

JOB DESCRIPTION



Effective Date: February 2026

**Location:
Hybrid (Across Swale, Maidstone &
Tunbridge Wells Borough
Councils)**

Job Title: Senior Lawyer (Planning)

Grade: 9

Responsible to: Team Leader (Planning)

No. of Staff Responsible For: 0

PURPOSE OF JOB

To provide proactive high quality professional legal services in the field of planning law while managing a diverse (including complex) legal caseload, as part of a shared legal service referred to as "Mid Kent Legal Services (MKLS).

MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

- To undertake an extensive legal caseload, including complex planning law related work as a senior member of the MKLS Planning team, providing proactive high quality legal services to clients and elected members (including committee) across the Mid Kent Service (“MKS”) authorities (Maidstone, Swale & Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils) and to any other MKLS customer in accordance with Lexcel standards and in a way that reflects the MKLS Values.
 - Legal Advice and Support: Providing legal advice to planning officers, committees, and other stakeholders on planning and development law, development regulations, and associated legal matters.
 - Drafting and Reviewing Documents: Drafting, reviewing, and negotiating legal documents related to planning and development, including Section 106 planning obligations, and enforcement notices and advising on officer delegated and committee reports for meetings of the MKS authorities.
 - Conduct Legal Research: Staying informed about changes in planning and development law, relevant regulations, and case law to ensure that advice and practices remain current and accurate.
 - Compliance and Risk Management: Ensure that planning decisions and procedures comply with relevant laws and regulations, identifying and mitigating potential legal risks.
 - Representation: Assist the MKS authorities with (and if necessary attend) planning appeals (hearings or Inquiries) or other legal proceedings, where required, to support planning decisions and defend against challenges and to instruct Counsel as necessary.
 - Collaboration with Stakeholders: Work closely with planning officers, other local government departments, and external stakeholders, such as developers, to ensure smooth and lawful planning processes.
 - Contribution to Policy Development: Assist in the development and review of local planning policies and guidelines to ensure they are legally sound and support the partner authorities’ strategic objectives.
 - Attend Meetings: to attend meetings of the MKS authorities including planning committee and other bodies as required and to work with the Monitoring Officer and/or their Deputy in giving proactive and clear advice to elected members as required regarding probity, conduct and bias/predetermination in connection with planning proposals and committee work.
- To provide legal supervision to less senior fee earners in the MKLS Planning team as appropriate including junior lawyers and work closely with the Legal Assistant (Planning) and the Legal Support Officers to supervise the administrative support they provide in delivering the legal services.
- Prepare and deliver or assist with the preparation and delivery of relevant planning and development training and member briefings at MKS authorities when required, enhancing the knowledge and skills of internal stakeholders.
- Perform other duties and functions that align with the senior planning lawyer's role and are commensurate with the grade of the position, supporting overall team goals and objectives.

Miscellaneous

- To be committed to the Visions, Strategic Plans and policy frameworks of the MKS authorities.
- To use and assist others to use information technology systems including the case management system (Iken) and to carry out duties in the most efficient and effective manner.
- To participate in intra- and inter-departmental working parties and corporate groups across the MKS authorities.
- To represent the MKS authorities as appropriate at external meetings.
- To undertake any training and development as required.
- To comply fully with the Councils' Equal Opportunity Policy.
- To comply fully with the Councils' Health and Safety at Work Policy.
- To assist as required in the Councils' Emergency Plan.
- To comply fully with the Councils' IT Security Policy.
- Any other duties commensurate to the role's grade.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
Senior Lawyer (Planning)



Attributes:		Essential / Desirable	Assessed By
Education, Training and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified lawyer, solicitor or barrister or suitably qualified legal executive or other qualified lawyer • Knowledge in other areas of local government law, such as administrative law, property law, and public law being desirable with a basic knowledge of data protection laws as they apply to public authorities. • Knowledge of environmental law and sustainability issues as they relate to planning. • Ability to communicate planning and development law and procedures clearly to a range of stakeholders, including councillors, planning committees, clients including senior leaders and key decision-makers at the highest levels and the public. • Familiarity with statutory instruments, regulations, and guidance relating to local government planning and development law with an aptitude for analysing planning issues and offering sound legal advice in a local government context. • Awareness of recent developments and case law in planning law and local government. • Excellent legal drafting including planning agreements • Excellent legal advice, negotiation, and interpersonal communication skills for collaborating with council officers, planning teams, and external stakeholders • Ability to respond efficiently to the changing needs of clients and competing priorities of the MKS authorities. 	<p>Essential</p> <p>Desirable</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Desirable</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p>	<p>Application/ Checks</p> <p>Application / Interview</p>
Experience	Substantial post qualification experience in planning law and practice.	Essential	Application / Interview

	Experience of operating in politically sensitive environments and able to demonstrate a good degree of political acumen.	Desirable	Application / Interview
	Experience in Planning Appeals and court proceedings, planning enforcement cases, issuing enforcement notices, and advising on legal compliance.	Desirable	Application / Interview
	Experience of partnership working or working within a shared service.	Desirable	Application / Interview
	Experience of best practice, innovation and continuous improvement in the delivery of legal services.	Essential	Application / Interview
	Ability to travel to attend offices of the MKS authorities wherever that office may be based.	Essential	Application / Interview
	Full UK Driving Licence	Essential	Application / Check
	Ability to be available to attend evening meetings remotely or at the offices of the MKS authorities, and in the event of emergencies or urgent management issues in relation to the MKS authorities.	Essential	Application / Interview

COMPETENCY PROFILE

Honest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truthful and takes responsibility • Act with integrity and keep commitments • Build trust through fairness and transparency • Self-motivated and able to work on own initiative
Empathetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen actively and with care • Respond with compassion • Create a supportive environment for all
Adaptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay open to change • Learn from challenges • Resilient and committed, remaining composed under pressure. • Communicate clearly and consistently during times of change
Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone with fairness and dignity • Listen to diverse perspectives • Create an environment where all voices are heard
Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works collaboratively for shared goals • Support one another effectively • Build strong, trusting relationships