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

**Job Description**

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| **Job Title:**  Principal Development Viability Officer (Wandsworth) | **Grade**:  PO5 |
| **Section:**  Spatial and Transport Planning | **Directorate:**  Environment and Community Services |
| **Responsible to following manager:**  Spatial Planning and Design Team Manager | **Responsible for following staff:**  None |
| **Post Number/s:** | **Last review date:**  N/A |

**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 (SSA) 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**

The Principal Development Viability Officer (Wandsworth) will deliver a high quality, robust and transparent service within the Planning and Transport Strategy Division, ensuring decision making within tight time frames. The postholder will also ensure that the Planning and Transport Strategy Division is recognised as delivering an excellent planning service for all of our customers.

The Principal Development Viability Officer (Wandsworth) will independently manage key planning and viability aspects related to decision making on planning applications in the borough, with specific focus on affordable housing. The main responsibilities include, providing advice on Financial Viability Appraisals at pre-application stage and reviewing Financial Viability Appraisals submitted as part of planning applications, scrutinising the outputs from the external viability consultants, securing financial contributions, and ensuring the Planning Service is well equipped in assessing and where necessary challenging viability appraisals and outputs.

You will lead on all aspects related to financial viability of developments in Wandsworth, taking personal responsibility for your work and projects. You will be able to work with minimal supervision in delivering the key requirements of the post.

You will also be responsible for ensuring there is up-to-date guidance and processes in relation to the requirements for Financial Viability Appraisals, ensuring that the right information is submitted at the outset as part of a planning application.

You will deal directly with the Council’s external viability consultants, the officers in the Planning and Transport Strategy Division, including senior managers within it, the SSA’s Housing department including the Head of Enabling and Special Projects and the applicants including their viability consultants; you will also act as the key link between those. You will work collaboratively with internal and external colleagues and partners, such as the Greater London Authority and Registered Providers as well as developers and landowners, and raise affordable housing policy as well as viability requirements at an early stage.

You will represent the Council at both internal and external meetings, including appropriate Committee meetings as required, defending the Council’s position in planning related negotiations, planning appeals, public inquiries and in examinations in public.

The postholder will primarily focus on delivery of services in the London Borough of Wandsworth but may also contribute to workstreams across the SSA.

**Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

1. To lead on and take personal responsibility for the critical review of inputs and outputs of Financial Viability Appraisals submitted as part of pre-applications and planning applications, liaising with the Council’s external viability consultants and ensuring financial contributions are secured as required by policies.
2. To negotiate with, and where required challenge applicants and viability consultants on the factors and outputs that determine the viability of schemes, with a view of securing maximum delivery of affordable housing and/or financial contributions.
3. To provide the key link between the Council’s Planning service, external viability consultant(s) and the Council’s Housing department.
4. To review existing and/or develop new guidance and process notes to support the submission and review of Financial Viability Appraisals, to ensure the correct processes are followed by applicants and there is clarity and transparency in the information that is required by the Council in order to interrogate the submitted Financial Viability Appraisals.
5. To attend meetings with applicants/developers, Planning Committee meetings, planning appeals, inquiries, examinations and other meetings as required, as the Council’s specialist on viability.
6. To contribute to the review of existing contracts and/or frameworks established for external viability advisors and consultants.
7. To support the delivery of the Council’s statutory planning functions by providing expert advice at pre-planning application stage and on planning applications in relation to affordable housing and viability matters. This includes providing advice and guidance in response to planning best practice, procedure or policy within a legal/organisational policy framework.
8. To lead on the inputs required for local plan making processes around affordable housing and viability, including the necessary research and evidence base to support the Council’s emerging policies. This may include leading on and/or developing the viability related evidence to secure contributions from small development sites in the borough, ensuring that viability is enshrined in the evidence base. To play an instrumental role in developing a new Infrastructure Levy for the borough, specifically advising on viability matters.
9. To lead on and take personal responsibility for the preparation of specialist evidence in respect of appeals including presenting evidence at Public Inquiries, Hearings and written representations, particularly with respect to affordable housing and viability matters.
10. To maintain an up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation and national and regional policy and guidance and take a proactive approach to relevant changes in these, recommending revised procedures and practices and managing the implementation of those revisions, with a particular focus on affordable housing and viability matters.
11. To provide advice and input into Section 106 Legal Agreements, particularly in relation to review mechanisms, to ensure that the opportunity to maximise affordable housing delivery and/or affordable housing contributions are secured during the construction process. This will include working with planning case officers and external legal advisors.
12. To build and develop strong working relationships inside the Planning service in order to deliver departmental and corporate objectives in relation to affordable housing and viability. This includes working collaboratively with internal colleagues, senior officers and Councillors to identify opportunities for increasing the delivery of affordable housing based on a sound understanding and assessment of viability matters.
13. To advise on the implications and consequences in terms of any future changes to the planning system and the proposed Infrastructure Levy, with a particular focus on any matters that could hinder the Council’s aims in securing affordable housing, including preparing briefings and where necessary presenting to colleagues, senior managers and Councillors.
14. To coach and facilitate the acquisition of skills and knowledge in others so that they are better equipped to be self-reliant in dealing with technical viability issues. This includes providing training and building in-house capacity within the Planning service on affordable housing, delivery and viability issues, which will develop and increase levels of corporate awareness on complex housing delivery and viability issues, as well as responding to the aspirations of Councillors.
15. To implement self-contained 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, taking personal responsibility for detailed project management as required.
16. To present your own recommendations to the Council’s relevant Committees, and other internal and public meetings on complex and/or controversial planning / affordable housing / financial viability issues in a clear and concise manner, including providing expert professional advice to Members and the public.
17. To ensure you meet service-wide and corporate performance indicators, targets and customer service standards for the full range of your own workload.

