

Wirral Council: Job Role Descriptor

Job Role:	Conservation Officer
Service:	Economic & Housing Growth / Major Growth & Housing Delivery / Development Management
Reports to:	Principal Planning Team Leaders
No of Subordinates:	0
HR USE ONLY	
Job Role Ref:	REG0021G
Job Family:	Regulatory
Grade:	Band H

JOB ROLE PURPOSE

To promote the preservation and enhancement of the historic built environment of Wirral and to provide specialist heritage advice to the Council and to the public, in line with best practice, national standards, organisational requirements and statutory obligations.

Dealing with all matters in respect of Development Management, especially in relation to all aspects of heritage planning (and related) applications; including relevant matters at pre-application and post-application stages of the planning process; planning appeals and planning enforcement matters.

KEY TASKS

1. Provide technical specialist support for and manage a caseload of applications. Process and determine all aspects of heritage planning related applications, appeals, discharge of conditions and all other post-decision matters; undertaking all necessary site inspections; preparing reports and recommendations for applications that are to be determined under powers delegated to the Corporate Director, Assistant Director and Development Management Manager and for applications to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee.
2. Advise on the need for planning permission and providing pre-application planning advice.
3. Responsible for ensuring appropriate support and advice is provided to building owners, applicants, developers, members of the public and all interested parties regarding design, repair and restoration on the care and protection of heritage assets and undesignated heritage assets.
4. Prepare evidence and written statements in respect of any Planning Appeals and Listed Building Appeals and to represent the Council as planning witness at Hearings and Inquiries as may be required.
5. Investigate all complaints regarding alleged breaches of planning control, including those in relation to trees, conservation areas and Listed Buildings; undertaking all necessary site inspections, gathering of information, including all relevant checks (e.g. DVLA and HM Land Registry); assessing whether a breach has taken place; dealing with individuals and/or organisations and effectively negotiating amendments

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where appropriate; assessing whether any breach is harmful and whether it is expedient to take appropriate enforcement action; take appropriate enforcement action as required, including the preparing and serving of Enforcement Notices, Planning Contravention Notices, Breach of Condition Notices etc. and dealing with any subsequent Appeals and giving/presenting evidence at Appeal Hearings, Inquiries or Court.

6. Provide guidance and advice to other Council services/officers on all aspects of planning related applications and enforcement matters.
7. Liaise with other Council services and other bodies, including statutory and non-statutory consultees and other external agencies, on relevant issues.
8. Contribute to the preparation and production of studies, policies and guidelines relating to conservation and historic buildings/environment throughout the Borough.
9. Apply a working knowledge of relevant statutes, circulars, rules and regulations, including the Council's own policies and procedures, and detailed professional specialist advice and expertise on conservation, care and protection of the historic environment and conservation matters.
10. Identify opportunities and develop projects for enhancement of Wirral's Heritage through grant programmes, partnership and joint working with other Council departments, Historic England, architects and other professional advisors to address the implications of development proposals on historic buildings and Conservation Areas.
11. Review and report to Historic England on a regular basis the Heritage at Risk Register, working proactively with owners to secure the reuse and long-term preservation of redundant buildings, initiating action to safeguard them, including the pursuit of enforcement action where necessary.
12. Manage and review the designation of new Conservation Areas and extensions and/or re-appraisals of existing Conservation Areas and the preparation and implementation of Conservation Area Management Plans. To co-ordinate and liaise with officers, other Council departments, consultants and partners as required.
13. Attend Planning Committee and, where required by and in support of the Assistant Director and/or Development Management Manager, other Committees.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

People

Support the democratic and decision-making processes in relation to heritage planning and planning enforcement related matters, providing professional planning advice and support to Elected Members, Chief Officers and others, where appropriate.

Enable others to make informed decisions by providing clear, advice and support and information with regards to conservation matters.

Promote and develop effective communication with all service users.

