te kaunihera ā-rohe o
matamata-piako
district council



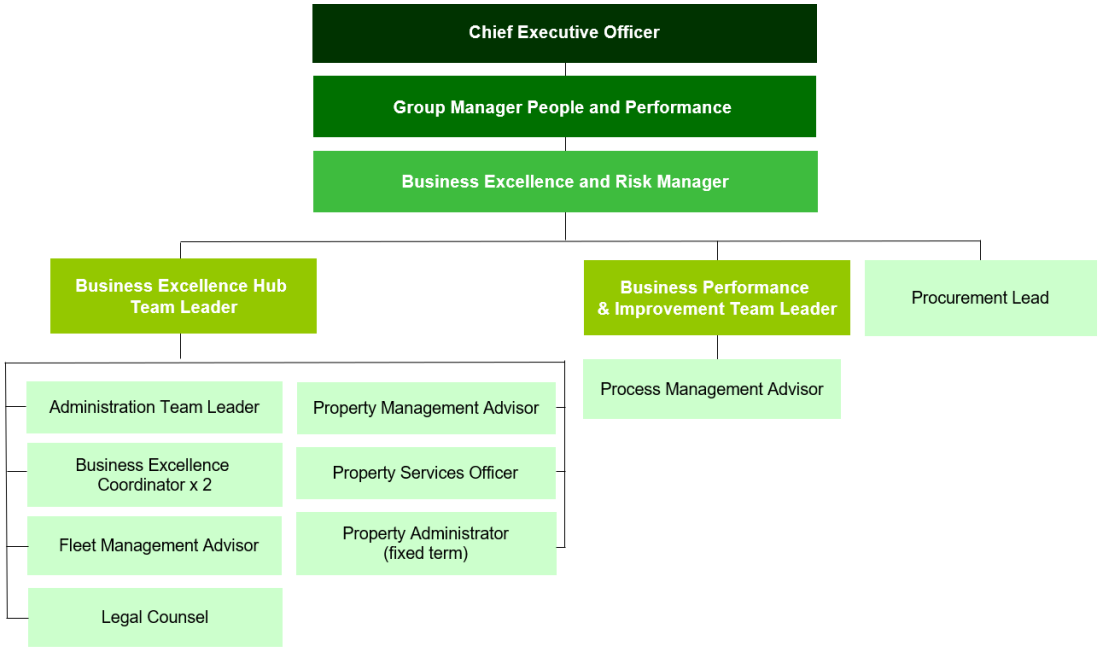





Position Description

Title:	Legal Counsel
Group:	People & Performance
Reports to:	Business Excellence Hub Team Leader
Number of staff reporting to this position:	No Direct Report
Position purpose:	To provide in house legal advice and services to staff and Council. To establish best practice legal processes throughout Council
Position Grade	16
Date:	November 2026

Organisation context



Our Vision: Making a difference

We as a Council strive to make a difference in our community in everything we do. In our work, in our district, and in our staff culture.

Making a difference means doing your job to the best of your ability, to improve the district, the towns we live in, and the lives of the people who live in Matamata-Piako.

The way we do things, has a real opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those who live in our communities.



Our Mission: Working with the community

Our mission is to work with the community to enhance the lives of all those in the district.

What we do has a direct effect on our community - the better the quality of our work and the more we work with our community, the better our community will be.

What we do matters.



Our Values: We do it right, we do it better, we do it together







Expected behaviours

We do it right

- We are accountable for our actions
- We take ownership of our work
- We provide great customer service
- We are professional in all our dealings with others
- We are aware of how our actions reflect on Council
- We are open and honest with each other
- We are trustworthy
- We are responsible for our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of our workmates

We do it better

- We are open to learning and change
- We are self motivated and we use our initiative
- We learn from our mistakes
- We challenge the status quo
- We strive for continuous improvement
- We are friendly, helpful and flexible
- We are solution centred

We do it together

- We work together as one team
- We respect and accept the views of others
- We are informed and we keep others informed
- We share our knowledge with other teams
- We celebrate success
- We are actively involved as part of the team

Key accountabilities

The position of Legal Counsel encompasses the following functions or Key Accountabilities:

- Legal services
- Provision of advice and support
- Policy development assistance
- Safety and Wellness
- Customer, Community and Stakeholder Focus
- Organisational Contribution, Risk and Compliance
- Business Resilience / Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM)
- Cover and support

The requirements in the above Key Accountabilities are broadly identified below:

Jobholder is accountable for	Jobholder is successful when
1. Legal Services • Undertake property conveyancing and transactions including: ▪ Sale & Purchase ▪ Leases ▪ Licences ▪ Easements ▪ Caveats	• Documents are on time, well drafted, conform to statutory requirements, protect Council's interests and are in a form accepted for registration by LINZ where applicable.
• Undertake road legalisations on behalf of Council including: ▪ Acquisition ▪ Disposal ▪ Preparation of Agreements for Sale & Purchase	• Documents are on time, well drafted, conform to statutory requirements, protect Council's interests and are in a form accepted for registration by LINZ where applicable.

