

## Role Profile

|                 |                                                               |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Job Title       | Strategic Member Advisor                                      |
| Location:       | Colindale Office, 2 Bristol Avenue / Hendon Townhall / Hybrid |
| Department:     | Governance Service                                            |
| Directorate:    | Assurance and Public Protection                               |
| Grade:          | Grade L                                                       |
| Type of Working | Hybrid Working                                                |
| Reports to:     | Head of Governance <sup>1</sup>                               |

**1. Profile Summary:**

The role of the Strategic Member Advisor is to work closely with Senior Members, providing comprehensive and high-quality, strategic policy advice and support. Senior Members include Group Leaders, Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs, and Shadow Cabinet and Lead Members.

This role does not include provision of political advice, and the post holder is not permitted to canvass on behalf of a political party or individual elected member.

The Strategic Member Advisor supports Senior Members with the development of policy and strategy and the forward plan for the Council. They will offer policy analysis and advice, shape the approach to communications and provide Members with perspectives on service delivery and policy options taking into account advice from Executive Directors and senior officers, acting at all times in the best interests of the council.

The Strategic Member Advisor will line manage a Political Assistant, ensuring that the political assistant complies with the requirements of that role<sup>2</sup> and that there is a clear distinction between that post holder and other officers.

**This post is politically restricted under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Therefore, they are not able to influence the public in a party political way.**

<sup>1</sup> Whilst the Head of Governance is the relevant senior officer, the post holder will liaise with a nominated Party Group Senior Member on their activities.

<sup>2</sup> [Local authority political assistants guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Local_authority_political_assistants_guidance_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

## 2. Key accountabilities:

### Strategic Development

- Work with Senior Members, Council Management Team (CMT) and the Council Senior Management Team (SMT) on strategic planning of the Council's long-term objectives across the portfolio of responsibilities and activities including supporting the development and review of the 4 year Corporate Plan.
- Work with CMT, SMT, the Strategy Team and Governance Officers to develop a forward plan for Council, Cabinet, committees, and partnership boards, to ensure that the Council's medium and long-term policy priorities are scrutinised and delivered in addition to the Council's core services and responsibilities.
- Working with the Political Assistant (recognising the complementary but different role) to support senior Members in refining their recommendations and responses to senior officers.
- Operate within a matrix management structure (reporting directly to the Head of Governance) and to act as the primary point of contact between Senior Officers and Senior Members, helping them understand and take account of each other's priorities and positions and, in so doing, contribute to the management of the Council's functions and future policy.
- Influence and support Senior Members with the formulation and scrutiny of the Council's priorities and policy taking into account the wider strategic context in Barnet, London and nationally.
- Monitor the impact of governmental and public affairs issues and proposals from other external organisations and assess the impact of them on Barnet and the work of the Council, and brief Senior Members and Senior Officers, working with them to develop handling strategies and effective responses.

### Research and briefing support

- Provide Senior Members with high-quality research and briefing service, working with officers across the Council as appropriate.
- Attend meetings with Senior Members, carrying out necessary research and providing briefings information as appropriate.
- Following such meetings, as appropriate, prepare briefing notes and action plans, including report writing, briefing Senior Members and Senior Officers, drafting correspondence, and managing ongoing liaison with government departments, partner organisations and other external stakeholders to support the Council's objectives and priorities.
- Work across the Council to collect relevant data and seek new ideas by liaising with the LGA, London Councils and other like organisations and brief Senior Members and officers on relevant local, national and London issues. Analyse the implications of collected data and potential new service delivery initiatives and advise Senior Members as appropriate.
- Develop options for Senior Members to consider in relation to the delivery of new initiatives, having regard to consistency and compatibility with existing policies and initiatives, liaising with officers as necessary.
- Assist Senior Members and officers with the dissemination of information and implementation of new initiatives, as appropriate.
- Working alongside Executive Directors, Strategy Officers and the Performance Team to identify output measures against which implementation can be monitored.

- Work with the scrutiny function in the Governance Service to ensure that non-Executive Members are receiving appropriate advice, support and guidance in the discharge of their scrutiny responsibilities.

