



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Role Profile

Job Title: Political Assistant (To the political party forming the Council's Administration)	Grade/ Level: Q	Post Number: GO8039
Directorate: Business Transformation / Law and Democratic Services / Committee and Member Services	Job Family: Government Operations	Date Prepared: October 2009

Role reports to (Job Title): **Operationally to the Leader of the Council** (the Leader of the political party forming the Council's Administration). Administratively to Committee and Member Services Manager
*Please attach an organisation chart showing where this job reports within the structure.

Job Purpose:

To provide a high level of advice and assistance to the Leader of the Council (the Leader of the political party forming the Council's Administration) on a broad range of policy and other issues impacting on the operation of the Council and its services.

To maintain effective liaison between the Leader of the political party forming the Council's Administration (the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet), the Council and its Chief Executive and Group Directors / Directors.

Key Accountabilities:

1. To be directly responsible for Investigating, undertaking research and obtaining information on Government, Council and political party related policy and general items of interest or concern to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Councillors of the political group forming the administration.
2. To research, prepare and write reports as necessary for or on behalf of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and appropriate Councillors (political group members).
3. To provide advice and to formulate recommendations for the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and appropriate Councillors (political group members) on Council the development and implementation of Council policy and on service related issues.
4. To provide advice and to formulate recommendations for the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and appropriate Councillors (political group members) on central policy developments within the relevant political party at the national level and general items of interest or concern to the Leader / relevant political group.
5. To identify, analyse and brief within appropriate timescales, and in collaboration with others where necessary, the Leader of the Council on all matters of importance that arise from information received by the Cabinet Office, and from other official organisations with whom the Leader is associated.
6. Provide administrative and personal support to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
7. To act as a central contact point by way of correspondence and any other appropriate means, to link the Leader with the wide range of people with whom the Leader of the Council / political group needs to communicate in order to carry out official duties, including Members of Parliament, Government departments, the media and the general public.

8. To identify, establish and maintain a “database” of key contacts that arise from the workflow of the Cabinet office and from other official organisations with which the Leader of the Council and the relevant political group are associated.
9. Develop and maintain a good knowledge of all the key functions, operations, policies and programmes of the Council, its departments, and key partner agencies.
10. Prepare agendas, draft reports, attend meetings and produce minutes for the meetings of the Leader’s Advisory Group (or equivalent). Including drafting and co-ordinating briefing papers for the Leader of the Council and Group spokespersons as required and ensuring proper co-ordination of meetings with officers across the Council and external organisations.
11. Prepare agendas, draft reports, attend meetings and produce minutes for the meetings of the relevant political group. Including drafting and co-ordinating briefing papers for the Leader of the political group and group spokespersons as required and ensuring proper co-ordination of meetings with officers across the Council and external organisations.
12. Respond on behalf of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet to enquiries from Members of Parliament, Councillors, partner agencies, members of the public, voluntary bodies and the media on all aspects of Council policy and Council initiatives.
13. Responsible for developing and maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of working practices, management developments and techniques and legislation in the field of local government, and to be aware of all central policy developments within the relevant political party, in order to convey this information by way of briefings to the Leader and members of the political group to enable their relevance to be taken into account in policy development at a local level.
14. To project manage, monitor and progress chase all initiatives and matters initiated by, or of interest to, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet and other members of the relevant political group.
15. To maintain a high level of confidentiality and discretion in all dealings relating to the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Office, the Council and the relevant political group.
16. To be responsible for monitoring and responding to media coverage of Council policy and the Council’s “administration”, including preparing Council related press releases on behalf of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet and Group Members.
17. To be responsible for dealing with other publicity matters in liaison with the Council’s Communications Team, and development and maintenance of any relevant political group Web pages.
18. Attend meetings of relevant local and national bodies, groups, agencies and associations as required by, and on behalf of, the Leader of the Council / Leader of the Group. To act on behalf of the Leader of the Council / the relevant political group as required.
19. To be responsible for briefing on behalf of the Leader of the Council / Leader of the political group, the Chief Executive, Group Directors, Directors and other partners and stakeholders, on emerging issues, and to be specifically responsible for clarifying agreements, resolving misunderstandings, and identifying outstanding issues.
20. To provide direct support the Leader of the Council in achieving and progressing decisions and policy within the Council and within external partnerships
21. To be directly responsible for making recommendations to the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet, the relevant political group, on proposals for the future direction of Council policies and initiatives.
22. To facilitate and coordinate the activities of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet with those of the Chief Executive and Corporate Board.

