



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Area Manager – Development Management	Grade: MGA
Division/Section: Development Management & Building Control	Location: Civic Centre
Responsible to: Head of Development Management & Building Control	Responsible for: Deputises for Head of Development Management and Building Control within area of expertise. Up to 10 staff
Post No: To be Confirmed	Last Review Date: 2005 - This JD is now revised

MAIN PURPOSE

The Development Management Service's focus is on delivering high quality, robust and transparent decision making within tight time frames to ensure that Merton's Planning Service is recognised as delivering an excellent planning experience for all our customers.

The Area Manager – Development Management will act as a lead planning specialist/expert and will lead one of two area planning teams and will provide professional advice for the Council, Members, and the Planning Applications Committee, creating and applying best practice and delivering successful planning outcomes.

To meet on a regular basis with The Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Applications Committee and to advise them regarding potential issues and areas of conflict that could arise from specific controversial planning applications.

To deputise for the Head of Development Management and Building Control on planning matters in his/her absence and will take a lead role in the delivery of a high quality, speedy development management service for our customers, utilising effectively IT and team members to ensure that corporate and national targets are met and exceeded.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide a comprehensive Development Management-service benefiting the residents and businesses of the Borough and to ensure a high quality of service and advice to the Council, its clients and partners.
- To lead one of two development management teams and to ensure the efficient and effective management of staff and the delivery of service through the maintenance of consistently high technical and professional standards, having regard to national and local performance indicators and requirements.
- To be ultimately responsible for ensuring the determination of full range of development management case work including negotiation of planning performance agreements, pre-application advice, the processing of highly complex and high-risk applications and correspondence, ensuring it is effectively and efficiently carried out to identifiable deadlines in a manner which is successful in meeting corporate targets and objectives.
- To provide an input into departmental and corporate initiatives/projects where expertise and professional knowledge is required and to lead on specific projects
- To deputise for the Head of Development Management & Building Control in his/her absence in relevant areas of Planning

(A) Management and Technical Supervision

- To lead and motivate a development management team, co-ordinate works programmes and allocate work tasks in order to process
 - Planning applications
 - Prior approvals
 - Listed Building and Conservation Area Applications
 - Planning Appeals
 - Advertisement Applications
 - Certificates of Lawfulness

within agreed national and local performance indicators, standards and requirements.

- To be responsible for the achievement and maintenance of high professional and technical standards within a development management team including up to date knowledge of relevant legislation, guidance, technology and techniques.
- To ensure that the team provides professional advice on development management issues and that an effective service is provided to the public, other stakeholders, relevant Council officers and Members of the Council.

- To ensure that the team maintains contact with the local community and business users, carries out consultation on planning applications and provides effective liaison with other Boroughs and bodies dealing with development control.
- To contribute to departmental and corporate priorities and initiatives, including special area based projects and service reviews, assessment and management of planning related statistics, and to manage and co-ordinate specific projects as directed.
- To ensure that quality control, systems are in place to ensure that correspondence and other forms of communication leaving the team is acceptable in terms of its timeliness, content and customer care.
- To continually assess and keep the Head of Development Management & Building Control informed of demands and priorities imposed on the team and provide him/her with relevant statistics on the DM team's performance and to comment on the quality of output.
- To manage the preparation of quality reports, making recommendations on planning applications for determination, either under delegated authority by the Head of Development Management & Building, or by the Planning Applications Committee as appropriate.
- To liaise with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Applications Committee regarding planning reports and to present reports at PAC as required.

(B) Responsibilities and Decisions

- To implement the Development Plan and other relevant Council policies through the development control process.
- To be ultimately responsible for the determination of a variety of applications within the postholder's allocated team, including Prior Approvals; Certificates of Lawfulness; and householder/advertisement applications In line with the Scheme of Delegation and the Development Plan.
- To make decisions on material and non-material amendments to grants of planning permission and to discharge conditions pursuant to grants of planning permission.
- To provide cover on day-to-day matters in the absence of the Head of Development Management & Building Control on work directly related to the DM duties of the post and to refer more complex issues for decision to the Assistant Director as appropriate where an early response is required.

- To take a leading role in the determination of complex and major planning applications including the negotiation of Section 106 Obligations to achieve maximum sustainable community benefit.
- To ensure that staff within the team are able to give preliminary advice to applicants on all appropriate Council functions, in accordance with the development team approach and give training to staff in other departments, divisions and sections as appropriate on development control and related matters.
- To prepare regular reports to the Head of Development Management & Building Control and the Planning Applications Committee as appropriate on the performance of the DM team against key performance targets and to contribute to the overall management of the Division, including the monitoring and improvement of practices and procedures.
- To prepare and present evidence and statements in response to planning appeals and "call in" applications and to give evidence in court and at public inquiries in relation to development control matters.
- To assist in policy developments including the formulation and modification to the Development Plan and its review and any future Local Development Framework, including the monitoring of existing policies and proposing alterations arising out of development management experience and legal test cases.
- To provide support and advice on enforcement matters (including trees) as and when required, and to refer to the Enforcement Team and Tree Officer as necessary.
- To be responsible for the service provision of the relevant team, having regard to national and local performance indicators, standards and requirements.
- To contribute towards the implementation of service improvements thereby promoting excellence in service delivery and development outcomes.

(C) Professional Expertise

- To have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the legislative and policy background relating to town and country planning in general and development management in particular.
- To lead a development management team, to ensure the highest standard of professional expertise and integrity, especially when consulting with third parties and communicating/negotiating with planning applicants and other stakeholders.

- To have the appropriate and necessary expertise to play a major role in the determination of complex planning applications, the negotiation of comprehensive Section 106 Obligations and the involvement in major public inquiries associated with planning appeals, compulsory purchase and "call in" applications.

(D) Financial Responsibilities

- To contribute towards the effective management of the Section's budget, including income from pre-application advice; applications; PPA's and other income, and to advise the Head of Development Management and Building Control accordingly.
- To contribute towards making more effective use of the development management budget, including the identification of efficiency savings.

(E) Recruitment and Training

- To take part in the appointment of staff for the team including temporary and agency staff and students/work experience staff.
- To review job descriptions and person specifications and organise short listing and interviewing.
- To ensure the effective monitoring of staff performance including carrying out staff appraisals and identifying staff training needs.
- To liaise with administrative staff and in particular, the Team Manager – Admin, to ensure that the development management service and support services are provided to a high standard.
- To agree and monitor annual and flexi leave arrangements within the team and to conduct regular 1 to 1, raising any particular issues with HR and Occupational Health as required.

(F) Corporate Requirements

- To carry out all duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities and Customer Care practices and take a proactive role in their development and implementation.
- To make use of office technology when required and implement new ICT systems, in liaison with ICT staff.
- To ensure that all staff reporting to the post holder are aware of their corporate and departmental health and safety policies and procedures and are trained in their implementation as necessary.

- To monitor the implementation of health and safety policies and to report any shortfalls identified through experience of their operation to the Development Control Manager.
- To carry out any other duties appropriate to the grading of the post as required by senior management.



**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION DEPARTMENT**

PERSON SPECIFICATION – AREA MANAGER - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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Our Values and Behaviours

At Merton, we take pride in delivering excellent services. Our vision is to be London's Best Council and for Merton to be a great place to live and call home.

We expect our staff and managers to adopt behaviour consistent with our 'Behaviours Framework' which is part of our strategy for achieving our internal vision of becoming London's Best Council as well as our Community Plan vision that Merton is 'a great place to live and call home.' The Behaviours Framework is a set of core behaviours which define how we are expected to approach our day to day work as we contribute to the Council's Vision.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND APTITUDES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Planning legislation, policy guidance and circulars, practice and case law and the ability to apply that knowledge in negotiating and delivering highly complex and high risk planning applications within agreed timeframes in order to deliver a responsive, high quality service at speed. 2. Knowledge of regulations and policy relating to Tree Management and Listed Building Applications

3. Ability to write clear reports, letters and proofs of evidence.
4. Ability to communicate on a range of planning matters with diplomacy and tact and, where appropriate, give clear instructions to both staff and the public
5. To be numerate with ability to monitor and control budgets and monitor Section 106 obligations.
6. To have an understanding of good design and knowledge of the National Design Guide so that developments recommended for approval enhance the character of the area.
7. To have well developed negotiation skills in order to achieve schemes which meet planning practice and Council standards and appropriate planning obligations.
8. Ability to supervise and monitor the work of staff and achieve the Council's Planning Charter
9. Ability to participate in and chair public meetings on planning applications and enforcement issues.
10. Ability to assist in the monitoring and review of Development Plan policies
11. Ability to assist in the preparation of Guidance Notes for the public and developers on design and other Development Management issues.
12. Ability to ensure the Council's consultation requirements are met in relation to planning applications.
13. Ability to take delegated decisions on applications and justify these on appeal.

EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS (INCLUDING TRAINING)

14. Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute
15. Degree or equivalent in Town Planning
16. Management qualification or equivalent experience

EXPERIENCE

17. 5 years' experience as a Planner since qualification, at least 3 years of which should have been spent in Development Management
18. Experience of managing a team and/or providing advice to junior members of staff

19. Experience in presenting reports and making recommendations to Committee and equivalent bodies

20. Experience in giving evidence at Public Inquiries.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

21. Ability to drive

22. Ability to adhere to and promote the Council's policies on equalities and customer care