

JOB DESCRIPTION
Approved June 2025

Title & Reporting Relationships

Position Title:	Te Kaitohutohu Matua – Ture, Senior Legal Counsel, Legal Services, Corporate Services
Grade:	SP 22
Reports to:	General Counsel
Direct Reports:	n/a
Indirect Reports:	As may be required pending the nature of a project or specific section of work programme
Purpose of the Group and the Position:	<p>The Corporate Services Group, comprises: Legal Services; Digital Solutions; Finance; Governance; and Risk and Assurance.</p>

The Corporate Services Group is responsible for providing the strategic management and robust effective operation of all financial management, information and technology management, governance and legal services as well as ensuring organisation wide risks are assessed and monitored.

The Legal Services function is responsible for providing quality, cost-effective and timely legal assistance that supports the achievement of Council's strategic, operational and statutory objectives through the best use of internal and external resources.

Council's Legal Services team are trusted advisors to the organisation, working collaboratively across the organisation to provide a strategic cross-council view and to proactively identify effective solutions to risk and issues to support the organisation to achieve its outcomes within an acceptable risk profile. The team contribute to fostering a high-performance organisational culture that is accountable and reinforces Council's social license.

The Senior Legal Counsel is responsible for providing quality, timely and cost-effective legal services to the Council. The Legal Counsel will provide advice and assistance to internal stakeholders across a range of legal issues relevant to local government at a senior level and provide leadership within the Legal Services function.

The Legal Services team is comprised of a General Counsel, Senior Legal Counsel and Legal Counsel, Manager Complaints, Legal Compliance and Privacy, Senior Advisor and Advisor Complaints, Legal Compliance and Privacy.

Internal Customers:	This role is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective, co-operative, and professional working relationships with all stakeholders including: General Counsel; Legal Assistant; Legal Services team; Chief Executive; Senior Leadership Team; Council Managers and staff
External Customers:	External Legal Providers; External bodies such as the Office of the Ombudsman New Zealand, Office of the Auditor General and Privacy Commission; Government agencies and providers such as Crown Law, New Zealand Police

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND OUTCOMES

In the current local government environment, Council must be well positioned and supported to meet the current and future needs of our communities for good quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is cost-effective for businesses and residents. The Council needs to be ready for, and respond appropriately to, changes in external operating environments (such as shifts in government policy), which in turn influences how we do things. The Council is working to be well-positioned not only to see what is coming but also to take opportunities to influence the shape of these externally driven changes.

We require all staff to demonstrate behaviours that underscore our commitment to build and maintain an organisation that is acknowledged and respected for being:

- Caring – we understand our customers’ needs, share information and work as a team;
- Dynamic – we bring a can-do attitude to make it happen; and
- Effective – we get it right and deliver consistent, value for money services.

Staff will be aware of political sensitivities, support equal employment opportunities, and demonstrate an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the context of a local authority.

Functional Key Requirements

- Provide quality, timely and cost-effective legal advice and assistance across a variety of legal areas relevant to local government to support in the delivery of an effective in-house Legal Services function. Key areas of practice span property, regulatory, resource management, building, official information, privacy, warrants, delegations and public law. Key roles and responsibilities include:
 - providing legal advice and assistance to the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Council managers, and the Mayor and Elected Members (as directed by the General Counsel).
 - representing Council’s legal function internally and externally including attending meetings and other engagements as required.
 - managing external investigations by the Office of the Ombudsman New Zealand, Privacy Commissioner or other external oversight bodies.
 - advising on, reviewing, or preparing, relevant agreements and memoranda on behalf of the organisation;

- supporting staff to access appropriate legal templates and associated documentation;
- advising on issues relevant to legislation, regulations, bylaws and rules
- provide support to Council's regulatory team on proposed enforcement action or prosecution including as a member of Council's Enforcement Decision Group (EDG) under the Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- advising on any Kāpiti Coast District Council property matters and business issues
- assist in managing the organisational response to claims or litigation (which will usually involve briefing external counsel).
- Work collaboratively with the Complaints, Legal Compliance and Privacy team and support with advice and activities relevant to these related legal support functions.
- Provide legal training and education to staff, including assisting with seminars to staff.
- Assist the General Counsel with legal reporting to the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team and Council (where required).

Leadership

- Provide leadership to staff in the Legal Services team and wider organisation, including mentoring and supporting junior lawyers in the team.
- Support the General Counsel to establish the Legal Services function as trusted advisors to the organisation who work collaboratively across the organisation to provide a strategic cross-council view, provide trusted advice and proactively identify effective solutions to risk and issues to support the organisation to achieve its outcomes within an acceptable risk profile.
- Contribute to the organisation's strategic direction through a close working relationship with Council's SLT and Managers and ensure the legal function is aligned to the organisation's priorities.
- Identify and drive continuous improvement initiatives within the Legal Services function.
- Deputise for the General Counsel position where required.

External Providers and Legal Budgets

- Instruct and manage external lawyers as appropriate
- Assist the General Counsel to manage relationships with external legal providers and assist in reviewing service levels and financial spend management
- Act as a conduit between Council staff and external legal providers to ensure quality instructions; that external advice is only obtained where necessary; and to assist in communicating external legal advice to Council staff to facilitate understanding of the advice and to ensure that advice is implemented in decision-making (where appropriate).