**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**

Whilst the role is based within the Shared Staffing Arrangement, this is a Wandsworth only role.

**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/ T/ C (see below for explanation)** |
| **Knowledge** | |
| Comprehensive knowledge and excellent understanding of development viability and Section 106 legal agreements, including related legislation, policy guidance, practice and case law, and the ability to apply that knowledge to delivering a responsive and high quality service. | A/I/T |
| **Experience** | |
| Proven experience in undertaking economic appraisals, including reviewing Financial Viability Appraisals as part of the planning process, including experience in analysing and interpreting data and outcomes. | A/I/T |
| Proven experience of using initiative to identify innovative solutions to problem solving and demonstrating a 'can-do' attitude to improvements in service delivery. | A/I |
| Desirable experience in relation to development viability working within local government. | A/I/T |
| Demonstrate experience in working with colleagues, senior managers, agencies and external partners to deliver agreed outcomes. | A/I |
| **Skills** | |
| Ability to understand complex affordable housing and viability matters in planning, how this fits into the planning process and opportunities to challenge and secure improvements to support affordable housing delivery. | A/I/T |
| Effective report writing skills on a wide range of complex issues, including for committee reports, local plan examination statements, planning appeal statements or equivalents. | A/I/T |
| Ability to organise own workload and work within agreed timeframes to maintain high quality decision making at speed and to achieve set deadlines and targets. This includes managing competing and changing priorities. | A/I |
| Articulate in written and oral communication skills with particular reference to report and letter writing, public speaking, presentation skills and communicating with Members, the public, staff and other professionals. | A/I/T |
| Ability to comprehensively review, analyse and interpret complex data and reports, specifically Financial Viability Appraisals, and present key facts and findings within reports to senior colleagues, Members and the public. | A/I/T |
| Ability to prepare briefs for, and select, control and monitor consultants. | A/I |
| Ability to lead on and take full responsibility for designated projects with minimum supervision as allocated by the Spatial Planning and Design Team Manager. | A/I |
| Ability to build and develop strong working relationships, both inside and outside the Planning Service, and well developed inter-personal skills. | A/I |
| Ability to produce clear and concise reports. | A/I/T |
| Ability to assist in identifying need for change and to introduce and manage changes designed to improve service delivery. | A/I |
| Ability to coach colleagues, Development Management officers and other professionals so that they can become self-reliant in dealing with technical issues. | A/I |
| Clear understanding of IT systems, including Microsoft Office applications, spreadsheets and database systems. | A/I/T |
| **Qualifications** | |
| Fully qualified member of RICS or equivalent professional body. | A/C |

**A – Application form / CV**

**I – Interview**

**T – Test**

**C - Certificate**