

Auckland Council Legal Team Model

Business partnering model

Relationship partners will be appointed from amongst the senior legal team to partner with senior leaders. At the initial meeting of each senior leader and their relationship lawyer, the principles and practicalities of the Legal Team Charter and refocused Legal Team Model will be presented and discussed.

Relationship partners and leaders will meet regularly to discuss business unit/departmental priorities, anticipated work-flows and demand for legal input, and opportunities for self-help. The picture developed by relationship partners will be shared with all lawyers working with that unit/department to assist them to actively prioritise instructions and manage work-streams.

Additional interface points may be created to help manage difficult relationships which will be prioritised in the short-medium term.

Driver – to better understand and deliver on business division priorities, to ensure legal input is strategic and consistent across the group, to forecast future need for legal resources and to identify and develop self-help tools where appropriate.

Prioritise strategically important work that advances key council objectives

Work will be actively prioritised, in consultation with clients, according to its strategic importance to the organisation. Before accepting an instruction, lawyers are expected to consider, and explore with the client, the strategic importance of the work, and tailor the legal response accordingly. This prioritisation will be informed by the overall picture of departmental priorities developed by relationship partners.

Customer inquiries will be managed to encourage instructions to come through the appropriate channels, including ensuring that the approval of a Tier 3 manager (or designated manager) has been obtained for the instruction.

Driver – the desire to collectively prioritise work across the legal team and ensure resources are deployed responsibly, where required to serve the best interests of the council group.

Personalised, customer friendly interactions and appropriate data capture and reporting

The generic request for legal advice form will be disestablished after a suitable transition period, in favour of a direct relationship-based approach.

The legal team page on Kotahi will be updated with designated relationship partners for each department and information from a customer perspective on who to contact for each type of legal issue.

Continuous improvement of the way information is captured will be undertaken to ensure the business has a clear picture of where legal demand is highest and where legal resource is being deployed.

Driver – to create a more customer-friendly way for clients to access legal team services and enable better monitoring and reporting of demand for legal services.

Supported self-help tools

Roll out a programme of self-help tools and training to enable customers to manage minor and repeat issues themselves; freeing up the legal team to work on business-critical matters. Examples: FAQs, guidance notes, templates, online training and video tutorials.

Relationship partners will work with department leaders to identify opportunities for self-help tools and training needs.

The legal team will draw on external providers to develop these new tools.

Driver – to help the business to manage low priority and repeat matters within their business unit.

Responsive customer service

All lawyers will clearly communicate with the instructing client and tell them who will be doing the work, by when and whether any further information is required. Lawyers will put themselves in the shoes of their client and keep them well informed of progress.

Lawyers will consult with the client if external legal support is required and consider their views.

Driver – to help the business feel well supported by a considerate legal team.