

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Assistant Director of Legal and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)

Prepared for Basildon Council

January 2025



Penna

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Welcome Letter

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Assistant Director of Legal and Democracy (Monitoring Officer) here at Basildon Borough Council.

As the Executive Director of Resources and Governance, this role plays a pivotal part in my leadership team and we are passionate about driving excellence and innovation across Resources and Governance services to ensure we meet the evolving needs of our borough, and our council. Basildon is a vibrant and diverse community with immense potential, and we are committed to building on its strengths while addressing the challenges we face – how about joining me on the journey?

This role is pivotal in shaping the governance and legal framework that supports our ambitions. As the Assistant Director of Legal and Democracy, you will lead a highly skilled team, ensuring robust decision-making processes and upholding our values of transparency, integrity, and accountability. You will also play a critical role in advising and supporting elected members, senior leaders, and the wider council to deliver exceptional outcomes for our residents. You'll work with me and the new Chief Executive, Gary Jones as part of the Golden Triangle to ensure the council runs as it should.

We are embarking on an exciting period of transformation. Yes, there are challenges but there are also ample opportunities! With one eye on workforce development, we are investing in our people to enrich our innovative, inclusive, and forward-thinking council. Your leadership will be key in driving this transformation within legal and democracy services, ensuring they are fit for the future while continuing to deliver excellence.

I am looking for a leader who shares my passion for Basildon and its people - someone who is not only an expert in their field but also understands the importance of collaboration, innovation, and fostering a strong sense of community. We are an ambitious borough and are early adopters of change and transformation. If you are ready to make a tangible impact and play a crucial part in Basildon's journey, I encourage you to apply.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far, but there is so much more to do. This is your opportunity to join a dedicated and ambitious team, working together to make a real difference for our borough and its residents.

I look forward to hearing how you can help us shape the future of Basildon.

Yours sincerely,

Owen Sparks
Executive Director of Resources and Governance

Advertisement

Basildon Borough Council

Assistant Director of Legal and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)

Salary – Competitive c.£110k

Are you ready to take a bold step in your career?

Basildon Borough Council is searching for a dynamic leader to shape its Legal and Democratic Services during a pivotal period of transformation. With local government reform on the horizon, this is a rare opportunity to make a lasting impact in one of the biggest, and most vibrant districts in the country. Join our new Chief Executive Gary Jones, in this exciting time for Basildon.

Basildon is an economic powerhouse that is home to almost 200,000 residents and a roster of blue-chip businesses and enterprises of all sizes. The borough is a hub of innovation and ambition and is driven by a passion for excellence in public services. From our roots as a post-war New Town to becoming a leader in engineering and manufacturing, Basildon is a place where opportunity thrives. The council is passionate about uniting People, Place and Prosperity in their strong ambitions for Basildon's thriving communities, and ambitious businesses.

As the Assistant Director of Legal and Democracy, you will ensure the council operates lawfully and effectively while providing expert legal advice at the highest level. Holding the statutory position of the council's Monitoring Officer, you will need to be fluent at speaking truth to power with courage and clarity, navigating a politically charged environment and driving meaningful change across the organisation.

This role demands experience, vision, and resilience. You will lead a talented team, oversee democratic decision-making processes, and champion strong governance that matches and shapes Basildon's ambitious future. You will work closely with the Chief Executive, and the Section 151 Officer and play a key part of the Golden Triangle. Your ability to adapt, innovate, and inspire will be critical in this fast-changing council, among a changing local government landscape.

This is a career-defining role for an experienced legally qualified leader who thrives under pressure and excels in building relationships with elected members, senior leaders, partners, and wider stakeholders. If you are ready to embrace the challenges of transformation and deliver results that matter, Basildon Borough Council is the place for you!

For more information, please speak with our recruitment partners at Penna:

Ali Tasker on 07514 728114 or email: ali.tasker@penna.com

Rachael Morris on 07840 711217 or email: rachael.morris@penna.com

Closing Date for applications: 9 February 2025 (Midnight)

Job Description

POST: Assistant Director, Legal and Democracy and Monitoring Officer

DIRECTORATE: Resources and Governance

SERVICE: Legal and Democracy

BAND: AD2

REPORTS TO: Executive Director Resources and Governance
Dotted reporting line and key advisor to the Chief Executive

DIRECT REPORTS Team Leader – Property, Regeneration, Contracts and Procurement
Team Leader - Litigation
Legal Practice Manager
Strategic Relationships & Democracy Manager
Elections Manager
Information and Compliance Manager
Data Protection Officer

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY £1.7m circa
(Direct Accountability)

TYPE: Hot desking or Agile/Mobile Working

Basildon Borough Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults, and expects all employees, contractors and volunteers to share its commitment to prevent abuse, harm or exploitation.

