

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Affordable Housing Officer		
Directorate	Housing General Fund		
Reporting to	Head of Service Affordable Housing		
Grade	11		
Evaluation ref:	TR0163	Job ref:	Family
Role purpose			
<p>Affordable Housing delivery is a key priority for the Council to develop a 'Fairer, Ambitious Somerset'.</p> <p>The Affordable Housing Officer plays a crucial role within the Housing General Fund Directorate, focusing on the development and delivery of affordable housing solutions across Somerset.</p> <p>The post holders will ensure affordable housing proposals are integrated and built to deliver against housing need, creating safe, healthy homes and encouraging diverse and sustainable communities.</p> <p>This role provides affordable housing technical advice collaborating with housing association partners, developers, landowners, agents, and other key stakeholders to identify and develop suitable sites that comply with planning policies and meet identified housing needs.</p> <p>The officer is a lead specialist for Affordable Housing representing the Council's requirements on Affordable Housing. They will be the Affordable Housing Consultee for planning applications negotiate Affordable Housing requirements and secure the homes through legal agreements. The officer will be the Affordable Housing expert at Planning Appeal providing evidence defending the position of Affordable Housing.</p> <p>Using their Affordable Housing specialist knowledge they will gather and interpret a range of housing and development data to robustly respond to scheme development viability challenges which are seeking to reduce the affordable housing requirement.</p> <p>As a champion of affordable housing they will work at a national and local level to raise the profile of affordable housing, the challenges being faced and be part of the solution to increase delivery. The post holder will lead on, seek funding solutions with key stakeholders including Homes England.</p> <p>To deliver affordable housing to our local communities the role requires working closely with local communities and representing the Council at community and Parish Council meetings. The role will work with the local</p>			

JOB DESCRIPTION

communities to identify the housing need and together seek a suitable housing solution to meet the need.

The postholder will provide specialist advice, technical guidance, and strategic leadership on affordable housing projects, ensuring adherence to council policies and contributing to the overall goal of increasing the affordable housing supply across Somerset.

Accountabilities

- Provide specialist, professional expertise and technical guidance on all affordable housing matters and in addition act as the service subject matter expert for one of five areas: specialist housing, rural housing, Housing market data, scheme development viability assessments, or strategic site delivery
- Collaborate with affordable housing providers to initiate housing developments, unblock barriers and actively work through creative solutions to influence the type and quantity of affordable housing to deliver a robust affordable housing pipeline
- Identify and negotiate affordable housing requirements with developers, land agents, architects and planning agents to deliver suitable development sites and ensure design specifications are compliant with planning policies.
- Represent the Council as the Affordable Housing specialist, acting as the Affordable Housing Consultee for the Planning Service making recommendations based on assessment of the local housing market profile including housing need and local affordability site location Initiate new business and development site opportunities to increase affordable housing provision across Somerset.
- Provide technical leadership on strategic affordable housing projects and programmes within the local parish and across the whole of Somerset.
- Identify, complete bid applications to secure funding and deploy the monies if successful, to support the delivery of affordable housing through central government initiatives including rural housing funds.
- Negotiate and approve affordable housing provisions within Planning Legal Agreements e.g Agreeing S106 Affordable Housing clauses and Deeds of Variation. The agreement will secure the appropriate future use of the affordable home.
- Act as the Affordable Housing Subject Matter Expert as the Council representative at Planning Committee's and Appeal Hearings and Parish Council Meeting.
- Engage with local communities including Community Land Trusts and lobby groups responding to and acting upon local affordable housing matters.
- Collaborate with other local authorities, external agencies and partners at a local and national level ie. Homes England to access funding streams and break down barriers for the delivery of affordable housing.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Collaboration with internal functions including planning policy, planning obligations, development management, land charges, legal services and asset management, to make sure the affordable housing is delivered and enforced to remain as affordable housing for future generations.
- Support, guide, and advise other teams within the council on affordable housing issues.
- Write processes and policies related to a specialist area of affordable housing.
- Manage multiple complex schemes in a portfolio of work with reputational, political and financial risk impacts.
- Lead the Affordable Housing delivery process across different phases spanning an average timeframe of over 5 years from initial community engagement, undertaking housing needs surveys, development site identification, planning application, on site delivery through to completion of affordable homes.
- Task management of team members

