent or deputise for the Principal Solicitor and to carry out special projects and to assist in corporate inter-service or inter-departmental projects from time to time.

In undertaking professional legal work, the Postholder will have to exercise professional skills of the highest order gained through wide experience, requiring both a depth and breadth of legal professional knowledge to an extensive degree.

In undertaking professional legal work and in giving legal advice the Postholder will have considerable autonomy, advising all levels through the organisation, including, from time to time, Corporate Directors and Elected Members with professional supervision being in the nature of ensuring that the professional role is being carried out within Corporate, Departmental and Service guidelines and in line with Council and Service objectives and the Legal Services Service Plan.

The Postholder will be called upon and have authority to take or recommend to taking of decisions which may have a significant impact on the Council's and its wholly owned companies' finances (e.g. the entering into a legal binding contract for the sale or purchase of land).

The Postholder will have authority to instruct Counsel subject to compliance with agreed service procedures.

Physical Effort: N/A

Working Environment: Normal office environment plus element of hybrid working.

Person Specification

This acts as selection criteria and gives an outline of the types of persons and the characteristics required to do the job.

Essential (E): - without which candidate would be rejected.
Desirable (D): - useful for choosing between two good candidates.

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give clear examples. of how you meet the essential and desirable criteria.				
Attributes	**Essential**	**How Measured**	**Desirable**	**How Measured**
Experience	Significant experience of effecting complex property transactions including advising on acquisitions, disposals, leases, and regeneration matters. Demonstrable experience of planning enforcement and drafting and negotiating Section 106 agreements, with limited supervision. Experience of effectively managing resources to achieve value for money and provide a high-quality service. Experience of supervising or mentoring more junior staff.	1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2	Local government experience Experience of dealing with highway (in particular s38 and s278 agreements) and compulsory Purchase matters	1, 2 1, 2
Skills/Abilities	Ability to draft and negotiate complex property, land and related legal documentation, minimising risk to the Council while delivering pragmatic and commercially focused outcomes. Strong analytical skills with the ability to assess and evaluate business risk, and to present legal risks in the context of the client's needs. Ability to independently manage a mixed caseload of commercial property work that would be considered to be highly complex and/or organisationally high profile.	1, 2 1, 2 1, 2		1, 2

	Excellent Oral and written communication skills with the ability to advise senior officers, Members and stakeholders, elicit relevant information in complex situations and translate it into clear, practical and effective legal advice, reports and legal documentation	1, 2		
	Demonstrates sound judgement, decisiveness and authority in evaluating complex and sensitive matters, making reasoned decisions, balancing legal and commercial risk, and providing persuasive advice that influences senior officers, Members and stakeholders. .	1, 2		
	Competent ICT skills including basic keyboard skills, familiarity with word-processing packages, case management systems and simple databases or ability to acquire the same.	1, 2		
	Ability to represent the Council at meetings of the Executive/Committees and at meetings with other public authorities and/or external third parties and give sound legal advice.	1, 2		
	Ability to work effectively under pressure, managing competing priorities and tight deadlines while maintaining high standards of performance, accuracy and client service	1, 2		

Equality Issues	Working Knowledge and understanding of equality issues and legislation	1, 2		
Specialist Knowledge	In depth knowledge of English Law with significant expertise in property, conveyancing and land law. Comprehensive understanding of residential and commercial property transactions, including complex acquisitions, disposals, development agreements, landlord and tenant matters, easements and title issues Demonstrable knowledge of Planning Law	1, 2, 3 1, 2, 3 1, 2, 3 1,2,3	knowledge of compulsory purchase, appropriation and subsidy control. Knowledge Local Government Property Law Experience of regeneration, development or infrastructure projects.	1, 2 1, 2
Education and Training	Must be a Solicitor, Barrister or Chartered Legal Executive qualified in England and hold (or be able to obtain) a current practising certificate in England and Wales	4		
Other Requirements	A minimum of 6+ years' PQE is essential Ability to attend Council offices and meetings as required.	1,2,3		

(1 = Application Form 2 = Interview 3 = Test 4 = Proof of Qualification 5 = Practical Exercise)

We will consider any reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equalities Act (2010) to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

The Jobholder will ensure that Luton Borough Council's policies are reflected in all aspects of his/her work, in particular those relating to:

(i) Equal Opportunities
(ii) Health and Safety
(iii) Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (2021)