



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title:	Scrutiny Officer		
Grade:	PO4		
Division/ Section:	Scrutiny Team		
Location:	Merton Civic Centre		
Responsible to:	Scrutiny Manager		
Responsible for:	None		
Post number:	P0018	Date:	17 October 2007

1. MAIN PURPOSE

To provide high quality advice, guidance and support to the overview and scrutiny function to enable members to effectively and constructively carry out their 'critical friend' role in relation to policy development and service delivery of the council and other organisations, where appropriate.

2. MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) To work closely with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Scrutiny Panels to support the development of an effective scrutiny function, providing advice and research support, managing projects and promoting overview and scrutiny across the council and to outside organisations and the public;
- b) To co-ordinate and assist the development and delivery of a creative, challenging scrutiny programme for reviewing specific issues, services and policies, through advice, research and planning support;
- c) To maintain regular dialogue with Council departments, and where appropriate partner organisations, to ensure they are kept informed of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels and to

discuss opportunities for work programme development, and, in liaison with Democratic Services, to ensure that timely follow up action is taken;

- d) To advise on and co-ordinate the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels both at scheduled public meetings and any other scrutiny activity included in or supporting the work programme, including:
- working with the chair and vice chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels to determine the content of meeting agendas;
 - supporting Members to review and analyse performance information making full use of available data;
 - advising Members on forthcoming items suitable for pre-decision scrutiny, policy review or other inclusion in the work programme;
 - producing short briefing papers for Members drawing out key issues that members may wish to pick up on during their scrutiny activities; and
 - facilitating and managing the work of the task and finish groups.
- e) To support the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels in undertaking reviews, including:
- undertaking research specific to the review, for example on the local dimension, the national policy context, best practice;
 - scoping the review in line with research and Member requirements, including setting objectives, identifying sources of information, external advisors and co-optees, defining a timetable;
 - holding fact-finding sessions with council employees, the public and representatives of outside organisations;
 - clarifying problems and recommendations for scrutiny panels and assessing alternative innovative options and solutions;
 - drafting review reports; and
 - project managing delivery of the review.
- f) To maintain an understanding of policy and service issues relevant to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels and advise Members accordingly;
- g) To seek out and/ or create learning and development opportunities to support Members in their scrutiny role;
- h) To actively promote the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels in the community, encouraging effective engagement and participation in scrutiny activity through a range of mechanisms;

- i) To explore opportunities and develop solutions to improve the overview and scrutiny function, including learning from best practice and responding to provisions in new or existing legislation;
- j) To present information for different audiences in appropriate formats, including formal reports, briefing notes and formal and informal presentations;
- k) To contribute to the development and implementation of the Scrutiny Team's Service Plan and the corresponding scrutiny elements of the Departmental Service plan and any other corporate planning activities as identified by the Scrutiny Manager;
- l) To work within the provisions of Merton's policies for Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Value for Money and Customer Care and to ensure that duties are undertaken with due regard to and compliance with the Data Protection Act and other related legislation;
- m) To be aware of the high standard of data quality expected in the council and, where appropriate, to maintain an accurate and full written record of activity as required by the line manager, passing records on for data recording/input within the agreed timescales;
- n) To provide policy and project management support to the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet in delivering their work programme, including researching and drafting of briefing papers and reports, as directed by the Scrutiny Manager; and
- o) To undertake any other duties as required by the Assistant Chief Executive, as appropriate to the post.



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Scrutiny Officer
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Date: 17 October 2007

Method of evaluation:	Application form	Interview	Test
1 Knowledge			
• Good understanding of the functions of local government and knowledge of the key issues facing local government;	✓	✓	
• Knowledge and understanding of the modern local authority governance arrangements and the respective roles of Executive Members, Scrutiny Members and officers;	✓		
• Knowledge of good practice in relation to overview and scrutiny work and understanding of emerging developments in the field; and	✓	✓	✓
• Knowledge and awareness of diversity and community cohesion issues as they related to role and the work of the local authority.	✓	✓	
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2 Skills			
• Able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, including an ability to draft reports and other written material clearly and present proposals in an imaginative and interesting way;	✓	✓	✓
• Strong analytical skills, including the ability to analyse problems and identify creative, realistic solutions;	✓	✓	✓
• Able to work under pressure, manage competing priorities and meet tight deadlines;	✓		
• Good interpersonal skills with the ability to influence a wide range of people;	✓	✓	
• Able to demonstrate understanding of political sensitivities;		✓	✓
• Self-motivated and able to work on own initiative; and	✓		
• Able to work within a team and with colleagues in other parts of the Council and other organisations.	✓		
• Good IT skills, including use of Microsoft Word, ExcelOffice IT packages	✓		✓
3 Experience/ Training			
• Experience of either overview and scrutiny, policy, research or performance review work in a public sector or similar organisation;	✓		
• Experience in providing advice to and influencing a senior audience;	✓	✓	
• Experience in managing and delivering projects;	✓	✓	
• Experience of working with councillors; and	✓		
• Experience of working with local communities and/or partner agencies.	✓		
4 Special requirements			
• Able to attend Overview and Scrutiny Commission/Panel and other meetings, as required, outside normal office hours.	✓	✓	
• Confirmation that the candidate complies with the requirements for politically restricted posts (as per the Local Government and Housing Act 2000)	✓	✓	