

Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification

Job Description

Job Title: Development Viability Officer	Grade: Sc6 to PO1
Section: Spatial Planning	Directorate: Place Division, Chief Executive
Responsible to following manager: Principal Development Viability Officer	Responsible for following staff: None
Post Number/s: TBC	Last review date: September 2024

Working for the Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership

This role is employed under the Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership. The overall purpose of Richmond & Wandsworth 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.

Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership 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 Development Viability Officer will assist in the delivery of a high quality, robust and transparent service within the Spatial Planning Service, ensuring decision making within tight time frames. The postholder will also ensure that the Place Division is recognised as delivering an excellent planning service for all of our customers.

The Development Viability Officer will work collaboratively with other officer/s to manage key planning and viability aspects related to decision making on planning applications in both Richmond and Wandsworth boroughs, with a specific focus on maximising affordable housing. The main responsibilities include providing advice on Financial Viability Appraisals at pre-application stage, reviewing Financial Viability Appraisals submitted as part of planning applications, scrutinising the outputs from the external viability consultants, securing financial contributions, and ensuring the Spatial Planning Service is well equipped in assessing and where necessary challenging viability appraisals and outputs.

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

Under the supervision of Senior Officers you will work collaboratively with the Council's external viability consultants, officers in the Place Division, including senior managers within it, the Councils' Housing department including the Head of Enabling and Special Projects and the applicants including their viability consultants, alongside the Senior Development Viability Officer and Principal Development Viability Officer and will raise affordable housing policy as well as viability requirements at an early stage alongside senior officers.

There will be opportunities to expand your learning and knowledge on matters relating to planning and viability including attending the London Authorities Viability Group and Association of London Borough Planning Officers (ALBPO) which meet on a regular basis as well as other CPD events as relevant or required to enable the postholder to progress in the role.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

1. To review economic viability modelling information specifically relating to the inputs and outputs of Financial Viability Appraisals (FVA) submitted as part of pre-applications and planning applications and feed any concerns back to senior officers to identify inputs, or methodologies included within submitted FVA's which do not align with acceptable ranges, and work alongside senior officers to scrutinise and raise any concerns with the reporting outputs of the Council's external viability consultants, including through the use of email and verbal correspondence.
2. To take a lead role in the organisation of the teams work load flows, including updating caseload spreadsheets and ensuring information on each case is up to date, ensuring deadlines for reviews are carried out within the timescales agreed

with the external consultant, and if necessary follow up with external consultants if reviews are not provided on time, or if additional information is required, work with Development Management colleagues to ensure the external consultants have all the information required to undertake the review in a timely manner.

3. To support senior officers in negotiating, and where required challenging applicants and viability consultants on the factors and outputs that determine the viability of schemes, with a view of securing the maximum delivery of affordable housing and/or financial contributions, including the review of standard viability assumptions, ensuring consistency across the Council, this will include researching appropriate evidence, identifying similar examples across London to use if necessary and justifying standard assumptions, such as on aspects including developer profit levels, professional fees, marketing and legal costs etc associated with a development, providing evidence either in writing or verbally. Ensuring financial contributions are secured as required by policies, and represented in relevant legal agreements, under the supervision of senior colleagues, with a view of securing the maximum delivery of affordable housing and/or financial contributions.
4. To contribute to the review, drafting/development, and implementation of new guidance, supplementary planning documents and process notes to support the submission and review of Financial Viability Appraisals, ensuring applicants have a clear understanding of what is required by the Council. This will include researching updated guidance, appeal decisions and national planning policy to ensure new guidance is supported by relevant, and up to date evidence.
5. To prepare background evidence for meetings with applicants/developers, Planning Committee meetings, and provide background information to senior officers at planning appeals, inquiries, examinations, and other meetings as/when required. This will include researching relevant evidence, including from previous appeal decisions and relevant viability guidance to support arguments raised by senior officers, then collating the relevant evidence, into documents such as appeal proofs, examination documents, and notes, in a clear and concise manner, meeting strict deadlines which is the case for appeals, inquiries, examination and committees.
6. To assist with the delivery of the Council's statutory planning functions by providing advice at pre-planning application stage on minor schemes and on planning applications in relation to affordable housing and viability matters under the supervision of senior officers. This includes providing clearly written advice and guidance, or directing officers to the correct person, in response to planning best practice, procedure or policy within a legal/organisational policy framework, with suitably evidenced work in case of any future appeal.
7. To assist with the provision of the housing and viability evidence base required as part of the local plan making process, including the necessary research and

evidence base to support the Council’s emerging policies. This may include researching relevant evidence and collating sufficient information and guidance to support any amendments to emerging Local Plan policy, ensuring there is a strong evidence base to justify the position of any emerging Local Plan documents.