Please note that the Council applies a robust recruitment vetting process.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The UK Government created Basildon as one of the first generation of post-war New Towns in 1949. The ambition was that, “Basildon will become a city which people from all over the world will want to visit.” Fast forward to today and Basildon is the largest economy in Essex and an established centre of excellence for engineering and manufacturing. Basildon boasts some of the most advanced technical facilities in the UK and is home to a number of innovative companies, large and small as well as a population of more than 180,000.

We have three corporate plan ambitions, the strategic themes for our work, we are defined as follows:

1. **People** - We want Basildon to be home to healthy and active local communities able to support themselves and each other.
2. **Place** - We want Basildon to offer a high quality of life for all residents through attractive, liveable, accessible and safe neighbourhoods and towns along with the provision of enduring facilities, green spaces and town centres that meet the needs of the community.
3. **Prosperity** - We want Basildon to have a thriving, dynamic and diverse economy where all our communities benefit from increased opportunity and our workforce has the right skills for our local economy and beyond.

MAIN PURPOSE

1. To provide leadership and management of Legal and Democratic Services, including Legal, Strategic Relationships and Committee Services, Electoral Services and Information Governance.
2. To ensure that the Council acts lawfully and advise on any changes in the law that may affect all or part of the Council. Providing high quality legal advice to the council, its members and officers on legal and procedural matters.
3. To sit as a permanent member of the Council's Corporate Leadership team.
4. To work closely with the Chief Executive and s151 Officer to drive improvements in governance in all areas of the Council and consider and recommend action in connection with any corporate governance, legal, procedural or constitutional issues which arise.
5. Drive effective collaboration across the Council, including with Members, to support delivery of corporate priorities.
6. Be a be clear communicator and to lead by example, ensuring compliance and governance matters are adhered to.
7. To provide the required visible leadership and presence in the office for a minimum of two days per week.
8. To support the Chief Executive, Assistant Directors and Executive Directors in Full Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and other working groups and Committees.
9. To be the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for the Council and ensure the effective management of information risks.

JOB DUTIES

1. To support the Executive Director of Resources and Governance, in developing and delivering the corporate vision, value and priorities of the Council and the projects for which the post holder is responsible.
2. To ensure the delivery of the council's legal, democratic, strategic relationships, information governance and electoral services. To lead, direct and effectively manage high performing, customer focused services as well as develop and maintain robust partnerships to deliver positive outcomes that help to deliver the Council's objectives.
3. To ensure that the council's democratic and decision-making arrangements operate effectively in accordance with relevant legislation and the Council's Constitution.

4. To act in an appropriate role as appointed by the Returning Officer, ensuring that the election process runs smoothly and complies with all relevant legislation.
5. To act as the Council's statutory Monitoring Officer in accordance with s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
6. To be responsible for the effective operation of the Members Code of Conduct including initial decision-making on complaints and to conduct investigations where appropriate. To provide advice, guidance and training on the Standards regime, Code of Conduct and Council Constitution.
7. To be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Council's Constitution, ensuring it is fit for purpose.
8. To have responsibility for reporting on any claims of maladministration against the Council.
9. To carry out efficient and effective performance and financial management ensuring that appropriate corrective action is taken promptly when necessary and that budgets are adhered to.
10. Deputise for the Director of Resources and Governance, as required.
11. To lead the development, review and maintaining of effective information governance policies, procedures and arrangements across the organisation. Ensuring through the Data Protection Officer, that the Council complies with all relevant Data Protection legislation and requirements.
12. Responsible for ensuring that the Council effectively fulfils its requirements associated with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 whilst providing advice to protect the Council and public's interests, as appropriate. Undertake all the duties within the framework of Equal Opportunities.
13. You must ensure full compliance with Health and Safety legislation and that Health and Safety matters are being managed on a day to day basis by your competent managers. You will also ensure you demonstrate you're committed to Health and Safety by leading by example.
14. Any other duties appropriate to the post: These other duties must be equivalent to or below the salary and status of the role and, where appropriate, under the Equality Act 2010, due consideration must be given to any employees with a "protected characteristic".