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Demonstrate to providing excellent customer service.	x	
Evidence knowledge of the housing sector and the role of affordable housing	x	
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of planning policies and affordable housing regulations.	x	
Awareness of the principles of data protection and confidentiality.	x	
Knowledge and experience of working with external partners and developing effective professional relationships	x	
Evidence of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion	x	
Experience		
Demonstrable track record of ability to multitask and work under pressure	x	
Experience in negotiating contractual terms with external parties	x	
Engaging and educating local communities in technically complex subject matter	x	

JOB DESCRIPTION

Experience in interpreting data and financial information	x	
Experience of developing and maintaining effective stakeholder relationships, including Government agencies and local communities	x	
Experience in writing and presenting reports to diverse audiences	x	
Experience in providing written and verbal specialist advice and technical guidance.	x	
Experience in identifying and securing funding through external agencies and partners at a local and National level.		x
Experience working with elected members or in a political environment.		x
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Educated to Degree level standard or 3 - 5 years equivalent experience.	x	
Relevant professional qualification or experience in housing or planning.		x
Membership of a relevant professional body, where applicable e.g Chartered institute of Housing/ royal town and planning institute		x
Evidence of continuing professional development through training or qualifications.	x	
Skills		
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to consult, influence, and negotiate.	x	
Be proficient in writing and presenting technical information clearly and concisely	x	
Strong problem-solving and decision-making abilities.	x	
Ability to lead, motivate, and develop others.	x	
High level of accuracy and attention to detail.	x	
Ability to work under pressure and manage multiple tasks.	x	
Ability to identify and interpret data sources including detailed numerical information	x	
Competent in the use of Microsoft Office and other relevant software.		x

JOB DESCRIPTION

Working Conditions

This role involves working within a dynamic and supportive local authority environment. Candidates should be prepared for the following conditions:

- **Work Hours:** Standard working hours are 37, with occasional requirements for evening or weekend work to meet project deadlines or attend community events.
- **Location:** Hybrid working. Need to attend County Hall, Taunton for work meetings. Remote work and travel around the County. Can work out of any of the county hub offices.
- **Travel:** Some travel within the local area may be required for meetings, site visits, and community engagement activities.
- **Work Environment:** The role involves working both independently and as part of a team, with access to modern office facilities and resources.
- **Health and Safety:** Adherence to all health and safety regulations is mandatory, ensuring a safe working environment for all employees.

Dimensions of the role

The Affordable Housing Officer will be responsible for securing the delivery of new affordable homes working across Somersets 331 parishes covered by six separate Local Plans.

The post holder will be a key contact between Landowners, Developers, Housing Associations, internal Council departments, and Members as well other external agencies including Homes England and other Local Authority Housing teams.

The Affordable Housing Service leads the Somerset Affordable Housing Delivery partnership. The post will build and maintain effective working relationships with all partners working together to overcome housing development barriers and seek innovative, cost effective housing development solutions.

The Affordable Housing Officer will independently manage key affordable housing delivery aspects and be a subject matter specialist with the Council's Planning Department and External Viability Consultants in providing commentary and advice on affordable housing to maximise delivery of affordable housing.

The post will manage an average 100 schemes ranging from inception of a development opportunity through to completion and end of development queries. The tasks are wide and varied with competing demands, therefore an ability to prioritise and respond to multiple requests is essential

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Affordable Housing Service is a small team and the postholder will need to take personal responsibility and be able to work with minimal supervision in delivering the key requirements of the post.

Affordable Housing function brings in millions of pounds of investment through our partners such as Homes England and private finance through the delivery of new affordable homes. Last year the team enabled the delivery of over 500 new affordable homes across Somerset. The delivery will levels will be increasing further as this role will actively contribute to securing the funding required to delivery these homes and meet the rising Affordable Housing need

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Deliver the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do, ensuring team members are also aware of their responsibilities and maintaining their understanding that Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

JOB DESCRIPTION

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