• Preparation and registration with LINZ of documents pursuant to the Building Act.	• Documents are on time, well drafted, conform to statutory requirements, protect Council's interests and are in a form accepted for registration by LINZ where applicable.
• Preparation and/or review of documents required pursuant to subdivision consent conditions and arranging registration where appropriate (such as easements, covenants, bonds).	• Information provided is timely and accurate. • Best results obtained for Council.
• Obtain search copies of titles and other documents held by LINZ to staff as requested.	• Information provided is timely and accurate.
• Initiate legal action and respond to legal action taken against Council on allocated matters.	• Best results obtained for Council.
• Undertake agreed Court proceedings.	• Best results obtained for Council.
• Liaise with external legal advisors as appropriate, ensuring they are well briefed, and provide assistance as required.	• Required information is provided to external advisors in a timely manner and there are no unnecessary delays caused by the Council. Best results obtained for Council.
• Prepare and advise on enforcement mechanisms (such as in the areas of animal control, building, resource management etc).	• Information provided is timely and accurate. Best results obtained for Council.
• Providing advice to officers and dealing with LGOIMA and Privacy Act requests	• Information provided is timely and accurate.
• Updating Council's and CEO's Delegations to Staff Register	• Staff register is kept up to date and information is accurate.
• Issuing Warrants of Appointment to staff	• Warrants are issued in a timely and accurate manner and warranted powers are reviewed regularly to reflect legislative changes.



• Review and negotiating amendments to contracts Council has with service providers	• Required information is provided in a timely manner. Best results obtained for Council.
2. Provision of advice and support • Provide legal advice to staff and Council in areas of responsibility • Keep up to date with changes and new developments in the relevant legislation • Provide advice to staff on the impact of new legislation, and communicate with affected staff any court decisions that are relevant in their work • Provide advice as required in the preparation of submissions on draft central and local government legislation • Identify areas that require revision of procedures and/or systems and recommend changes • Provide legal advice on the recovery of monies owed to Council. • Drafting reports to Council when necessary and assisting staff with legal issues raised in reports drafted by them • Provide training to staff in areas of legal responsibility (such as LGOIMA, Privacy Act) and use of legal resources • Arranging training sessions for staff with LexisNexis and legal firms	• Advice is accurate and timely in clear accessible language. • Council effectively addresses the impact of new legislation • Advice is accurate and timely in clear accessible language. • Ensure best practice and continuous improvement • Advice is accurate and timely in clear accessible language. • Reports are drafted in an accurate and timely manner. Advice is accurate and timely in clear accessible language. • Training is arranged as required.

3. Policy development assistance • Provide policy development assistance as require • Provide advice and input into policy development as required	• Council policies are developed when required • Advice ad input is provided when required
4. Safety and Wellness • Taking day-to-day responsibility for working safely and supporting the wellbeing of yourself and others. • Following safe work practices, using required controls (including PPE), and stopping work if it is unsafe. • Identifying hazards/risks, applying controls, and escalating issues you cannot resolve. • Reporting events (including near misses), participating in investigations/learning reviews where required, and contributing to continuous improvement in safety and wellness.	• Work is planned and carried out safely, with hazards/risks identified early and managed appropriately. You participate in safety and wellness training, health monitoring, and return-to-work processes as required for your role. • You consistently follow MPDC safety and wellness requirements, including contractor or volunteer management and procurement processes where applicable. • You speak up, stop unsafe work, and escalate concerns early. • You report safety events promptly and contribute to learning and improvement.
5. Customer, Community and Stakeholder Focus • Providing professional, timely and respectful service to customers and colleagues across all channels (phone, face-to-face, email and written correspondence).	• Customers receive timely, accurate and respectful service, with clear information and appropriate follow-up.



• Recording, progressing and following through customer requests in line with agreed processes and service standards. Communicating clearly, using plain language where appropriate, and keeping people informed of progress and outcomes. • Showing cultural awareness and respect in day-to-day interactions, including understanding the relevance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to your role and considering Māori and community perspectives where required.	• Requests and enquiries are recorded correctly, progressed efficiently, and action taken decision communicated within expected timeframes. • Interactions demonstrate cultural awareness and support constructive relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and the community.
6. Organisational Contribution, Risk and Compliance • Contributing to the wider organisation's success beyond your immediate tasks by working collaboratively, sharing information early, and supporting a positive team culture. • Using approved systems and processes to keep information accurate, complete and up to date (including records and customer/service information as required). • Complying with Council policies, procedures and legislative requirements relevant to your role, and raising concerns early if you are unsure or see something that may be a breach. • Using Council digital and technology systems responsibly and in accordance with Cybersecurity policies and guidance (including protecting logon credentials, handling information appropriately, and reporting cyber incidents or potential risks). • Following procurement and purchasing requirements when ordering goods/services, including seeking approvals and using delegated authority processes where applicable.	• You work constructively with others across the organisation, contribute to continuous improvement, and build your capability through learning and development. • Work is completed using approved processes and systems, with accurate records and information. This includes payroll processes such as timesheets and leave applications and keeping business processes up to date. • Policies are complied with and procedures are followed, and issues or uncertainties are raised early. • Digital tools are used responsibly and securely; potential cyber risks are identified and reported. • Purchasing and procurement activities are completed correctly and on time, and approvals are obtained where required.