## **Stakeholder Management**

- Assist Senior Members with the management of stakeholder relationships particularly with senior officers and external partners.
- Provide strategic advice and guidance to Members and work with the wider leadership group to agree the Council's strategic objectives, ensuring Members' direction is relayed to the Councils' Senior Leadership Team.
- Represent the Council in discussions with stakeholders on matters relating to Council policies, priorities and issues affecting Barnet, as agreed with Senior Members and Senior Officers.
- Liaise and build relationships at a senior level both across the organisation and externally.
- Attend relevant conferences, seminars and similar events.
- Work with external organisations and representative bodies such as the GLA, the office of Mayor of London, London Councils, the LGA, Barnet's MPs, the civil service including Special Advisors, and others to support the work of the Council, sharing knowledge and conducting analysis, and to be able to brief elected Members and senior officers on their potential impact on Barnet Council and the borough.

## **Policy support and advice**

- Provide guidance, policy analysis and advice to Senior Members on a range of issues related to their responsibilities.
- Offer advice to Senior Members through regular meetings and act as a sounding board for key decisions.
- Commission and draft correspondence for Senior Members.
- Support Senior Members in driving progress on the Council's short, medium and long-term priorities, for example through commissioning advice and briefings on relevant issues to ensure that Senior Members and Group Officers have the necessary information available.
- Work with the communications team to ensure that media engagement reflects the perspectives of any relevant Senior Member and that the Council has positive exposure in the media.
- Perform all duties with due regard to political sensitivity and the need for confidentiality and discretion for the Council.

## **Briefing and external liaison**

- Brief members on relevant local, regional and national issues necessary to conduct their Cabinet, committee and ward work.
- Brief members on upcoming Council business, including major strategic policies and decisions, to keep them updated on Council decisions.
- Oversee the work of the Political Assistant, including to ensure that Group Meetings are well informed on Council policies and processes.
- Support the Governance Service with delivery of the Member Development Programme to ensure that Members have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to be effective councillors.

## Public Relations

- Play a key role in the development and execution of the public and external affairs plan for the Council, particularly to ensure that the perspectives of relevant Senior Members are captured, as part of the Communications & Engagement Strategy.
- To work with Senior Officers and the Communications Team to deliver day-to-day stakeholder engagement and relationship management activities across multiple channels, ensuring a coordinated and balanced approach to external engagement, analysis and intelligence in support of the Corporate Plan and Council priorities.
- To produce an effective briefing service, able to respond to external events and issues and advising on policy and engagement approaches for Senior Members.
- To work with Senior Members to shape the presentation of Council policies and inform the work of the Communications Team.
- To help Senior Members engage internally with officers, and externally with partners, residents and the press and social media.

## 3. Staff Responsibilities:

- The Strategic Member Advisor will line manage the Political Assistant<sup>3</sup>, ensuring there is clarity on roles and responsibilities and that the distinct nature of the political assistant role is understood.
- To supervise, support and develop the work of the Political Assistant including ensuring they are clear on performance expectations, restrictions on the role, how they are progressing and provides appropriate support and development opportunities to enhance their personal effectiveness, skills and knowledge.

## 4. Health and Safety Responsibilities

As a manager of the London Borough of Barnet, you are required to:

- Abide by Barnet's health and safety policy, associated arrangements for managing, and implement the manager's responsibilities set out therein.
- Complete mandatory health and safety training
- Ensure risk assessments are in place for all task/activities where there are significant hazards, including stressors that could have an adverse effect on staff wellbeing. Identify and implement controls. Ensure staff are aware of the risk assessment findings and trained in the use of controls measures.
- Monitor health and safety compliance arrangements and take action where there are concerns
- Include health and safety in regular management team meetings
- Lead by example, monitor and enforce health and safety compliance of staff

## 5. Promotion of Corporate Values

- To ensure that customer care is maintained to the agreed standards according to the Council's values.
- To ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.
- Our values: Caring / Learning to Improve / Inclusive / Collaboration

## **6. Flexibility**

- In order to deliver the service effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post-holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

