



JOB DESCRIPTION

**Form
JD1**

JOB TITLE: Head of Democratic Governance

POST NUMBER:

REPORTS TO (Job Title): Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

DEPARTMENT: Governance

GRADE: 13

JE REF:

PANEL DATE:

24/6/21

1. MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB

To provide scrutiny and advice to ensure that council decisions and actions are made correctly and are legally compliant, and that elections are prepared for and carried out correctly and efficiently.

Through service leadership of the Democratic Services and Electoral Services Teams, to deliver high quality decision making, scrutiny, electoral, civic and councillor support functions in accordance with all legal and constitutional requirements.

As the key contact for council members, to facilitate and manage productive working relationships with Members and other internal and external key stakeholders.

To deputise for the Director of Governance as and when necessary, and to act as the Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer (subject to appointment by the Monitoring Officer) and to support the Monitoring Officer in the performance of his/her statutory functions in so far as they relate to issues within the remit of the service area.

2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS & DUTIES:

i To support the Director of Governance by providing strategic leadership across all areas of managerial responsibility to ensure that effective management systems and processes are in place throughout Democratic Services and Electoral Services.

ii To be responsible for the strategic leadership and direction of the elections and electoral registration service and support the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer in the management and operation of UK Parliamentary, local and parish elections, Police Commissioner elections, referendums and parish polls.

iii Is responsible for the interpretation and management of the

		documents associated with the Council's Constitution, including the Constitution itself, the various Procedure Rules, and the Scheme of Delegation. Together with the Monitoring officer the post holder is responsible for the development of these documents, to ensure that they meet statutory requirements, are relevant, and remain up to date.
	iv	To ensure that all decisions made are in the context of the above documents and that effective governance is achieved through seamless collaboration with Legal Services and other Teams in the wider Governance Department.
	v	To provide advice and support to the Corporate Management Team, especially around electoral and constitutional issues. Will attend CMT meetings in the absence of the Director of Governance.
	vi	To provide advice and support to all councillors, and specifically to the Leader, Executive, Group Leaders, Scrutiny Chairs and Committee Chairs in relation to effective and lawful decision-making processes, civic and ceremonial responsibilities and appropriate courses of action/processes that achieve issue resolution.
	vii	To support the Group Leaders and/or Group Whips to address and eliminate barriers to effective decision-making and promote effective working relationships with officer colleagues in the context of achieving good governance through effective behaviour, leadership and mutual respect.
	viii	To develop policy and procedures in relation to member learning and development to ensure the effective delivery of the annual Training and Development Programme for councillors including the councillor induction programme.
	ix	To ensure that councillors' needs in the governance of the Council and the requirements of their Wards are met. To resolve issues in the context of working in a finely balanced political organisation, without recourse to senior management.
	x	To arrange, support and advise the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors Allowances.
	xi	To manage the performance of the service and to build capacity, add value and deliver continuous improvement. Will develop and implement the annual Service Plan and performance manage the service to ensure priorities and improvement are delivered, setting clear targets and priorities in line with corporate strategies and performance standards.
	xii	To manage the provision of services to any external body to meet

		the standards agreed in a Service Level Agreement.
	xiii	To collaborate with and support the Director of Governance through processes of organisational change and development to deliver the most effective and efficient services possible.
3.	SUPERVISION / MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE Number of staff reporting to jobholder and nature of supervision eg full line management responsibility or day to day supervision of work Direct: 2 Indirect: 2 Political Assistant roles	
4.	CREATIVITY & INNOVATION The highest level of creativity and innovation is required to develop innovative processes of work, new services and protocols for the discharge of the Council's statutory functions, duties and responsibilities. The post-holder is regularly presented with unique and highly complex and contentious situations that require rapid and detailed analysis in determining options and managing the expectations of stakeholders. The post-holder needs excellent problem solving skills to explore and identify, with no or minimal guidance, appropriate and imaginative solutions to a variety of non-routine problems within a wide range of work areas. Using their detailed and expert knowledge of statutory and other regulations and local governance documents, they must find solutions to questions or problems raised. They must ensure the appropriateness, integrity and legality of advice given or decisions taken. Within the context of the Council's legal powers and duties the post-holder is required to be to be proactive and innovative in advising on ways in which the implementation of the Council's policies and programmes and the carrying out of its responsibilities to its citizens and customers can be best achieved.	
5.	CONTACTS & RELATIONSHIPS The post holder will be the first point of contact for all questions around the constitution, electoral issues and other areas falling within these teams, from council members, officers and stakeholders. Internal Councillors and Democracy – Works closely with councillors, Group Leaders (individually and collectively), Committee Chairs, Parish Councils and Political Assistants to develop policy and procedures, agree work programmes and ensure effective support for both councillors and decision making. This involves daily contact with councillors and with officer colleagues throughout the Council at all	

