

Law and Governance Business Centre Plan 2019/2020

Version control

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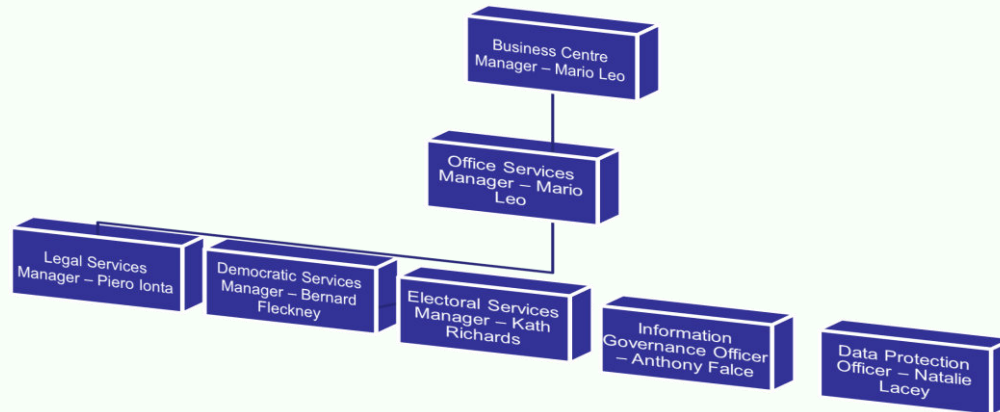
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Section 1: Law and Governance Business Centre's structure:



Committee(s): The Business Centre interacts with all Committees of the Council by virtue of the various functions different teams within the Business Centre carry out, ranging from organising the meetings of the committees of the Council and Full Council, attending meetings to provide legal and procedural advice, writing Minutes, supporting all Councillors in their role and providing specialist administrative support.

Section 2: Law and Governance Business Centre overview

Law and Governance Business Centre

The Business Centre comprises six teams that undertake a diverse range of functions. Some of the teams discharge a statutory function such as Electoral Services and Data Protection. Some support the overall work of the Council such as Democratic Services, Legal Services, Office Services and Information Governance. The Office Services team provides a complete suite of administrative support and provides secretarial and administrative services for the Mayor and the Chief Executive.

There are situations when a team will carry out dual functions such as supporting the overall work of the Council and discharge of a statutory function e.g. Democratic Services which in addition to provision of support for the democratic process also deals with matters such as Freedom of Information and licensing of charitable collections.

Electoral Services Team

Is responsible for overseeing the infrastructure of the electoral process, including electoral registration and conduct of elections. The team discharges the Council's legal obligation to provide support to the Chief Executive in his capacity as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer, which are positions he is appointed to by the Council and carry with them personal responsibility for those functions. The team administers on an annual basis the compilation of the register of electors and will organise the conduct of a wide range of elections on a regular basis. They also assist with reviewing and implementing local and parliamentary boundary changes. A further function of the team is conducting the periodic review of polling places and polling stations. In recent years the team has dealt with the challenges presented by the introduction of Individual Elector Registration (IER). The team has five staff (three part-time), supplemented by casual staff at critical times such as annual canvass and elections.

Legal Services Team

Performs the various functions of advising the Council and its Committees: - providing legal advice across the Council remit, advice on governance matters and undertaking legal casework for various Business Centres. The team carries out the full range of activities that is expected of an in-house legal function, ranging from the drafting of contracts, the conduct of civil and criminal litigation, the sale and purchase of land and council properties, regeneration and managing a commercial property portfolio, advising on housing matters, regulatory and licensing functions, Data Protection, Freedom of Information, employment and planning matters. Members of the team attend meetings of the various committees and working groups of the Council to provide

legal and procedural advice. The team also provides advice to the Council regarding its statutory obligations under Equalities legislation. The team has eight staff.

