

Role:	Director of Law, Governance & Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
Reports to:	Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service <i>As a statutory officer the postholder has direct access to the Board, its Chair and, from election, the Mayor, and to the Chairs of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</i>
Grade / Salary:	Director (SMG)
Date of issue:	8 October 2026

Purpose of Post

The Director of Law, Governance & Compliance is the Strategic Authority's Monitoring Officer, designated under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and its most senior adviser on law, governance and assurance. With the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and the Section 73 Chief Finance Officer, the postholder is one of the three statutory officers who together safeguard the lawfulness, propriety and financial integrity of everything the Authority does. It is an integral and strategic role, providing authentic, strong and visible leadership within the organisation across all areas of competence.

The postholder leads governance and assurance for the Authority at a strategic level: as custodian of the Constitution and the Local Assurance Framework, as principal governance adviser to the Board and its committees, and as the officer who assures the Chief Executive, the Board, Government and the public that decisions are taken lawfully, openly and with proper regard to value for public money. Strong governance and assurance are what allow the Authority to act quickly and to be trusted with more.

That matters more as devolution deepens. The Government's Rewiring the State reforms commit to devolving powers and funding by default, to fiscal devolution (including an Overnight Visitor Levy for all strategic authorities and, for mayoral authorities, retained tax revenues), to aligning fire, policing and health boundaries with strategic authorities, and to a stronger local accountability system in which chief executives of mayoral strategic authorities become Local Accounting Officers and the Local Audit Office has a stronger role. The postholder will make sure that the Authority's governance and assurance arrangements are ready ahead of each new power and funding stream, and ahead of the election of the first Mayor.

The key areas of responsibility within the Directorate are Governance and Assurance, Legal, Democratic Services and Information Governance, all reporting to the Director.

The postholder will report to the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and will have a close relationship with the Section 73 Officer and the Board, subsequently the Mayor, to provide independent advice, guidance and direction, deliver effective governance arrangements and compliance with legislation and fulfil statutory officer requirements. The statutory duties of the Monitoring Officer are personal to the postholder and are exercised independently.

We expect this role to deliver:

- authoritative, independent and high quality legal and governance advice, reflecting best practice, to the Board, Mayor, Members and Officers
- an innovative and evolving governance framework that anticipates new powers, funding and accountabilities rather than following them
- assurance to the Chief Executive, the Board, the Audit and Governance Committee and Government that the Authority's decisions and use of public money are lawful, regular and well governed
- the Authority's governance readiness for deeper devolution, fiscal devolution, the transfer of public service functions and mayoral governance
- strategic leadership and effective management of legal, governance, democratic and information governance services
- a full and active role on the Senior Leadership Team
- support for the delivery of an ambitious strategic framework
- an 'enabling approach' within services provided by the Directorate and across the organisation

Key Accountabilities

Statutory Monitoring Officer

- Discharge personally and independently the statutory functions of the Monitoring Officer under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, including the duty to report to the Board on any proposal, decision or omission that is or would be unlawful or amount to maladministration, ensuring the Strategic Authority fulfils its lawful obligations and statutory duties in accordance with the Strategic Authority's Constitution.
- Work with the Chief Executive and the Section 73 Officer as one of the Authority's three statutory officers, meeting regularly to anticipate risk, test significant proposals at a formative stage and give the Board joined-up advice, in line with the Code of Practice on Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers.

- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct, leading the ethical framework for Members and officers (the Codes of Conduct, registers of interests, complaints and whistleblowing arrangements) and supporting the Audit and Governance Committee in its standards role.