• Supporting a risk-aware culture by identifying risks in your work, applying controls, and escalating new or changing risks. • Participating in required learning and development, applying new skills, and sharing knowledge to improve outcomes.	• Risks are identified, controls are applied and new risks are reported. • L&D processes are followed and development needs are discussed with your manager.
7. Business Resilience / Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) • Recognising that business continuity, crisis management and CDEM is a shared responsibility across Council. • Completing required CDEM/business continuity training and understanding your role in an emergency. • Considering business continuity and CDEM impacts in day-to-day work, raising risks or improvement opportunities when identified. • Participating in readiness activities, exercises, and response or recovery activities when required (including undertaking duties outside normal BAU during events).	• You understand your responsibilities in an emergency and follow instructions during events. • Required training is completed and kept up to date. • Risks and impacts to service delivery are raised early and improvement opportunities are identified. • You participate in readiness, response and recovery activities when required.
8. Cover and support • Providing cover and support as directed by your team leader and manager.	• Cover and support is provided as required, with a flexible and team-focused approach.



Note
The above performance standards are provided as a guide only. The precise performance measures for this position will need further discussion between the jobholder and manager as part of the performance management process.

Work complexity

Most challenging duties typically undertaken:

- Provision of legal advice across all areas of the organisation, liaising with external providers where appropriate
- Undertaking contract and other dispute/appeal negotiations/mediation on behalf of Council
- Detailed, advanced analysis of legislation and legislative changes, statistics, reports and academic papers to develop policy advice for the organisation

Key relationship skills

Key internal and/or external contacts	***Nature of the contact most typical*** *(e.g. courtesy, giving/receiving information, explaining things, liaising, advising, gaining cooperation, facilitating, influencing and persuading, resolving minor conflicts, mediating, negotiating, formal negotiation, supervising, leading.)*	***Frequency of interaction*** D - daily W - weekly M - monthly
Public	courtesy, giving/receiving information, explaining things, liaising, advising, gaining cooperation, facilitating, influencing and persuading, resolving minor conflicts	D
Staff	courtesy, giving/receiving information, explaining things, liaising, advising, gaining cooperation, facilitating, influencing and persuading	D
Managers	courtesy, giving/receiving information, explaining things, liaising, advising, gaining cooperation, facilitating, influencing and persuading	W
Executive Managers	courtesy, giving/receiving information, explaining things, liaising, advising	W
Lawyers/Legal advisors	Negotiation, conflict resolution, giving/receiving information	D/W

Examples of the situations which require the use of the highest level of communication or influencing skills:

- Dispute resolution, negotiating/mediation with external solicitors/adversarial parties
- Negotiation and influencing discussions with internal and external parties

Examples where the role co-ordinates or provides coaching or monitors the work of other people not reporting directly to the role (e.g. contractors)?

- Advice/guidance to staff, Exec and Council in legal matters
- Instructions/managing external lawyers/contractors



Person specification

This section is designed to capture the expertise required for the role at the 100% fully effective level. (This does not necessarily reflect what the current jobholder has.) This may be a combination of qualifications/experience, knowledge or equivalent level of learning through experience or key skills, attributes or job specific competencies.

Essential	Preferred
Education and qualifications	
• Tertiary degree in Law • Full NZ Drivers' Licence • Admittance to the New Zealand bar and current practising certificate	
Knowledge and experience	
• Three years legal experience • Excellent legal research, statutory interpretation skills • Sound knowledge and interest in Local Government • Strong relationship management and interpersonal skills • Good understanding of relevant legislation e.g. Local Government Act, Resource Management Act	• Three to five years post admission legal experience

Skills & Competencies

- Political Awareness - Understands the workings of local government. Recognises the boundaries between governance and management/administration and acts accordingly. Applies understanding of organisational culture and climate to decisions and actions

- Negotiation - Preparing for, engaging in and managing a formal negotiation and communication process with the aim of gaining an outcome that satisfies both parties

- Negotiating - Ability to relate to people at all levels and to negotiate outcomes. Has specialised and highly developed problem solving and resolution skills.

- Professional skills and technical expertise- sound working knowledge of the principles of law

- Customer Focus - Makes customers & their needs a primary focus of their actions. Develops and sustains productive customer relationships. Understands customer service principles and practices. Presents a professional image e.g. dress code, behaviour, conduct

- Communication - Clearly conveys information and ideas through a variety of appropriate media to individuals or groups in a manner that helps them understand and retain the message. Communicates in a compelling and articulate manner that instills commitment

- Teamwork - Actively participates as a member of a team. Contributes actively and fully to team projects by working with colleages collaboratively, working towards consensual solutions that enhance the output of the team. Accepts share of workload.

- Legislation - Has the ability to interpret and enforce a wide range of legislation

Change to position description

From time to time it may be necessary to consider changes in the position description in response to the changing nature of our work environment – including technological requirements or statutory changes. This position description may be reviewed as part of the preparation for performance planning for the annual performance cycle or as required.

Position holder _____ Date _____