Democratic Services Team

Responsible for the provision of an efficient committee administration service to the Council and its committees, the provision of support to Councillors and effective and lawful decision making. The team also deals with corporate coordination of advice and liaison and responding to Freedom of Information Act requests submitted to the Council and various other miscellaneous administrative tasks such as some aspects of licensing, appointments to external bodies, some grant aid, some road closure/car parking orders, street trading consents, review of Constitution and maintenance of committee webpages. The team also prepares the Complaints/Compliments reports for Councillors and Officers. A further function of the team is to co-ordinate the Council's response to investigations by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The team provides support to individual councillors by acting as a source of information and advice, undertaking research and maintaining the records of member interests and service records. The team oversees the induction of newly elected members and providing support to the Independent Remuneration Panel when it undertakes its periodic reviews of Member allowances. The team's principal responsibility is to ensure that all the necessary legal and constitutional requirements are complied with to guarantee that the various meetings of the Council are properly convened and decisions are made lawfully. The team also provides senior support during the various elections organised by the Council. The team has four full time staff.

Office Services Team

A small team that provides support to the Business Centre through the provision of specialist documentation production, records management, some financial management, general administrative duties and support to the Mayor. The team also provides secretarial support to the Chief Executive. During election periods the team also assists its colleagues in the Electoral Services Team. The team has four staff (two part-time).

Information Governance Team

A small team that provides advice to the Council and staff in relation to Information Governance matters. The team will also undertake a review of the Council's existing Information Governance Strategy and review the way in which the Council manages its diverse information databases (to ensure all new compliance measures are demonstrated). The team has one full time member of staff.

Data Protection Officer Function

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) has to ensure that the data protection rules are respected in cooperation with the data protection authority (for the Council this is the Information Commissioners' Office). In the Council the DPO must ensure that controllers and data subjects are informed about their data protection rights, obligations and responsibilities and raise awareness about them. Give advice and recommendations to the Council about the interpretation or application of the data protection rules. Ensure data protection compliance within the Council and help the Council to be accountable in this respect. Handle queries or complaints. Cooperate with the ICO (responding to requests about investigations, complaint handling, inspections conducted by the ICO). Draw the Council's attention to any failure to comply with the applicable data protection rules.

Key Business Centre/Team statistics/volumes (optional):

Democratic Services Team – Produce Agendas for approximately 110 meetings annually convened by the Council and produces the Minutes of those meetings. Provides support to all forty-two members of the Council. The team deals with 20 road closure orders per annum. Each year 40 applications for charitable collections are also processed. Each year 20 – 30 grant aid applications are processed and it administers approximately 75 appointments to outside bodies.

Election Services – Process annual canvass of Electors which involves reviewing over 59,342 voters, organising annual elections for the Borough and County Council elections for the six Electoral Divisions situated in the borough and assisting in elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner and General Election for the Runnymede & Weybridge constituency taking on approximately a further 16,500 electors from Elmbridge Borough Council. Postal vote refresh exercise dealing with approximately 500 voters.

Legal Services Team – Deal with a variety of complex legal matters, processing on average 400 new instructions (volume varies from year to year) which involve attending Court (from Magistrates', County and Crown Court level up to the High Court and Court of Appeal). Attending and advising 110 committee meetings supporting colleagues in Democratic Services.

Office Services Team – Manages approximately 4000 paper files and 1000 deeds, agreements, contracts, departmental and corporate records. Document production, prepares and uploads all web related material in respect of the democratic process in addition to supporting colleagues around the organisation. Also provides administrative support for the Mayor through organising attendance at some 197 functions per year and arranging the annual Civic reception.

Information Governance Team - The team also deal with over 500 - 600 Freedom of Information requests per annum.

Section 3: Key drivers/influences for the Business Centre

Drivers and influences	
Internal drivers/influences	
<p>Key corporate drivers/influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Business Plan is trying to achieve against the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting Local People - Enhancing Our Environment - Improving Our Economy - Organisational Development • Corporate Key Performance Indicators. • There is a need to increase income generation to offset growing costs and loss of government grants. 	<p>Key drivers/influences of any Business Centre/Team strategies/key documents</p> <p>Council Constitution – need to ensure compliance with its various provisions thus ensuring lawful decision making by the Council and its officers.</p> <p>Local Plan – need to provide legal advice to support preparation, submission and public examination of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Corporate Document Retention Schedule – ensures corporate records are managed in accordance with best practice and in compliance with the Data Protection principles.</p> <p>Housing Strategy - need to provide legal advice to enable delivery of the Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Property Investment Strategy – need to provide legal services to support delivery of strategy.</p> <p>Separately, the Corporate Head, in addition to his other duties also acts as the Council’s Monitoring Officer, the SIRO and the Senior Responsible Officer in respect of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).</p>