Strategic governance and assurance

- Lead, develop and evolve the governance framework so that decisions of the Board, its committees, the Mayor and officers are lawful, open, well evidenced and timely, and ensure that the Mayor, Members, the Business Advisory Board and the Representatives Panel are appropriately supported in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Act as custodian of the Constitution and the Local Assurance Framework, keeping both under review and ensuring adherence to them across all activities, programmes and investment decisions, so that the Authority can show Government, auditors and the public that devolved funding is committed lawfully and with proper assurance.
- Lead the Authority's system of corporate assurance with the Section 73 Officer, including the annual review of governance, the Annual Governance Statement and the Authority's response on governance matters to internal audit, external audit and the Local Audit Office.
- Act as principal governance adviser to the Audit and Governance Committee and ensure that Overview and Scrutiny is properly supported, so that challenge and accountability meet the standards of the English Devolution Accountability Framework and the Scrutiny Protocol.

Devolution, Rewiring the State and readiness for mayoral governance

- Lead the Authority's governance readiness for the Government's Rewiring the State reforms and the devolution White Paper: anticipate new powers, funding and duties, advise the Board on their legal and constitutional implications, and ensure that the Constitution, delegations and assurance arrangements are in place before new functions are exercised.
- Design and maintain the accountability arrangements that deeper devolution requires, including support for the Chief Executive's prospective role as Local Accounting Officer, the outcomes framework and the role of Members of Parliament in local accountability, so that the Authority can evidence that it is a safe and credible recipient of devolved powers and funding.
- Provide legal and governance leadership for fiscal devolution and new investment models, including any Overnight Visitor Levy, retained tax revenues and investment funds, ensuring lawful decision-making, consultation and transparency.
- Lead the legal and constitutional work for the transfer and integration of public service functions, including fire and rescue and police and crime functions, and for

the transition to mayoral governance, including the first mayoral election and the governance of deputy mayor and commissioner roles.

- Represent the Authority with Government and in national governance networks, helping to shape national policy on accountability, assurance and capability and bringing best practice back to Sussex and Brighton.

Legal, governance and information services

- Develop the legal model, ensuring the timely provision of high quality legal and governance services to facilitate the delivery of projects and programmes in accordance with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Provide leadership and direction overseeing the full range of legal, governance and compliance core functions including regulatory, property and contract law, compliance oversight, external and internal governance and information governance.
- Act as the most senior legal advisor to the Strategic Authority, the Mayor, the Deputy Mayors, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and S73 Officer, identifying areas of risk and liability and advising on solution focussed strategies to deliver the Strategic Authority's priorities.
- To support the Chief Executive and other Directors to deliver the aspirations and outcomes contained within the SA corporate plan and associated strategies.
- Shape and deliver the objectives of the service to support the Strategic Authority in achieving its vision and maintaining an enabling and compliant culture.
- Ensure the processes around the publication scheme, data protection and GDPR, freedom of information and wider information governance meet statutory requirements and are embedded across the organisation.
- Discharge the functions delegated to the Director of Law, Governance & Compliance (Monitoring Officer) in the Constitution including the institution, conduct or defence of any legal proceedings or disputes, and nominate and develop a Deputy Monitoring Officer so that the statutory role is resilient.
- Provide legal and governance advice, solutions and guidance to Members and officers on procurement, subsidy control, commercial arrangements and the governance of the Authority's companies and partnerships, in accordance with the Constitution, procurement framework and relevant legislation/best practice.

Corporate leadership

- Take a proactive corporate role in the leadership of the organisation as a full and active member of the Senior Leadership Team. Responsible as a member of the senior leadership team for consistent and visible leadership across the

organisation, creating an environment where teams can aspire, flourish, thrive and perform.

- Promote partnership working across the organisation and always demonstrate organisational values and behaviours.
- Influence, develop and motivate their team, always taking a positive approach to their development, and build governance capability and confidence across the Authority through training, guidance and clear, plain-English advice.
- Provide assurance, with the Section 73 Officer, that the Strategic Authority's legal, policy, people, financial and systems functions are fit for purpose and meet all statutory requirements, enabling the Strategic Authority to operate effectively and efficiently.
- To facilitate the identification and compliance with EDI improvements/changes across all services and service delivery, giving due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty when performing duties and functions/activities.
- Ensure delivery of quality, consistent, compliant and value for money services.

