

JOB DESCRIPTION

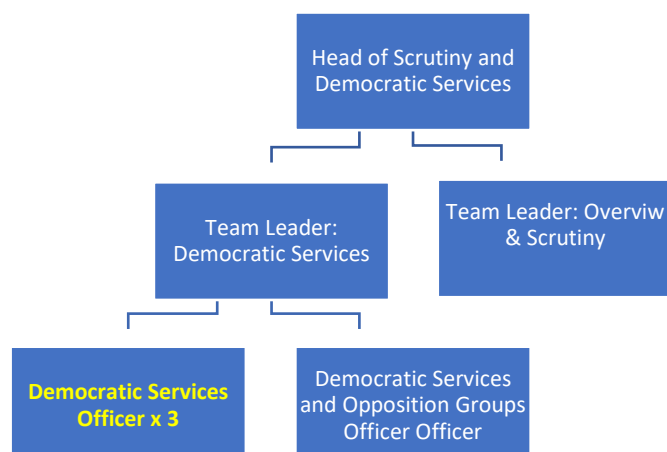
Job Title:	Democratic Services Officer		
Directorate:	Communities	Salary:	£35,235 - £39,513 FTE plus £706 FTE London Weighting For 22.2 hrs pro-rata: £21,141 - £23,707 plus £423 London Weighting
Section:	Democratic & Registration Services	Grade:	BG-G SCP 25 - 30
Location:	Time Square	Work Style:	Flexible

Key Objectives of the role

- To manage a number of the council's committees, sub-committees and other councillor, officer and partnership bodies and support the council's decision-making processes, including executive decision making.
- To arrange and clerk quasi-judicial appeals panels, including licensing, school admission and exclusion (Independent Review) panels.
- To work with the Team Leader: Overview & Scrutiny when required, to support the effective delivery of the overview and scrutiny function.

Designation of post and position within departmental structure

The Democratic Services Officer (DSO) is responsible to the Team Leader: Democratic Services, subject to the overall direction of the Head of Scrutiny and Democratic Services.



Daily and monthly responsibilities

- To manage such committees, sub-committees, panels and other member, officer and partnership bodies as may be assigned from time to time and to undertake the preparation and dispatch of agendas, attendance at meetings, in-person or remotely, to take notes and advise if required on procedural matters, and draft minutes and action sheets. Setting up rooms may also be necessary on occasions for off-site meetings.
- To support and ensure the council's decision-making processes are understood throughout the council, including overseeing executive decision making, ensuring that forward planning is undertaken effectively, deadlines and timescales are met, and that decision records are produced on a timely basis, liaising with directors, report authors and decision makers accordingly.
- To clerk hearings in respect of licensing appeals, school admission and school exclusion appeals and associated tasks, which include liaising and advising appellants and the panel, and ensuring that hearings are conducted in accordance with the statutory procedures and guidance as well as the principles of natural justice.
- To respond to Local Government Ombudsman complaints regarding the appeal procedures.
- To be responsible for and take a pro-active role in agenda preparation, ensuring that all matters requiring attention by elected councillors are brought before the correct meeting/member for decision and that all agendas and reports comply with corporate standards and the requirements of legislation.
- To understand and ensure compliance with legislation, government guidance, the council's constitution, codes of conduct, policy statements etc published on behalf of the council within the current responsibilities of the post holder.
- To be responsible for advising and assisting chairs and leading members on the conduct of business at meetings and the interpretation of the council's constitution and other relevant procedures.
- To develop a basic understanding of digital tools, including Office365 and AI, to enhance daily work activities.
- To work with the Team Leader: Democratic Services to provide streaming of formal and informal councillor meetings.
- To participate in flexible cover arrangements across the Scrutiny and Democratic Services function in the event of holiday, sickness and emergency cover.

Scope of role

- The nature of the work undertaken will impact directly on elected councillors, directors, assistant directors, heads of service and other departmental officers as well as residents, other authorities, partners and local organisations including local media.
- The Democratic Services team deals with a broad range of responsibilities, including around 250 committee meetings, 50 school appeals and 20 licensing appeals per annum. The actual number of appeals is demand-led and may vary from year to year. The specific responsibilities allocated to this post and the degree of direct supervision by the Team Leader: Democratic Services will be commensurate with the post holder's experience and skills but the postholder will be expected to work largely on their own initiative.

- The role involves access to sensitive papers, including some which may be politically sensitive. It will also require tact and sensitivity in dealing with those whose appeals are being heard.
- There are no budgetary or supervisory responsibilities.

Commitment to the Council's Equal Opportunities policy at all times

Commitment to working within the bounds of the Data Protection Act and GDPR legislation at all times

Such other duties as may from time to time be necessary, compatible with the nature of the post. It should be noted that the above list of main duties and responsibilities is not necessarily a complete statement of the final duties of the post. It is intended to give an overall view of the position and should be taken as guidance only

PERSON SPECIFICATION

KEY CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Skills and qualifications	<p>Educated to degree level, or equivalent, or verifiable experience and training.</p> <p>Commitment to pursue a relevant professional qualification.</p> <p>Commitment to continual improvement of personal knowledge and performance.</p> <p>Good understanding of Information Security and GDPR requirements.</p>	<p>Membership of the Association of Democratic Services Officers</p>
Competence Summary (Knowledge, abilities, skills, experience)	<p>Excellent oral and written communication skills.</p> <p>Experience of presenting information and advice confidently and effectively to a wide range of people.</p> <p>Experience of working in or with a democratic services team, preparing agendas, minutes and associated documentation including report writing, or equivalent.</p> <p>Up-to-date knowledge of all relevant legislation and guidance, and the ability to apply that knowledge appropriately, including an understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> local government and its political processes. the Law and practice of local authority meetings and decision-making procedures. the law and current best practice in relation to statutory appeals and complaints processes and other administrative and quasi-judicial functions. <p>Experience of Modern.gov or another electronic committee management system.</p>	<p>Experience of clerking appeals and quasi-judicial meetings/tribunals</p> <p>Knowledge of major issues in the external environment affecting local government</p> <p>Basic understanding of digital tools including Office365 and AI</p> <p>Understand the importance of digital security measures.</p> <p>Skills in reporting data effectively using available digital technologies.</p>

Experience of setting up audio-visual equipment at meetings.

Good ICT skills including experience of using the Office 365 Suite of applications, including creating spreadsheets, managing electronic calendars and email systems.

Ability to organise workload effectively, working to tight deadlines and to manage conflicting demands.

Ability to take accurate notes of key points being made and voting patterns at meetings.

Experience of absorbing new and changing information and analysing its implications for current tasks.

Attention to detail.

Experience of using negotiating and influencing skills.

**Work-related
Personal
Requirements**

Good inter-personal skills with experience of forming effective working relationships with councillors, directors, senior officers and partners.

Experience of exercising tact, diplomacy, sensitivity and confidentiality in carrying out duties.

Politically sensitive and astute.

Experience of working on own initiative and co-operatively in a team environment.

Reliable and trustworthy.

Ability to travel to off-site meetings.

**Other Work
Requirements**

Ability to work outside normal working hours (evenings) on a regular basis and at short notice if required.

Good understanding of the political context of local authority decision making.

Ability to converse easily with members of the public and respond effectively to questions in spoken English.

This is a politically restricted post within the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Role models and demonstrates the Council’s values and behaviours

Our values define who we are. They outline what is important to us. They influence the way we work with each other – and the way we serve our residents and engage with our communities.

We make our values real by demonstrating them in how we behave every day.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the Council’s Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and Council policies/procedures.