PERSON SPECIFICATION

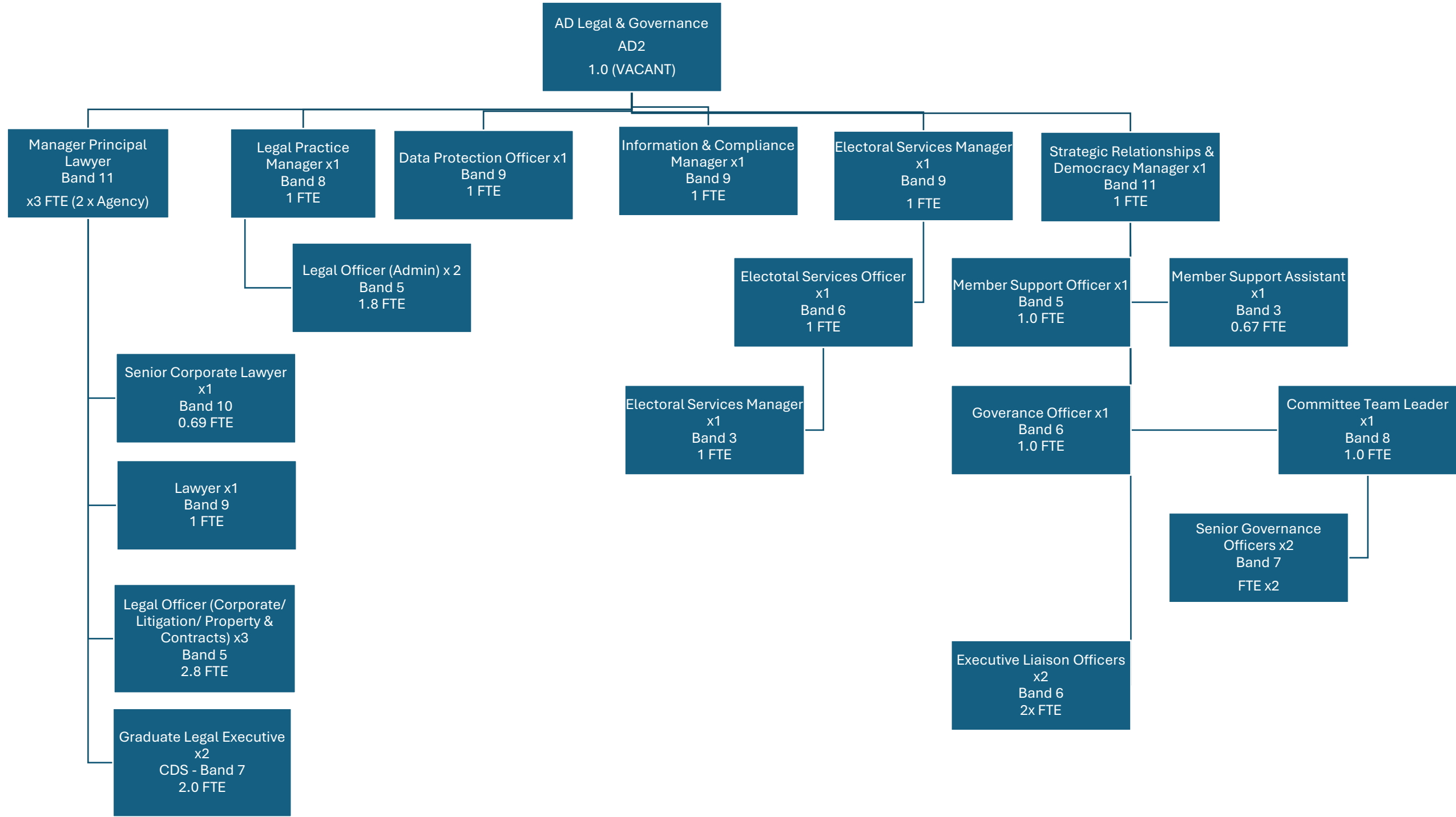
Position Title:	Assistant Director Legal and Democracy and Monitoring Officer	Date Prepared:	December 2023
Service:	Resources and Governance	Band:	AD2

