



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION DEPARTMENT

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE: Planning Policy Officer

Grade: ME12 – ME15

DIVISION/SECTION: Sustainable Communities/Future Merton

Location: Merton Civic Centre

Responsible to: Programme Manager, strategic research and policy

Post number:

Date: March 2011

1. MAIN PURPOSE

1. To lead and manage multi disciplinary project teams of council officers and external stakeholders to develop and deliver innovative planning solutions for a wide range of planning policy issues including housing, infrastructure, economic development, open space, biodiversity, design, waste management, climate change and minimising flood risk.
2. To lead on the delivery of strategic planning policy for Merton Council, primarily the preparation, submission, review and delivery of all aspects of Merton's development plan (Local Development Framework) and associated supplementary guidance.
3. To act as the lead specialist, principal point of contact, technical advisor for the Council in matters relating to planning policies, including housing, infrastructure, economic development, open space, biodiversity, design, waste management, climate change and minimising flood risk, providing expert advice to the development management process, Councillors, local residents, developers, community groups, businesses and other technical and non-technical audiences.

2. MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ME12

4. To identify, co-ordinate and deliver the preparation of robust and effective research and monitoring information to support production and delivery of Merton's strategies for planning, housing and economic development.
5. To develop effective working relationships at an appropriate level with key agencies and organisations, such as government departments, the Greater London Authority, strategic healthcare providers, housing providers, the Environment Agency, infrastructure providers and others. This includes undertaking negotiations to raise the profile of Merton for strategic planning and development matters, representing the Council at external meetings and leading on Merton's input to external strategies.
6. To identify potential external funding sources and develop effective bids to secure them, ensuring that the Council's ability to generate external funding for projects is maximised. To develop bids for capital and revenue resources as appropriate and provide support for project management, budget management and financial forecasts.
7. To promote the projects and activities of the team to the wider council, its partners and external organisations including the development industry, other public bodies, business organisations and community associations to raise the teams' profile and attract new business.
8. To undertake analysis and make recommendations to the Project Managers and Future Merton Manager and others as required enabling budget allocation and effective resource management.
9. To undertake regular site visits borough-wide in all seasons to assess spatial planning matters including on development sites under construction.
10. To guide the Placemaking and Regeneration Officer in identifying research and monitoring requirements for a wide range of planning policy issues, including housing, infrastructure, the built and natural environment devising innovative solutions to efficiently monitor development trends in Merton over time, analysing the results and making recommendations.
11. To supervise and motivate junior staff, to establish the quality and budgetary criteria they are expected to work within, and to manage their performance within specific projects.

12. To be responsible for the achievement and maintenance of high professional and technical standards, including an up-to-date knowledge of relevant transport planning legislation, guidance standards, techniques and financial implications.

13. To undertake other duties as required.

ME13:

To have demonstrated performance of all of the above to a high standard and:

14. To be responsible for leading and managing projects towards the successful development, delivery and review of planning, housing and economic development related strategies for Merton Council, including the Local Development Framework and other technical plans.

15. To ensure that effective consultation arrangements which are fully compliant with any relevant statutory requirement, are in place to provide a clear and transparent mechanism for individuals and groups to contribute to the strategy development process.

16. To manage tendering and contract procedures for projects within the service area, advise on and agree the appointment of consultants carrying out studies and projects. Final responsibility would ultimately rest with the postholder.

ME14:

To have demonstrated performance of all of the above to a high standard and:

17. To produce and deliver strategic planning policies and guidance for Merton, demonstrating a substantial level of technical and complex knowledge on strategic planning policy matters including housing, infrastructure, economic development, open space, biodiversity, design, climate change, flooding and waste management.

18. To be solely responsible for making planning-related technical judgements and recommendations on competing needs and development requirements, for example for housing, economic development, infrastructure, the natural environment etc. To demonstrate dealing with emotive issues, having strong negotiation skills, managing conflict, making and conveying difficult decisions due to the potential impact of the wide range of topic areas on people's lives and on financial investments into Merton.

ME15:

To have demonstrated performance of all of the above to a high standard and:

19. To take sole responsibility for representing the Council as expert witness on specific technical planning policy matters at public enquiries as required (e.g. statutory development plans, planning appeals.) This process can be adversarial with robust cross-examination.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO THIS ROLE

The post holder is expected to be committed to the Council's core values of public service, quality, equality and empowerment and to demonstrate this commitment in the way they carry out their duties. In addition they should be available to carry out such other duties, as may be required which are consistent with the grade and scope of the post, as required.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS**Health & Safety**

To ensure that corporate and Departmental Health and Safety policies and procedures are implemented at all times and to raise any concerns regarding their operation or any other health and safety matters with the appropriate line manager.

Equal Opportunities

To be aware of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy: to understand it and to adhere to it.

Customer Care

To assist in ensuring that the Authority's aims regarding customer awareness are achieved.

New Technology

To make use of information technology where necessary in the areas of responsibility and to develop IT use in consultation with the appropriate technical officers.



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Knowledge

1. Knowledge of development plan making legislation and techniques.
2. Understanding of the legislation relating to strategic planning and associated topics
3. Knowledge of best practice and innovative approaches to strategic planning
4. Knowledge & awareness of issues relating to equal opportunities.

Skills and abilities

5. Ability to conduct an open and communicative approach including excellent written and oral communication skills.
6. Ability to plan, programme, monitor and deliver projects and programmes of work in accordance with required timescales.
7. Good analytical skills including the ability to collect, present and interpret complex information.
8. Leadership and interpersonal skills combined with the ability to work effectively as an individual and within a team.
9. Understanding of resource management, including effective budget management.

10. Understanding of IT systems including a good level of competence in all standard software packages including Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint. Familiarity with IT relevant to spatial planning, including mapping packages.

11. An understanding of the different roles and needs of Councillors, clients, consultants, contractors and the public in relation to the team's work.

Experience / training

12. Degree in planning or relevant qualification

13. Membership or eligibility for membership to the RTPPI

14. Substantial in-depth comprehensive experience in preparing development plans and planning policy formulation covering different topics

15. Experience of assessing the implications of planning applications and other major projects/initiatives.

16. Experience of motivating and supervising staff

Other requirements

17. A willingness to work outside normal office hours.