Legal Risk

- Manage legal risk in the provision of advice and assistance across a range of legal matters.
- Proactively identify and communicate and relevant on legal risks relevant to the Council.
- Keep the General Counsel informed of matters including key legal risks and potentially significant or publicly controversial matters affecting Council.

Legal Systems and Technology

- Support the General Counsel in developing and implementing systems and processes to support an effective Legal Services function.
- Champion good document management and use of legal systems and technology adopted by the Legal Services function.

Personal Key Results

- Demonstrate commitment to organisational values through behaviour that is consistent with our caring, dynamic and effective approach to customer service.
- Establish and maintain effective and efficient working relationships with all stakeholders.
- Contribute collaboratively, positively, and effectively to the operation of the team, the Group, and the organisation as a whole.
- Take responsibility for your own self-development to enhance skills and knowledge applicable to current and future positions.
- Exhibit behavior which is consistent with the understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its application for the Council.

Health and Safety

All employees have a responsibility to work towards keeping a safe and healthy work environment by following all safe work methods, identifying work place risks and hazards and using appropriate safety equipment. This includes but is not exclusive to demonstration of the following:

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure your own safety at work, and that no action or inaction of yours while at work causes harm to any person or the environment;
- Reporting any risks and/or hazards you become aware of in the workplace;
- Observing all safety policies, procedures and precautions, including wearing and using the protective clothing and equipment;
- Notifying your manager/Group Manager/H&S Advisor immediately if you have an accident/incident/near miss at work and completing the required forms within 24 hours;
- Notifying your manager/Group Manager/H&S Advisor within 24 hours of filing any ACC claim for a work related accident or gradual process injury, and provide your manager/Group Manager/H&S Advisor with copies of relevant medical information specific to your claim; and
- Complying with all policies and procedures that are in place.

At the discretion of the Council, as part of a rehabilitation programme, you may be required to return to work to undertake such alternative duties as are available and are as reasonably within your capability and level of fitness as determined in consultation with a registered medical practitioner.

Essential Skills, Knowledge and Experience

- Current legal practicing certificate for New Zealand and relevant legal qualifications.
- Demonstrated senior-level knowledge and experience providing legal advice and assistance across a range of issues relevant to local government (6+ years PQE desirable).
- Ability to provide advice that is well reasoned to facilitate pragmatic recommendations and decisions to be made and to assess when specialist legal advice is required (to manage legal risk or complex issues).
- Experience providing leadership and coaching to more junior staff members and providing leadership to support the effectiveness of the Legal Services function.
- Demonstrated ability to identify, analyse and communicate legal issues and analysis in a clear, concise and timely manner.
- Demonstrated experience drafting and interpreting contracts and other legal documents.
- Demonstrated ability to display discerning judgement in the face of ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity, and to thrive in a dynamic environment.
- Demonstrated high level of discretion and diplomacy with ability to maintain strict confidence on any Council matter of a sensitive nature.
- Understanding and awareness of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Ao Māori perspectives and Council's statutory obligations to Māori and mana whenua in the Kāpiti Coast District,

and the ability to apply this knowledge to ensure the effectiveness of Council's internal legal function and the advice provided to Council staff particularly where this relates to Council's partnership with mana whenua.

- Effective interpersonal skills with a demonstrated commitment to customer service and willingness to and capability for working with a wide range of people within and outside the organization. Customer service focus and a courteous and helpful manner in dealing with clients and the public.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective professional working relationships with all key stakeholders, including with other council staff members based on a collaborative, collegial and cooperative working style.
- Effective time management skills and ability to work effectively without supervision and collaboratively as an effective team member.
- Proficient IT Microsoft skills including word processing, spreadsheets, legal research databases, PowerPoint and SharePoint.
- Holder of a current and valid NZ Drivers' licence.

OTHER INFORMATION

From time to time, the position holder may be required to perform other duties in conjunction with the role and which are reasonably within their experience and capabilities.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Kapiti Coast District Council has a responsibility to contribute to meeting obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Meeting our commitment to Te Tiriti will contribute towards creating an organisation that is grounded, dynamic and resilient and supports our organizational values of being Caring, Dynamic and Effective in how we work.

Staff will contribute to the promotion of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the involvement of Māori within the decision-making process for matters related to and important to them within the Council management processes and procedures.

Inclusion of Te Tiriti o Waitangi within all aspects of the role and its outcomes is necessary, while ensuring the engagement processes include appropriate mechanisms to meet the needs and aspirations of our hapori Māori, informed by our mana whenua partners – in an appropriate and safe manner.

To give effect to our responsibilities and achieve our respective outcomes – Tiriti training will be appropriate and organised through Te Rōpū Hononga ā-lwi / lwi Partnerships Group.

Civil Defence, Emergency Management and Business Continuity Duties

All staff of Kāpiti Coast District Council may be required to undertake Civil Defence and/or Emergency Management duties in the event of an emergency. (Training will be given as appropriate.) Staff will also be required to assist with maintaining business continuity in the event of a disruption to Council business and/or the impact of a pandemic by undertaking duties in accordance with how the Council responds to the interruption.

The Council likewise recognises the staff member's need to ensure their family's needs are adequately catered for.

Performance Review

Performance in this position will be assessed in terms of an agreed performance plan.