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Financial

Not a budget holder and no specific responsibilities for budget setting/monitoring and management.

Support heritage and conservation organisations in making funding bids to external organisations for grant or loan funding.

Identify potential income sources for furthering conservation objectives and activity in Wirral.

Strategic

Support the Assistant Director and the Development Management Manager in developing and delivering the Corporate vision, values and priorities of the Council, the Directorate and the Services.

Ensure effective engagement with Members, other Council services, local strategic partnerships, developers, community organisations and other appropriate bodies to maximise joint working with regards to the Council's regeneration and economic development programmes.

Research, interpret, review and advise on the implementation of new and existing legislation, Government guidance and initiatives on a wide range of conservation related issues to ensure compliance with statutory and other obligations and to recommend appropriate alterations to process, policy and standards as may be required.

Ensure compliance with Health and Safety and other relevant legislation across the service area.

Resources

No specific responsibility for stock control, procurement or other Resource related issues.

Manage and maintain reports, statements, evidence etc. in relation to planning applications, pre-application enquiries, planning appeals and planning enforcement matters with due consideration to confidentiality and accuracy.

Planning and Organising

Plan arrange and co-ordinate tasks and procedures related to the service to achieve timely and good quality decisions, commensurate with the resources available. Manage and prioritise own workload.

Co-ordinate and deliver public consultations on heritage related matters.

Respond to tight deadlines with minimum supervision.

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Manage and prioritise own workloads within the minimum supervision.

Respond to tight deadlines having regard to Committee deadlines, corporate performance targets and nationally set performance indicators, with minimum supervision.

Decision Making

Handle situations and problems with innovation and creativity, recognising controversial and sensitive issues.

Make decisions within the timescales set by Central Government for the processing of applications

EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Essential Criteria

Qualifications:

- Educated to Degree Level in Planning and/or Conservation or a closely related qualification.
- Evidence of continuous professional development (CPD) related to one or more aspects of heritage and/or development management.

Knowledge & Skills:

- Knowledge of the relevant law, Government guidance, policies and practice relating to conservation and Listed Buildings.
- Knowledge of funding regimes to support heritage projects
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to articulate information; to present clear, accurate and concise reports to a wide range of audiences.
- Ability to work effectively with individuals, teams, customers, partners and staff, understanding the functions and needs of the service and the organisation as a whole.
- Focus on customer satisfaction and deliver a quality service.

Desirable Criteria

Qualifications:

- Full Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute and/or Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) or eligible for Full Membership.

Knowledge & Skills:

- I.T. literate, ability to use MS Office and ability to become competent at using other software applications relevant to the role.

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- Knowledge of democratic process and appreciation of the role of Elected Members.
- Ability to influence and negotiate at all levels within the organisation and with external agencies or bodies.

Experience:

- Experience in the field of conservation and/or design and the ability to demonstrate a knowledge and interest in conservation and the built environment.
- Some experience of dealing with planning and related applications, including negotiating with applicants, appeals and enforcement.
- Experience in Development Management and/or planning enforcement matters, including the carrying out of investigations, achieving resolution through negotiation and/or persuasion, carrying out harm and expediency assessments and, where necessary, pursuing appropriate action.
- Experience of allied skills (e.g. Urban Design, Local Plan/Planning Policy work).

ADDITIONAL WORK ELEMENTS

Ability to attend evening meetings/Committees and/or sometimes work at weekends.

Ability to attend meetings regionally and, where appropriate, nationally.

Ability to travel across the borough.

NOTE:

The job role holder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the job role descriptor grade as directed by the Head of Service.

This job role descriptor will be reviewed regularly and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post holder. It is not a definitive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the Service in relation to the post holder's responsibilities and duties.

Elements of this job role descriptor and changes to it may be amended in light of organisational and service requirements.

Signed Head of Service

Date

David Ball

29th April 2019

Assistant Director – Major Growth Projects & Housing Delivery