Supplementary Accountabilities:

Job Scope: Number and type of jobs managed:

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Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others:	<p>Budget: Non Directly - Responsible for working within the Division's approved budget.</p> <p>Assets: Responsible for IT, Office and dictation equipment issued to post holder.</p>
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Knowledge and Experience:

Essential:

- Educated to degree level, or compensatory experience (Appropriate work or voluntary experience in a research/political or journalistic activity.)
- Excellent Communication skills (Oral and in Writing)
- IT literacy (Microsoft software)
- Excellent knowledge of working practices, management developments, techniques and legislation in the field of Local Government
- Excellent administrative, coordinating and organisational skills
- Proven ability to undertake research and produce reports on complex issues for a variety of meeting types
- The political nature of local government and the confidentiality of many of the issues that will be encountered when working with the Leader of the Council require an ability to deal with issues sensitively.

Desirable:

- Knowledge of relevant party political policies, procedures and structures.
- Experience of dealing with the media.

Work Environment

- Mainly “office based” at the Council’s offices. Post holder will on occasion be required to attend meetings at venues external to Swindon Borough Council and, on occasion, “site visits” to external locations.
- The job’s responsibilities will require evening and, on infrequent occasions, weekend working in order to support the Leader of the Council / the Cabinet / Leader of the Group / the relevant political group.
- The job is pressurised as the post is the first stop for officers of the Council and the public in seeking information with regard to the Cabinet Office / relevant political group and its views and policies as the Leader of the Council is at the centre of the Council’s decision- making processes.
- The job requires sufficient IT literacy to use the Council’s Microsoft Office package.

Decision Making:

- The Post holder will be involved in directly providing advice and support to the Leader of the Group and the Group (Cabinet when the Group is the Council’s Administration).
- The Post holder will be involved in directly making recommendations to enable the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet and the political party forming the Council’s “Administration” to make informed decisions on all key and significant issues that are central to the Council’s decision-making process.

Contacts and Relationships:

- The job requires the post holder to communicate in person and in writing with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members, Councillors, the Chief Executive, Group Directors, Directors and officers from across the Council on a day-to-day basis.

- The post holder will also come into regular contact with the public, the media, Members of Parliament, Government departments and other outside organisations on a regular basis.
- The post holder will be required to identify, establish and maintain contacts with key Government, political party, public sector, Council, community and other groups.

Creativity and Innovation:

- The Post Holder will be required to prepare material for the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet and the relevant political group, for example, press releases, media responses, position statements and policy documents.
- The post holder will be required to write reports for or on behalf of the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and political group members forming the Council's "Administration".
- The post holder will be required to be creative and flexible in the way they establish contacts, gather information, implement and undertake consultation, analyse data and produce reports and formulate recommendations to enable the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and appropriate political group members forming the Council's "Administration" to make informed decisions across a diverse range of topics affecting the Council and the local community.
- The post holder will be required to develop new ways of working and new techniques to assist the development of Group / Council policy, and in respect of specific Group policies.

Job Specific Competencies:

- Excellent interpersonal / people skills, experience with dealing with Councillors / the public.
- Proven ability to work on own initiative, demonstrate organisational skills and manage a varied workload in a high-profile, pressurised working environment.

Values and Behaviours

We strive to underpin our culture through strong management and authentic leadership, this means getting the management basics right, and ensuring what we commit to individually and collectively, we own and demonstrate accountability aiming to get things right first time. Building on this we also expect everyone at SBC to demonstrate and live our organisational values and behaviours, this means in our work we are:

Connected: We put Swindon and its people at the heart of everything we do.

We display a communication and behaviour style that promotes a positive Council identity in connecting with residents, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders ensuring a partnership approach to delivering our vision. Always asking, "is what I am doing in the best interests of Swindon and its people,"?

Resilient: We are forward thinking and work smart

We seek to identify where things can be improved, ensuring this learning is embedded, evaluated and built upon through a strong approach to continuous organisational development.

Brave: We respect and work together with our colleagues and customers to achieve success

We act in an emotionally intelligent way, setting positive examples around accountability, risk and governance. This will be delivered through developing ourselves and our teams to achieve the highest possible levels of productivity and performance.

In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, jobholders should take reasonable care to ensure that personal data is not disclosed outside Council procedures, or use personal data held on others for their own purposes. In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act

2000, ensure requests for non-personal information are dealt with in accordance with the Council's written procedures.

In accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, you must take reasonable care so as not to endanger yourself and of other persons whilst at work. You must also co-operate with the Council to enable it to comply with its statutory duties for health and safety. You must work in accordance with training or instructions given, make proper use of any personal protective equipment provided and inform your manager of any hazardous situations or risks of which you are aware. You must ensure you undertake responsibilities relating to your position as detailed within the Council and Directorate Health and Safety policy.

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date

Line Manager's Signature

Print Name:

Date: