

## Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification

### Job Description

<b>Job Title:</b> Senior Development Viability Officer	<b>Grade:</b> PO2 to PO4
<b>Section:</b> Spatial Planning	<b>Directorate:</b> Place Division, Chief Executive
<b>Responsible to following manager:</b> Principal Development Viability Officer	<b>Responsible for following staff:</b> None
<b>Post Number/s:</b> TBC	<b>Last review date:</b> 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 Senior 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 Senior 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 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 all 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 minimal supervision in delivering the key requirements of the post.

You will also contribute to creating and implementing 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, 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; you will also act as a crucial 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 will 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, as well as supporting senior colleagues with planning appeals, public inquiries and in examinations in public.

### **Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

1. To take a lead role in the critical review of inputs and outputs of Financial Viability Appraisals (FVA) submitted as part of pre-applications and planning applications for minor sites and for major sites review submitted FVA's, seeking input if required from the Principal Viability Officer. Liaising with the Council's external viability consultants through the use of emails and verbal communication 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.

This will involve communication with applicants and their external viability consultant, via emails, verbal communication and face to face meetings if required, sometimes in a challenging or heated environment, with the Senior Officer being required to think proactively, lead negotiations and find solutions. Prioritising securing the maximum level of affordable housing and/or financial contributions within both Councils. Ensuring the relevant case officer/s are properly kept informed of the negotiation process through the use of either email and/or verbal communication.

3. To provide a key link, alongside the Principal Development Viability Officer, between the Council's Spatial Planning service, external viability consultant(s) and the Council's Housing department.
4. To take an active role in the review, development, and implementation of new guidance, supplementary planning documents and process notes to support the submission and review of FVA's. This will include helping to write new guidance documents to produce useable documents that are clear, concise and understandable to applicants, as well as recommending improvements to existing guidance which could increase efficiencies within the planning process relating to viability within the planning department. Ensuring 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, and provide support to senior officers at planning appeals, inquiries, examinations, and other meetings as/when required. This will include speaking on and communicating key viability principles, contributing to committee reports and providing support to the Principal Development Viability Officer on more complex schemes, this will include helping write proofs, reviewing evidence documents and providing recommendations to the Principal Development Viability Officer as an when required.
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 advice at pre-planning application stage on minor and less complex major schemes, and with the guidance of the Principal Development Viability Officer on more complex major schemes on planning applications in relation to affordable housing and viability matters, and associated legal agreements. This includes providing clearly written and verbal advice and guidance in response to planning best practice, procedure or policy within a legal/organisational policy framework, with suitable evidenced work in case of any future appeal.

8. To assist the Principal Development Viability Officer in leading 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 taking an active role on writing tenders and briefs to procure viability related evidence to secure contributions from small development sites, and liaising with external consultants, providing them with information required to carry out the work, providing updates to senior officers on progress and ensuring external consultants keep to required timescales, ensuring that viability is enshrined in the evidence base. To play an instrumental role in developing the evidence and preparing policy documentation as required to support any changes in developer contribution charging regimes (CIL/S106/Infrastructure Levy etc), specifically advising on viability matters.
9. To take 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, with limited supervision on straight forward schemes/matters and under supervision of the Principal Development Viability Officer on more complex schemes/matters.
10. To maintain an up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation and national and regional policy and guidance. Taking a proactive approach to relevant changes,, recommending revised procedures and practices to the Principal Officer 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 opportunities 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 Place Division 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 implications for viability of any central and regional government proposals, including leading on aspects of to the Council's formal/ written responses as required.
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 supporting senior officers providing training and building in-house

capacity within the Place Division 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 present recommendations to the Council's relevant Committees, and other internal and public meetings on complex and/or controversial planning / affordable housing / financial viability issues on straightforward development schemes in a clear and concise manner, including providing expert professional advice to Members and the public. To deputise for the Principal Development Viability Officer at meetings where required and as appropriate.
16. 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 PO3

- To undertake planning projects or casework at the following level with minimal supervision on minor and major sites:
  - contribute to complex policy reviews
  - contribute to complex legal agreements
  - provide comments on complex 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.
- Attend and contribute to planning committee or similar and be able to present a straightforward scheme to members of the committee, answering questions clearly and concisely.
- Help prepare and give evidence on behalf of the Council at Public Examinations and Inquiries as and when required under supervision of the Principal Development Viability Officer.
- Attend meetings with minimal support from the Principal Viability Officer including with external viability consultants and applicants, negotiating confidently and proficiently on a variety of viability principles to ensure the best outcomes are achieved on sites relating to affordable housing delivery.

#### CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION TO PO4

- To undertake planning projects or casework at the following level independently:
  - Lead on complex policy reviews

- Lead on the contribution to complex legal agreements
  - provide comments on complex 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 prepare and give evidence on behalf of the Council at Public Examinations and Inquiries as and when required.
  - To independently attend meetings with external viability consultants and applicants, negotiating confidently and proficiently to ensure the best outcomes are achieved on sites relating to affordable housing delivery.
  - Attend and contribute to planning committee or similar and be able to present a more complex scheme to members of the committee, answering questions clearly and concisely.
  - To provide advice to Councillors on matters relating to viability and affordable housing, with the ability to present complex viability matters clearly and concisely and able to transfer complex viability principles into an understandable format.
  - Take an active role in recommending improvements to the service and take responsibility for helping write and implement new guidance as and when required.

### **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
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



<b>Experience</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Assessed</b>
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
Experience in relation to development viability working within local government.		✓	A/I
Demonstrate experience in working with colleagues, senior managers, agencies and external partners to deliver agreed outcomes.	✓		A/I
<b>Skills</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Assessed</b>
Understand complex affordable housing and viability matters in planning, how this fits into the planning process and be able 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
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, public speaking, presentation skills and communicating with Members, the public, staff and other professionals.	✓		A/I/T
Ability to convert complex viability principles into simple terms and present these to Councillors, members of the public		✓	A/I/T

and other internal officer and present confidently and concisely.			
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/
Ability to prepare briefs for, and select, manage and monitor consultants.		✓	A/I
Ability to lead on and take full responsibility for designated projects with minimum supervision as allocated by the Principal Development Viability Officer.	✓		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.	✓		A/I
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
<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Assessed</b>
A relevant degree and masters level qualification.	✓		A/C
Fully qualified member of RICS or equivalent professional body, or working towards a relevant qualification.		✓	A/C

**A – Application form / CV**

**I – Interview**

**T – Test**

**C - Certificate**