Directorate Structure

The structure of the Directorate is evolving to ensure it can deliver on emerging and developing requirements around our core areas of competence and devolution ambitions. You will play the key role in determining resource requirements within the Directorate moving forward. At present the structure has a Head of Governance, Head of Legal, Lawyer, Information Governance Lead and a Head of Democratic Services. Democratic Services are currently supplied via a Service Level Agreement from a constituent council. The postholder will nominate a Deputy Monitoring Officer from within the Directorate and is entitled to the staff, accommodation and other resources needed to discharge the Monitoring Officer's statutory duties.

Experience

- Educated or experienced to master's degree/post graduate professional qualification level with supporting management training or equivalent experience
- Qualified Solicitor, Barrister or Chartered Legal Executive (Fellow of CILEX)
- Experience as a Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer, or of exercising equivalent statutory governance responsibility, in a combined, strategic or other complex public authority
- Extensive experience of successfully performing in a similar role including the provision of legal and governance services in a high-profile political environment

- Experience of designing, implementing or assuring governance and assurance frameworks for major public investment, such as constitutions, schemes of delegation and assurance frameworks agreed with Government
- Experience of leading governance through significant change, such as the creation of a new authority, the transfer of functions or the introduction of mayoral governance
- Demonstrates a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion always
- Substantial experience of operating in a senior leadership role responsible for a portfolio of services/teams
- Proven leadership and people management experience of developing high-performance teams and adapting leadership style required for the individual and team to thrive and flourish
- Sound understanding of the corporate decision making, constitutional and legal/governance environment in which the Strategic Authority operates, including the devolution framework and the accountability and assurance expectations that come with devolved powers and funding
- Experience of making compelling presentations and written reports for a range of audiences
- Strong political awareness and sensitivity
- Experience of providing direct advice to officers and members of a board on a range of complex issues both verbally and in writing
- Evidence of commitment to continuous professional and personal development

Skills, Abilities and Behaviours

- Confident communicator, able to discuss broad and complex issues with a wide range of partners/stakeholders using appropriate skills such as engagement, influencing, shaping, persuasion and negotiating
- Able to develop effective working relationships and partnerships and drive consensus in a respectful and consistent way that builds trust and values the contributions of others
- Well-developed strategic and critical thinking
- Strategic with sound and timely decision making and leadership judgement
- Personal authority, independence and resilience: able to give clear and sometimes unwelcome advice to the most senior Members and officers and to stand by it
- Able to anticipate the legal, governance and assurance implications of national policy and turn them into practical, proportionate arrangements
- Agile, resilient with the ability to prioritise competing demands/deadlines and the determination to deliver

- Ability to:
 - work collaboratively as part of a cohesive leadership team ensuring open and effective communication
 - interpret, analyse, monitor and track information and progress and use judgement and evidence-based decision making to create solutions and opportunities
 - able to communicate insights derived from the analysis of data/information to a range of audiences
- Authoritative in public and local government law and the democratic process, able to provide clear professional advice where legal and professional standards are not met and to recognise when specialist advice is needed

Values in practice

- **Setting People First** We put the best interests of residents / communities and business at the heart of every decision.
- **Being Open and Accountable** We act with transparency, integrity and fairness in everything we do.
- **Stronger Together** We collaborate across Sussex and Brighton to deliver better outcomes.
- **Always Improving** We use evidence, learning and innovation to improve what we do and deliver results.

Working Conditions

Emotional Demands: Leading under pressure and managing competing priorities.

Physical Demands: Role will be agile with some travel required to sites across East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and outside of the region.

Working Conditions: Agile working with office-based presence as required.

Political Restriction

This is a politically restricted post under section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and applicable legislation. The postholder cannot be an elected member of a local authority and is restricted in the political activity they may undertake.