External drivers/influences		
Key community/consultation drivers/influences	Key partner's / supplier's drivers/influences	National key drivers/influences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation outcomes • Polling Places review on a periodic basis. • Electoral Review • Parliamentary constituency review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring delivery of Council's obligations in relation to development projects where undertaken with partner bodies e.g. Addlestone One. • Providing legal services in relation to properties owned by the Council. • Dealing with legal agreements related to the development of land. • Ensuring delivery of Council's obligations in relation to development projects where undertaken with partner bodies e.g. Runnymede Regeneration Project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of Individual Elector Registration • Legal requirements relating to conduct of Election process • Compliance with requirements of national bodies in relation to Election functions • Ensuring that decision making and actions of Council comply with legal requirements and best practice • Ensuring compliance by Council with Freedom of Information legislation • Ensuring compliance by Council with Transparency Agenda • Ensuring compliance by the Council with Human Rights and Equalities legislation • Legal requirements relating to Parliamentary and Borough ward Boundary reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring compliance with Data Protection legislation

Section 4: Planned work

Key:  Project  Review  One-off Activity*  New Business As Usual  Business As Usual

*N.B. One-off Activity refers to an activity that is needed as a one-off but is not a project or a review e.g. writing a new policy/strategy or undertaking recruitment.

Projects				
Ref.	Project name (<i>N.B. Detailed objectives, deliverables and risks can be found in Project Charters</i>)	Team/section leading on the project (shown in bold) and support teams	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the project brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
LG 15	Organisation and delivery of all out elections following outcome of Electoral Review	Electoral Services	The election of Councillors	May 2019

New Business As Usual				
Ref.	Objective	Team/section leading on the activity (shown in bold) and support teams	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
L&G 37	To provide legal support for approx.. 20 contracts to Housing Services in the procurement of various contracts associated with the delivery of Housing Services	Legal Services	To ensure that appropriate contracts are in place to govern the legal relationship between the Council and contractors providing services to it.	End March 2020

Business As Usual				
Ref.	Objective	Team/section leading on the activity (shown in bold) and support teams	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
L&G 1	To co-ordinate Council's response to Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests.	Information Governance Officer	To ensure that the Council responds within the statutory time limit or indicates why it will not provide the information requested.	End March 2020
L&G 2	To issue Agenda papers for meetings of Council and Council Committees.	Democratic Services	To ensure that Agendas are issued within the statutory time frame.	End of March 2020

L&G 3	Annual review of Council's Constitution.	Democratic Services	Production of a document which sets out the internal governance arrangements for the Council as statutorily required	May 2019
L&G 4	Electronic transmission of agendas.	Democratic Services	To allow Members to exercise their legal right to receive agendas in an electronic format and better use of modern technology.	End of March 2020
L&G 5	Induction of new Members elected in May 2019 Borough	Democratic Services	To ensure new Members are aware of their legal rights, obligations, and duties.	May 2019
L&G 6	Review of Member Allowances.	Democratic Services	To obtain recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for consideration by the Full Council for April 2019	April 2019
L&G 7	To provide administrative support to the Business Centre.	Office Services	To ensure that the Business Centre complies with its legal requirements.	End of March 2020
L&G 8	To provide administrative support to Mayor to facilitate discharge of civic duties.	Office Services	To ensure that Mayor discharges civic duties in a timely and appropriate fashion	End of March 2020
L&G 9	Electronic transmission of agendas.	Office Services	To allow Members to exercise their legal right to receive agendas in an electronic format and better use modern technology.	End of March 2020
L&G 10	To provide PA support to CEO.	Office Services	To ensure that CEO discharges his duties in an effective and efficient manner.	End of March 2020

