**Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification**

**Job Description**

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| **Job Title:**  Planning Assistant | **Grade**:  Scale 5 – Scale 6 |
| **Section:**  Spatial and Transport Planning | **Directorate:**  Environment and Community Services |
| **Responsible to following manager:**  Spatial Planning and Design Team Manager | **Responsible for following staff:**  N/A |
| **Post Number/s:** | **Last review date:** September 2021 |

**Working for the Richmond/Wandsworth Shared Staffing Arrangement**

This role is employed under the Shared Staffing Arrangement between Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. The overall purpose of the Shared Staffing Arrangement is to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest attainable cost.

Staff are expected to deliver high quality and responsive services wherever they are based, as well as having the ability to adapt to sometimes differing processes and expectations.

The Shared Staffing Arrangement aims to be at the forefront of innovation in local government and the organisation will invest in the development of its staff and ensure the opportunities for progression that only a large organisation can provide.

**Job Purpose:**

To assist with the delivery of high quality, robust and transparent Planning Policy service ensuring decision making within tight time frames and to ensure that the Spatial and Transport Planning Division is recognised as delivering an excellent planning service for all of our customers. The Planning Assistant will assist on an area of planning policy, including in providing policy advice on planning applications, pre-application advice requests and correspondence to agreed and identifiable timescales. To undertake less specialist projects related to planning policy and its broader implementation within the borough, as allocated by the Spatial Planning and Design Team Manager. To undertake appropriate training to help them acquire the skills and knowledge so that they can become self-reliant in dealing with technical and people issues as required.

**Specific Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. To be responsible to the Spatial Planning and Design Team Manager and work

under the supervision of the Principal Policy and Information Planner as well as Senior Planner(s).

1. To support the delivery of planning projects or casework, under full supervision, on a range of planning policy work including the development and review of planning policy, working to identifiable deadlines in a manner that is consistent with meeting corporate targets and objectives.
2. To assist in the formulation, planning and monitoring of policies and procedures, including assisting in the provision of planning policy comments to straightforward planning applications.
3. To assist and contribute to the development of the Richmond and Wandsworth Local Plans, including on work relating to policy formulation and supporting evidence base.
4. To assist in the preparation for public consultation and engagement events. This includes assisting in the organisation and facilitation of events as well as in the processing and analysis of responses, particularly relating to the boroughs’ Local Plans.
5. To develop and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of national and regional planning policy and relevant legislation.
6. To assist in providing advice and guidance in response to planning best practice, procedure or policy within a legal/organisational policy framework.
7. To assist in identifying issues and proposing improvements within the context of current and future service requirements, including in the light of the government’s planning reform agenda.
8. To assist on projects or components of larger projects in order to deliver organisational objectives as well as enabling agreed changes in planning practice and processes to take place.
9. To seek opportunities to improve your planning knowledge.
10. To arrange and support meetings, including note taking.
11. To undertake administrative and other supporting tasks relating to the work of the Team as required.

**CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO SCALE 6**

1. To be able to work both independently and as an effective team member, undertaking a variety of work using own initiative, including management of own workload and adapting to changing priorities and deadlines.
2. To research, prepare and write up reports and briefing papers for colleagues and managers under minimal supervision.
3. To contribute to slightly more complex planning projects or casework, including Local Plan work and related evidence base.
4. To actively take part in the preparation for public consultation exercises and in engagement events, including coordinating consultation initiatives, particularly in respect of the boroughs’ Local Plans.
5. To work independently on the processing of consultation responses and representations to planning related consultations.
6. To develop and maintain knowledge of national and regional planning policy and relevant legislation.
7. On occasion, to present your own recommendations to internal and public meetings on basic planning issues in a clear and concise manner.

**Generic Duties and Responsibilities**

* To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of the Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond.
* To comply with relevant Codes of Practice, including the Code of Conduct and policies concerning data protection and health and safety.
* To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by the SSA’s policies, procedures and local risk assessments to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability and legal compliance of information and systems.
* To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, maintaining an awareness of the equality and diversity protocol/policy and working to create and maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where all people are treated with dignity and their identity and culture are valued and respected.
* To understand both Councils’ duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults as they apply to the role within the council.
* The Shared Staffing Arrangement will keep its structures under continual review and as a result the post holder should expect to carry out any other reasonable duties within the overall function, commensurate with the level of the post.

**Additional Information**

Over time Council services change and develop. This can impact upon the main duties and responsibilities of the role, and subsequently the post holder, who will be required to adapt. Any changes will be appropriate to the grading of the post and will be made in discussion with the post holder.

**Current Team structure**

**Person Specification**

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**Our Values and Behaviours**

The values and behaviours we seek from our staff draw on the high standards of the two boroughs, and we prize these qualities in particular:

**Being open.** This means we share our views openly, honestly and in a thoughtful way. We encourage new ideas and ways of doing things. We appreciate and listen to feedback from each other.

**Being supportive.** This means we drive the success of the organisation by making sure that our colleagues are successful. We encourage others and take account of the challenges they face. We help each other to do our jobs.

**Being positive and helpful.** This means we keep our goals in mind and look for ways to achieve them. We listen constructively and help others see opportunities and the way forward. We have a ‘can do’ attitude and are continuously looking for ways to help each other improve.

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| **Person Specification Requirements** | **Assessed by**  **A & I (see below for explanation)** |
| **Knowledge** | |
| Knowledge and understanding of planning legislation and policy guidance, including the ability to apply that knowledge in practice. | A/I |
| **Experience** | |
| Experience of conducting research and using evidence to draw conclusions | A/I |
| Experience of working collaboratively to achieve an agreed outcome | A/I |
| Experience of using IT systems, including word-processing, database and spreadsheet software (mainly Microsoft Office applications) and use of Internet and virtual platforms such as Teams, Zoom and/or Skype. | A/I |
| **Skills** | |
| Ability to express yourself confidently and to present arguments clearly and succinctly both on paper and in person. | A/I |
| Good report writing skills and the ability to prepare briefing notes and other documents or research reports in clear and concise English. | A/I |
| Ability to use effective means of communication in order to resolve problems. | A/I |
| Ability to analyse and interpret information and data. | A/I |
| Ability to work on designated projects with supervision. | A/I |
| Ability to organise own workload, prioritise tasks to meet deadlines and respond flexibly to frequently changing needs and priorities. | A/I |
| Ability to use initiative to identify solutions to problem solving and demonstrating a 'can-do' attitude to improvements in service delivery. | A/I |
| Ability to assist in identifying need for change and to introduce and manage changes designed to improve service delivery. | A/I |
| A good understanding of own strengths and development needs together with a commitment to self-improvement | A/I |
| Ability to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to equality and diversity | A/I |
| **Qualifications** | |
| Educated to degree level, minimum 2:2 attainment, with ideally a degree in planning or related disciplines within the built environment | A/I |

**A – Application**

**I – Interview**