West Midlands Combined Authority

Job Description

Job Title:	Chief Legal & Governance Officer
Directorate/Team:	Corporate Services
Location:	16 Summer Lane or other site/location
Responsible to:	Executive Director of Corporate Services
Accountable to:	Chief Executive Officer via matrix management
Responsible for:	3 Heads of Service leading the Legal, Governance and Audit functions
Key working relationships: (internal)	The Mayor, WMCA Executive Board, Senior Leaders, Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) members and employees across the Authority.
Key working relationships: (external)	Constituent and Non-Constituent Members, Government Departments and Government Agencies, other Combined Authorities and related organisations, regulators, auditors, senior law practitioners, barristers and professional advisory bodies.

Purpose of the Post

To ensure the West Midlands Combined Authority operates as a high-performing, resilient and well-governed organisation, capable of delivering its strategic priorities and long-term ambitions for the region.

As Chief Legal & Governance Officer the role holder is accountable for setting the strategic direction and ensuring the performance, professional standards and continued development of the Authority's legal, governance, audit and assurance functions. The role will ensure a coherent and robust framework that enables lawful and transparent decision-making, operational delivery, effective risk management and continuous improvement across the Authority.

The role will act as the statutory Monitoring Officer, advising on legality, ethical standards, probity and governance, and ensuring that the Authority operates within its statutory and regulatory framework. The role will also safeguard the independence, objectivity and professional integrity of the Authority's statutory and audit functions.

As a member of the WMCA Executive Board, the role holder will provide visible corporate leadership, shaping organisational strategy, influencing decision-making and risk appetite, and ensuring effective governance, organisational resilience and long-term sustainability. The role holder will contribute to the leadership of the Authority as a whole, sharing collective accountability for organisational performance, culture, resilience and long-term sustainability, while retaining individual accountability for the legal, governance, audit and assurance portfolio.

Accountabilities

- Member of the Executive Board, contributing to corporate leadership, organisational strategy and overall performance and sustainability of the Authority.
- Accountable for the strategic direction, performance, professional standards and continuous improvement of the Authority's legal, governance, audit and assurance functions.
- Accountable for the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the WMCA's organisation-wide governance, legal and assurance framework.
- Accountable for ensuring the legality, integrity and transparency of corporate decision-making and governance processes.
- Perform the statutory role of Monitoring Officer, providing advice on legality, ethical standards, probity and governance, and exercising delegated authority as required.
- Safeguard the independence, objectivity and professional integrity of the Authority's statutory and audit functions.

- Work in partnership with other Statutory Officers to ensure robust governance, risk management and assurance across the Authority.
- Act as principal legal adviser to the Mayor, Members and senior officers on governance, legal and information governance matters.
- Act as Clerk to the Combined Authority and Proper Officer for meetings, fulfilling statutory duties in line with relevant legislation.
- Act as shareholder representative on behalf of the Authority in relation to arm's-length bodies and commercial entities, where formally designated.
- Lead and influence governance practice across the WMCA and wider system, ensuring alignment with legislation, regulation and best practice.
- Contribute to and provide governance and assurance oversight of the Authority's organisational performance and continuous improvement arrangements, ensuring that decision-making, risk and assurance support delivery of corporate priorities.
- Provide corporate leadership and assurance on organisational governance and resilience, ensuring that legal, audit and assurance arrangements support the Authority's long-term sustainability.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Authority's business planning, performance and organisational development frameworks.
- Act as a corporate sponsor for organisational change, transformation and improvement programmes.
- Act as a champion for equality, diversity and inclusion, supporting organisational objectives and inclusive outcomes.
- Accountable for the effective stewardship of delegated budgets and resources within the function.