8. 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 to senior officers, improvements to procedures and practices and managing the implementation of those revisions, with a particular focus on affordable housing and viability matters.
9. To advise on implications for viability of any central and regional government proposals, including contribution to the Council’s formal/ written responses as required.
10. To ensure you meet service-wide and corporate performance indicators, targets and customer service standards for the full range of your own workload. This includes providing comments and feedback to Development Management within timescales set out corporately to aid the planning department in meeting appropriate KPI’s.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO SO1

- To provide basic advice at pre-planning application stage and on planning applications in relation to affordable housing and viability matters on minor sites (sites of less than 10 dwellings) or casework at the following level under the supervision of Senior officers:
 - straightforward policy reviews
 - Start to gain an understanding of legal agreements and be able to identify key issues within S106 legal agreements
 - provide comments on straightforward viability assessments in an accurate, well written officer report based on relevant planning policies and other material considerations.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO SO2

- To provide advice and support to Development Management Officers in relation to housing and viability matters, more complex minor sites and/or mixed use sites at the following level under the limited supervision of Senior officers:
 - more complex planning policy reviews
 - straightforward legal agreements on minor sites
 - observations on planning applications where a variety of housing policies need to be reconciled
 - provide comments on straightforward viability assessments and to assess, negotiate and set out clear and robust recommendations in

an accurate, well written officer report based on relevant planning policies and other material considerations.

- To provide support to Development Management in drafting committee reports for more complex schemes relating to housing and viability as and when required.
- To provide advice and guidance as required in response to planning best practice, procedure or policy within a legal/organisational policy framework and develop solutions or recommendations to meet service needs or provide improvements

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO PO1

- To provide advice and support to Development Management Officers in relation to housing and viability matters, on more straightforward major and mixed use sites at the following level under the supervision of Senior officers:
 - Planning policy reviews on straightforward major sites
 - straightforward legal agreements on major sites
 - provide comments on straightforward major site viability assessments and to assess, negotiate and set out clear and robust recommendations in an accurate, well written officer report based on relevant planning policies and other material considerations.
- Work collaboratively with other departments in the Council including Housing Enabling to work towards improved outcomes which are achieved on development sites within Richmond and Wandsworth with some supervision from senior colleagues, collating sufficient evidence to justify the outcomes.
- To provide support to Development Management in drafting committee reports for straightforward major sites.
- Attend meetings with external viability consultants, supported by senior officers, negotiating on basic aspects of development viability confidently and proficiently to ensure the best outcomes are achieved on sites relating to affordable housing delivery.

Generic Duties and Responsibilities

- To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnerships.
- 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 Richmond and Wandsworth 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 roles within the Councils.
- The profile is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the duties the post holder will carry out. Other reasonable duties commensurate with the level of the post, including supporting emergency and priority situations, will form part of the role.

Additional Information

- This role offers the flexibility of agile working, with office based and remote working as agreed to meet the needs of the Service.
- This position serves two London boroughs and as such the postholder will be expected to work flexibly across two office locations (Wandsworth Town Hall and Twickenham Civic Centre).
- The Councils will reimburse membership fees to a relevant professional institute.

Team structure



Person Specification

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Our Values

THINK BIGGER

EMBRACE DIFFERENCE

CONNECT BETTER

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Our Values are embedded across Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership and throughout all roles and responsibilities at all levels of the organisation. Please [familiarise yourself with our values](#) as they are an integral part of our recruitment and selection process.

Person Specification Requirements			Assessed by A/I/T/C (see below for explanation)
Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
General understanding of development viability principles, awareness of Section 106 legal agreements, including related legislation, policy and guidance.	✓		A/I
Experience	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Experience in understanding economic appraisals, including Financial Viability Appraisals submitted as part of the	✓		A/I

planning process, including experience in analysing and interpreting key inputs and outputs.			
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
Experience in relation to development viability working within local government.		✓	A/I
Demonstrate experience in working with colleagues and senior managers, to deliver agreed outcomes.	✓		A/I
Skills	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Ability to understand 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
Be able to query and challenge as appropriate viability appraisal assumptions.	✓		A/I
Effective report writing skills on a wide range of complex issues, including for committee reports, local plan examination statements, planning appeal statements or equivalent.		✓	A/I
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, especially report and letter writing, presentation skills and communicating complex principles to other members of staff.	✓		A/I
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.		✓	A/I

Ability to build and develop strong working relationships, both inside and outside the Place Division, and well developed inter-personal skills.	✓		A/I
Ability to produce clear and concise reports with guidance from senior officers.	✓		A/I
Ability to assist in identifying need for change and to introduce and manage changes designed to improve service delivery.	✓		A/I
Clear understanding of IT systems, including Microsoft Office applications, spreadsheets and database systems.	✓		A/I
Ability to understand 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
Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
A relevant degree and masters level qualification and working towards or the desire to work towards a RICS professional qualification or equivalent professional body.	✓		A/C

A – Application form / CV

I – Interview

T – Test

C - Certificate