	<p>levels and across all service disciplines, taking account of the political and organisational implications of advice given and the approach to tackling issues.</p> <p>Will act as adjudicator in cases of conflict involving council members, or issues around the Code of Conduct, in the absence of the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>There is a regular requirement for a high degree of knowledge of all Council services to facilitate problem solving and ensure credibility. There is a need for the post holder to have highly developed political awareness and the ability to act independently to resolve problems and issues and promote effective and productive working relationships between councillors and officers.</p> <p>Elections - Works closely with the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer, party agents, candidates, councillors, MPs, other Council Departments, the Electoral Commission, and Central Government Departments to ensure the whole process from registering electors to conducting elections is carried out within strict legal guidelines, meets national standards, runs smoothly and is fair and transparent.</p> <p>Other Service Groups – Daily contact with members of the Corporate Management Team, Chief Officers, and staff at all levels in the preparation of agendas and reports, and in challenging and offering advice on draft reports, and the decision-making and scrutiny processes.</p> <p>In the absence of the Director of Governance, will attend Executive or full council meetings, to report and to provide technical advice.</p> <p>External The post holder is responsible for services provided directly to the community, therefore has frequent, and often repeated, contact with the public and external bodies, often in difficult circumstances, with the expectation that the post holder will manage and contain issues through to resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) when acting as a representative of the Returning Officer and the Council in appropriate circumstances, including liaising with political party agents, the Electoral Commission and the Local Government Association; (b) with political and lobbying groups, health partners and other councils (c) associated with Council and Committee Meetings <p>In response to queries from the public or the Press, the post holder will verify information and provide details to be used for any replies.</p>
6.	DECISIONS – discretion & consequences

The post holder will regularly deputise for the Director of Governance, not just in their absence, working collaboratively with them and with minimal levels of supervision.

The post-holder has wide discretion concerning the interpretation of the law and the examination of various options and solutions. The post-holder is regularly required to use their detailed and expert knowledge of statutory and other regulations and local constitution/governance documents to exercise judgement and recommend appropriate courses of action across a wide range of subject areas.

The post-holder often needs to respond to urgent requests for advice and assistance without reference to others. They will need to be responsive to and to find solutions to problems as they arise, making sure that appropriate procedures are followed and working with staff to reduce potentially difficult situations, which will regularly have legal and/or political implications for the council.

The quality and success of the post-holder's professional decisions and support have a positive impact on the reputation and success of the Council not only by ensuring that the Council acts in a lawful manner and is not vulnerable to legal challenge but also by ensuring that discretion is exercised in a way which recognises and mitigates the reputational and political risks to the Council.

The postholder has overall responsibility for Electoral Services ensuring all statutory procedures are carried out, including ensuring effective delivery of voter registration. They must act with integrity and transparency and will be accountable for all aspects of decision making.

Any perceived failures in process are likely to be subject to significant scrutiny in York by local commentators or the local media. Actual failures may result in decisions of the Council being overturned in legal proceedings.

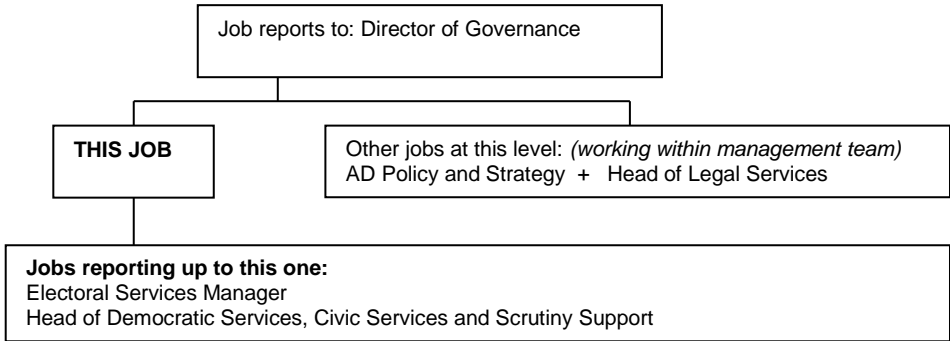
Oversees the budgets within Democratic Services and Electoral Services and ensures that all cost centres operate within strict budget constraints.

The post holder will be involved in high level, complex and politically sensitive decisions. The post holder will need to assess relative priorities and allocate appropriate resources to ensure deadlines are met, including ensuring that all relevant meetings are appropriately supported.