Responsibilities

Strategic

- Lead the development and delivery of WMCA's governance, legal and audit strategy, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and statutory responsibilities.
- As a member of the Executive Board, shape organisational strategy, influence key decisions and provide authoritative advice on governance, legality and risk.
- Provide strategic leadership and assurance to key governance bodies, including ARAC and Overview & Scrutiny, ensuring effective oversight and accountability.
- Ensure the WMCA constitution and governance arrangements are effective, legally robust and aligned to organisational objectives and best practice.
- Influence and contribute to the development of regional and national governance practice where appropriate, representing WMCA at external forums.
- Provide strategic advice on complex, high-risk and high-profile issues impacting the organisation.
- Ensure organisational governance, risk, performance and assurance arrangements operate as an integrated framework that supports delivery of corporate priorities.
- Lead and sponsor major organisational transformation and improvement programmes where required.
- Contribute to the development of corporate priorities, organisational performance frameworks and delivery plans across the Authority.
- Support the Chief Executive in driving organisational effectiveness, resilience and long-term sustainability.

People

- Provide strategic leadership to Heads of Service and senior leaders across legal, governance and audit functions, ensuring high performance, capability and succession planning.
- Foster a culture of professional excellence, collaboration and continuous improvement across the function and wider organisation.
- Build strong, effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including constituent authorities, partners and government bodies.
- Contribute to organisational leadership, including culture, leadership capability and workforce sustainability across WMCA.
- Promote effective collaboration across directorates to ensure governance and legal considerations are embedded in organisational activity.
- Provide leadership across organisational boundaries, fostering collaboration, shared accountability and collective leadership across the Authority.

- Sponsor organisational culture and change initiatives that support improved performance and employee engagement.

Operational

- Ensure effective frameworks, systems and controls are in place for the delivery of legal, governance and audit services.
- Provide strategic oversight of legal risk, including litigation and complex legal matters.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the commissioning and oversight of external legal services where required.
- Provide oversight of internal audit and assurance functions, ensuring insight and recommendations inform organisational decision-making.
- Ensure robust governance, risk and assurance mechanisms are embedded across the organisation to support delivery of objectives and statutory compliance.
- Ensure compliance with legislative, regulatory and governance requirements across all areas of responsibility
- Oversee organisational performance monitoring and assurance arrangements, ensuring delivery against strategic objectives.
- Ensure continuous improvement in the effectiveness, efficiency and value for money of the legal, governance and audit functions.
- Ensure governance, legal, audit and assurance arrangements actively support organisational delivery, innovation and transformation.
- Provide leadership on organisational resilience, corporate governance and business continuity arrangements.

Financial

- Accountable for the effective stewardship and management of budgets and resources within the function, ensuring value for money and financial compliance.
- Work in partnership with Finance colleagues to set, manage and monitor budgets.
- Contribute to the Authority's long-term financial sustainability through effective governance, resource planning and organisational efficiency initiatives.
- Support corporate resource allocation and investment decisions through the provision of strategic governance, assurance and risk advice.
- Contribute to corporate financial strategy, ensuring governance and legal considerations are integral to financial decision-making.

Other

- Represent WMCA at senior regional and national forums on governance, legal and assurance matters.
- Undertake such duties as may reasonably be required, commensurate with the scope and level of the role.

Person Specification

Candidates/post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:	Essential / Desirable		How Evidenced?		
Experience	**E**	**D**	**A**	**I**	**T**
Extensive experience operating within, or advising, complex public sector organisations at Executive Board or equivalent senior leadership level	X		X	X	
Significant experience of working within local government or a comparable regulatory environment		X	X	X	
Significant experience of leading or sponsoring complex organisation-wide change, transformation and continuous improvement programmes	X		X	X	
Experience of leading large, complex professional or corporate functions	X		X	X	
Significant experience operating as a member of a senior executive leadership team, leading complex cross-organisational activity through senior leadership groups	X		X	X	
Extensive experience of applying and interpreting statutory frameworks, particularly within local government	X		X	X	
Experience of advising on complex and high-risk legal, governance and strategic issues	X		X	X	