L&G 11	To manage document retention by Council	Office Services	To ensure all documents generated by the Council are stored and indexed properly.	End of March 2020
L&G 12	To provide support for financial management of Business Centre.	Office Services	To ensure Business Centre manages its budget in accordance with Council procedures.	End Of March 2020
L&G 13	Annual Election Register Canvass	Electoral Services	To produce an accurate record of persons entitled to vote any elections or referendum held during the year.	December 2020
L&G 14	Postal vote Refresher exercise	Electoral Services	To update personal identifiers of those individuals who have indicated a preference to vote by post	March 2020
L&G 15	All out Borough elections May 2019	Electoral Services	To enable all Councillors standing for election to be elected lawfully	May 2019
L&G 16	Polling districts and places review	Electoral Services	To ensure that appropriate polling districts and places are established.	December 2019
L&G 17	To provide legal services to the Council in relation to litigious matters, property matters, contract matters and regulatory matters.	Legal Services	To ensure that the Council is properly advised from a legal perspective in relation to all its work.	March 2020
L&G 18	To provide legal advice to the various Council Committees and Full Council.	Legal Services	To ensure that the various meetings of the Council are properly advised in relation to any decisions they make of matters they consider.	March 2020

L&G 19	Legal work associated with Addlestone One development	Legal Services	To deliver Addlestone One project on time and within budget.	March 2020
L&G 20	To address breaches of Planning legislation including at the Padd Farm site.	Legal Services	To secure compliance with planning legislation including at the Padd Farm site.	March 2020
L&G 21	Delivery of the Runnymede Regeneration Project.	Legal Services	To deliver Runnymede Regeneration Project on time and within budget.	March 2020
L&G 22	To provide legal support for the adoption of the Local Plan.	Legal Services	To ensure all legal requirements are complied with to enable adoption of the Local Plan.	July 2019
L&G 23	To review Council's Information Governance Strategy.	Information Governance	To ensure that the Information Governance Strategy secures compliance with all legal requirements.	April 2019
L&G 24	To provide advice to Council departments on the operation of the GDPR.	Data Protection Officer	To ensure that the Council complies with legal duties imposed by GDPR.	March 2019
L&G 25	To assist the Council in complying with its various Data Protection obligations.	Information Governance/Data Protection Officer	To ensure that the Council's complies fully with its Data Protection obligations.	March 2020

Section 5: Law and Governance Business Centre's requests for growth

Description	Linked objective/project	Amount requested	Business case completed? (Not always relevant – if unsure CE to determine. If yes – attach with this plan)
Additional staff in Democratic Services to service new Member Working Groups to be established for Municipal Year 2019/20		1 fte staff grade 8/9 = £31848 + on costs	Yes
Polling Booths and boxes		5 Booths at £365 £1825 15 Carrying Boxes £120 Carriage £80 Total £2025 Please note that the costs of the equipment can be apportioned and claimed back via the election claims unit at national elections.	Not relevant
Staffing in Elections Services		"Post 1 £24,800 + on costs Post 2 £12,700 + on costs We currently have two members of staff who are on temporary contracts which expire in July and September 2019.	Yes

		They are employed to assist with the introduction of IER and I would like to extend their contracts for a further year.	
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Section 6: Law and Governance Business Centre's performance indicators

	Target					Actual						
Performance Indicator	Q1 (Apr-June)	Q2 (Jul-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Full year (Apr-Mar)	Q1 (Apr-June)	Q2 (Jul-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Full year (Apr-Mar)	Current status	Trend
Number of formal complaints related to the Business Centre/Team.	0	0	0	0	0							
Number of decisions investigated by the ombudsman requiring a remedy by the Council.	0	0	0	0	0							
Percentage of FOI requests processed in statutory deadline	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%							

Section 7: Summary of the Law and Governance Business Centre contribution to Corporate Business Plan themes

Priority	Supporting Local People	Enhancing Our Environment	Improving Our Economy	Organisational development
Reference number	L&G 13, L&G 14 & L&G 16	L&G 20 & L&G 22	L&G 19 & L&G 21	L&G 23, L&G 24 & L&G 25
Supports all Corporate Themes				
Reference number	L&G 1, L&G 2, L&G 3, L&G 4, L&G 5, L&G 6, L&G 8, L&G 15, L&G 17 & L&G 18			

Section 8: Law and Governance Business Centre/Team's risk management (excluding project risks with separate Project Charter)

This section has been redacted