The post holder will take responsibility for determining the correct levels of resource for Democratic Services and Electoral Services both during and outside of election periods. They will make appropriate recommendations to the Director on opportunities to achieve value for money; actively seeking and establishing external funding and

	partnerships to deliver cost effective services and maximises income through providing meeting support services to other Service Groups and partner organisations.
7.	RESOURCES – financial & equipment <i>(Not budget, and <u>not</u> including desktop equipment.)</i> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <u>Description</u> <u>Value</u> </div>
8.	WORK ENVIRONMENT – work demands, physical demands, working conditions & work context Work demands The post holder will be required to prioritise conflicting demands, meet deadlines and deal with regular interruptions. These will often come urgently from councillors, as well as from council officers. High level of responsiveness is required to reprioritise their own and their teams' workloads, and adapt to constant interruptions and requests for advice and assistance. Must meet deadlines and timescales, many of which are fixed and statutory. Some work outside normal office hours will be necessary to support the proper functioning of the Council. Physical demands Normal demands Working conditions The post holder will work in an agile environment, including an office environment and potential to work from home. The post holder will be required to attend evening meetings, and/or meetings held at various locations throughout the city. Work context The post holder may occasionally have to deal with aggression from others. The post holder is likely to be subject to public attack especially on social media in respect of decisions which they have made or advised on.
9.	KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS <div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1; padding-right: 10px;"><i>Pol</i></div> <div> Educated to Degree level in a public administration discipline, or able to demonstrate extensive relevant experience Membership of appropriate professional organisation (ADSO, AEA or previously the ICSA), to reflect the professional nature of the post Extensive knowledge and experience of current operational knowledge </div> </div>

Man	<p>of governance, law and practice of Local Authority meetings</p> <p>Extensive knowledge and experience of managing Election/ Electoral Registration Services, which is quite separate from other local government democracy processes.</p> <p>Extensive knowledge of public service/local government arrangements and procedures, with extensive proven experience of administering / supporting formal committee/decision making processes at a senior level</p> <p>Significant knowledge of relevant Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments and any other associated guidance</p> <p>Experience of acting as a Returning Officer/ Deputy Returning Officer/Electoral Services Manager.</p> <p>Experience of acting as a Deputy Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Extensive and detailed knowledge of relevant Local Authority strategic policies and plans.</p> <p>Good understanding of “political” dimensions and issues around competing priorities.</p> <p>Understanding of politics and politicians with the ability to work within the political process, with extensive experience in dealing with politically sensitive issues involving Members and Senior Managers in a local authority context.</p> <p>Ability to work effectively in a political environment and establish positive relationship with Councillors, senior managers, staff and external partners, to establish confidence, trust and credibility</p> <p>Demonstrable understanding of target setting and improvements in service delivery, able to assess priorities and allocate appropriate resources to ensure outcomes are achieved and deadlines are met.</p> <p>Ability to assess and monitor internal processes and deliver changes in order to deliver continuous improvement in current methods and levels of service, and willing to take measured risks to try new ideas.</p> <p>Ability to visualise, communicate effectively and lead and motivate colleagues through change within work area to improve service delivery including changing processes and culture.</p> <p>Proven track record of successful financial management in a large complex organisation, including proven ability to manage and monitor budgets</p>
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<p><i>Pers</i></p>	<p>Advanced research, analytical and problem solving capabilities with the ability to work effectively with complex information presented in a range of different ways, along with significant experience in local government policy/research environment.</p> <p>Ability to write reports on complex strategic issues and the ability to present them to a range of audiences.</p> <p>Ability to communicate to a range of audiences, to deliver information clearly and succinctly to others (within the Council, partnerships, external organisations and customers).</p> <p>Ability to manage and monitor complex projects to ensure that targets and timescales are consistently met</p> <p>Being highly organised, methodical and well organised with the ability to produce quality work to tight deadlines.</p> <p>Proficient IT skills in the use of Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint, as well as bespoke IT products for electoral services and committee management.</p> <p><i>This is a politically restricted post.</i></p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Position of Job in Organisation Structure</p>  <pre> graph TD DG[Job reports to: Director of Governance] --- L1 L1 --- THIS_JOB[THIS JOB] L1 --- L1_Other[Other jobs at this level: (working within management team) AD Policy and Strategy + Head of Legal Services] THIS_JOB --- L2 L2 --- L2_Box[Jobs reporting up to this one: Electoral Services Manager Head of Democratic Services, Civic Services and Scrutiny Support] </pre>