Extensive experience of influencing strategic decision-making and advising elected members, senior stakeholders and external partners within a complex political environment	X		X	X	
Proven experience of leading, managing and developing high-performing teams	X		X	X	
Experience of managing budgets and resources and delivering value for money	X		X	X	
Skills/Knowledge/Abilities	**E**	**D**	**A**	**I**	**T**
Exceptional strategic thinking and the ability to shape organisational direction and decision-making	X		X	X	
Strong political awareness and the ability to operate effectively within a complex governance and stakeholder environment	X		X	X	
Highly developed influencing and negotiation skills at senior organisational and system levels	X		X	X	
Strong understanding of organisational performance, business planning and corporate delivery frameworks.	X		X	X	
Ability to balance strategic, operational, financial and political priorities.	X		X	X	
Proven ability to provide organisation-wide leadership and influence beyond professional specialism.	X		X	X	
Ability to communicate complex legal, governance and policy issues clearly to a wide range of audiences	X		X	X	
Strong collaborative leadership style with the ability to work across organisational boundaries	X		X	X	
Comprehensive knowledge of relevant legislation, governance frameworks and national policy context	X		X	X	
Qualification / Education / Training	**E**	**D**	**A**	**I**	**T**
Degree level qualification or equivalent experience	X		X		
Qualified solicitor or equivalent recognised legal qualification	X		X		
Evidence of continuing professional development	X		X		
Leadership and/or management qualification		X	X		

Key: A = Application, **I** = Interview, **T** = Testing/Assessment

Core Expectations	
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health, safety, and wellbeing of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work; and co-operate with their employer so far as is necessary to enable it to successfully discharge its own responsibilities in relation to health, safety, and wellbeing.
Equality & Diversity	Promote and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of the role.
Learning & Development	Participate in and take responsibility of any learning and development required to carry out this role effectively.
Performance Management	Actively engage in the performance management process and take responsibility for managing performance outcomes.
GDPR	Ensure the reasonable and proportionate protection, processing, sharing, and storing of WMCA information in accordance with the relevant legislation, corporate policies, and in the best interests of the data subjects (Data Protection/GDPR), the WMCA, our partners, and the West Midlands, in all aspects of the role.
Adherence to Policies	Be aware of and comply with all organisation policies.
Matrix Working	Work in a matrix way when required by actively collaborating across traditional boundaries—such as directorates, functions, or geographic areas—to achieve shared goals. Depending on your role, you may contribute to multiple projects or workstreams, often working alongside different teams and leaders.

Business Continuity	All staff should actively participate in business continuity training and exercises when required, ensuring they understand and follow business continuity plans and procedures to maintain organisational resilience during disruptions.
Other	There may be a requirement to work outside normal office hours on occasion, including a requirement to work within stakeholder and partner offices within the WMCA constituent area on a regular basis.

Values	
Collaborative	We work as one organisation, building trust, connection and shared purpose across teams and partners to create the biggest impact for our region.
Inclusive	Every voice matters – we create belonging, fairness and psychological safety so everyone can thrive.
Innovative	We think future and act smarter – embracing curiosity, creativity and continuous improvement to shape the future.
Driven	Focused on impact – leading with clarity, care and courage to deliver meaningful results for the West Midlands.
Our culture is built on collective leadership, where everyone plays a part in shaping how we work and succeed together. Guided by our values, we create an environment where people feel valued, supported and able to contribute their best. Through behaviours grounded in clarity, care and courage, as set out in our Leadership Statement we are making the West Midlands Combined Authority the best place to work and belong.	

Additional Post Requirements							
Politically Restricted Post		**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**				**Vetting**	
Yes ☒	No ☐	Basic ☐	Standard ☐	Enhanced ☐	None ☒	Yes ☒	No ☐

Job Evaluation Details			
Date Evaluation Agreed	**JEP Reference**	**Grade**	**Job Family**
Position Reference			