AF= Application Form I = Interview T = Test

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
1.	EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE			
1.1	Demonstrable experience of providing effective high quality legal advice and guidance in a complex environment.	ü		AF/I
1.2	Experience of local authority committee decision-making arrangements and of providing guidance and advice to the council and Elected Members.	ü		AF/I
1.3	Proven experience of dealing with elected Councillors at all levels within a democratic environment ideally in a local government context.	ü		AF/I
1.4	Experience of elections, referenda and of supporting the Returning Officer.	ü		AF/I
1.5	Understanding of the principles of effective information governance, data protection, freedom of information and business continuity and emergency planning legislation and practice	ü		AF/I
1.6	Demonstrable experience of negotiating at a high level with a range of stakeholders including within complex political environments.	ü		AF/I
1.7	Experience of making successful improvements to processes and the service.	ü		AF/I
1.8	Flexibility and ability to work under pressure including meeting deadlines and managing a complex work load simultaneously.	ü		AF/I/T
1.9	Experience of document and case management systems	ü		AF/I/T
1.10	Experience of working in pursuit of collaborative/organisational goals	ü		AF/I/T
1.11	Experience in Local Government standards and constitution.	ü		AF/I/T
2.	COMPETENCIES			
1	LEADING AND DECIDING			AF/I
1	Takes control and exercises leadership. Initiates action, gives direction and takes responsibility.	ü		
2	SUPPORTING AND CO-OPERATING			AF/I
2	Supports others and shows respect and positive regard for them in social situations. Puts people first, working effectively with individuals and teams, clients and staff.	ü		

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
	Behaves consistently with clear personal values that complement those of the organisation.			
3	INTERACTING AND PRESENTING Communicates and networks effectively. Successfully persuades and influences others. Relates to others in a confident and relaxed manner.	ü		AF/I
4	ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING Shows evidence of clear analytical thinking. Gets to the heart of complex problems and issues. Applies own expertise effectively. Quickly learns new technology. Communicate well in writing.	ü		AF/I
5	CREATING AND CONCEPTUALISING Open to new ideas and experiences. Seeks out learning opportunities. Handles situations and problems with innovation and creativity. Thinks broadly and strategically. Support and drives organisational change.	ü		AF/I
6	ORGANISING AND EXECUTING Plans ahead and works in a systematic and organised way. Follows directions and procedures. Focuses on customer satisfaction and delivers a quality service or product to the agreed standards.	ü		AF/I
7	ADAPTING AND COPING Adapts and responds well to change. Manages pressure effectively and copes well with setbacks.	ü		AF/I
8	ENTERPRISING AND PERFORMING Focuses on results and achieving personal work objectives. Works best when work is related closely to results and the impact of personal efforts is obvious. Shows an understanding of business, commerce and finance. Seeks opportunities for self-development and career advancement.	ü		AF/I
3	EDUCATION AND TRAINING			
3.1	Fully qualified solicitor (or barrister) with a current practice certificate.	ü		AF
3.2	Membership of an appropriate professional body such as Lawyers in Local Government or equivalent.	ü		AF
3.3	Evidence to support commitment towards continuing professional development	ü		AF/I

Legal Structure Chart



How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and Covering Letter (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.
- Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; and that where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications you make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.
- Please share with us in your supporting statement, the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.
- Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details.
- Please return your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.
- Following long listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.
- At any point throughout the process our retained consultants at Penna will be happy to help you with information, insight and guidance about the process and our clients.

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

Date	Activity
Closing Date	Midnight, Sunday 2 nd February 2025
Longlist Meeting (candidates are not required to attend)	Wednesday 5 th February 2025
Preliminary Interviews	Monday 10 th /Tuesday 11 th February 2025
Shortlist Meeting (candidates are not required to attend)	Thursday 13 th February 2025
Member Panel Interviews	Wednesday 5 th March 2025

To apply for this role, please click the link below:

<https://execroles.penna.com/?type=1>

For further information or confidential discussion, please contact:

Ali Tasker on 07514 728114 or email: ali.tasker@penna.com

Rachael Morris on 07840 711217 or email: rachael.morris@penna.com