## **7. The Council's Commitment to Equality**

- To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity in the provision of services. All staff are expected to promote equality in the workplace and in the services the council delivers.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

|                        |                                                                      |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Job Title</b>       | <b>Strategic Member Advisor</b>                                      |
| <b>Location:</b>       | <b>Colindale Office, 2 Bristol Avenue / Hendon Townhall / Hybrid</b> |
| <b>Department:</b>     | <b>Governance Service</b>                                            |
| <b>Directorate:</b>    | <b>Assurance and Public Protection</b>                               |
| <b>Grade:</b>          | <b>Grade L</b>                                                       |
| <b>Type of Working</b> | <b>Hybrid Working</b>                                                |
| <b>Reports to:</b>     | <b>Head of Governance<sup>3</sup></b>                                |

| <b>Criteria</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>Essential/Desirable</b> | <b>Assessed by:</b>   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Knowledge</b>                                                                                                                         |                            |                       |
| Educated to a high standard, degree level or equivalent                                                                                  | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Knowledge of all aspects of local government organisation and services                                                                   | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Detailed, up to date knowledge of local, regional and national political issues and how they relate to and impact on the local authority | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| <b>Experience</b>                                                                                                                        |                            |                       |
| Extensive experience of research and analysis, and policy briefings in a Local Authority or similar context.                             | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Extensive experience of working in highly complex and political environments                                                             | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Experience of working in a political environment with politicians and senior officers.                                                   | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Experience of research, analysis and policy briefings in a Local Authority or similar context.                                           | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Experience of undertaking complex policy research into local government issues                                                           | Essential                  | Application/Interview |
| Experience of organising own work successfully whilst under the pressure of deadlines and conflicting priorities.                        | Essential                  | Application/Interview |

<sup>3</sup> Whilst the Head of Governance is the relevant senior officer, the post holder will liaise with a nominated Party Group Senior Member on their activities.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Journalistic experience and experience of writing all types of correspondence to a high standard including publicity material, briefings, presentations and policy documents.                                                                      | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Experience of advising, liaising with senior officers and/or senior Members                                                                                                                                                                        | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Experience working in a complex politically led environment                                                                                                                                                                                        | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to draft correspondence and deal with matters in a sensitive manner                                                                                                             | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Balance competing demands and priorities                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Work collaboratively with other services and external partners to deliver successful outcomes                                                                                                                                                      | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Experience of the use of Microsoft Office, a variety of ICT and social media to support effective research and analysis and formulating appropriate reports and press and social media materials                                                   | Essential | Application/Interview |
| <b>Planning, organising and controlling skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |           |                       |
| Ability to adopt a flexible work pattern to meet the needs of the job, including attendance at weekend and evening meetings as required.                                                                                                           | Essential | Application/Interview |
| A high degree of self-direction including proactively identify and responding to emerging issues, managing competing priorities and dealing with complex issues                                                                                    | Essential | Application/Interview |
| <b>Communication and influencing skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |           |                       |
| Ability to understand the role of public relations and to contribute effectively to the media and social media strategies.                                                                                                                         | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Good understanding of the internal workings of local government at both the political and management levels, including the restrictions on local authority publicity and an understanding of how regional and national politics impacts on Barnet. | Essential | Application/Interview |
| Ability to influence                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Essential | Application/Interview |
| <b>Initiative and Innovation skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |           |                       |
| Helping develop policy initiatives across the Council's portfolio of responsibilities and activities.                                                                                                                                              | Desirable | Application/Interview |

| Management and leadership skills                                                                                                                   |           |                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Experience in managing staff and strategic and operational policy development                                                                      | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Recognition of and ability to reward high levels of performance and achievement and tackle under-performance in others quickly and constructively. | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| To provide staff supervision and training when required.                                                                                           | Desirable | Application/Interview |

| Values & Behaviours                                                                                                                                                       |           |                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Caring                                                                                                                                                                    |           |                       |
| Integrity- I work with candidates and colleagues in a way that builds trust.                                                                                              | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Learning to Improve                                                                                                                                                       |           |                       |
| Agile-I am fully empowered to act within the scope of my role                                                                                                             | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Inclusive                                                                                                                                                                 |           |                       |
| Engage with discomfort- I am open to and reflect on what makes me uncomfortable and use my engagement with others to challenge myself and constructively challenge others | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Collaborative                                                                                                                                                             |           |                       |
| Accountable- I accept responsibility for my own actions and decisions, and demonstrate commitment to ensuring these align to what is best for Barnet                      | Desirable | Application/Interview |
| Outcomes Focused- I adapt my way of working to best suit the outcome we are trying to achieve within the scope of my role and professional standards                      | Desirable | Application/Interview |