

Senior Planning and Development Consultant

About Optimis

Optimis is an award-winning planning and development consultancy providing a bespoke compelling service to a range of private clients. We aim to deliver customer-focused, commercially-sound advice.

Our primary focus is residential planning, with a portfolio of work spanning the full spectrum of development projects, ranging from large scale developments with national house builders to smaller unique domestic projects.

We specialise in co-ordinating project teams, informing development proposals and developing relationships with local planning authorities to deliver planning permission for our clients. Covering Bedfordshire, Greater London, the south east and beyond we pride ourselves on our commerciality, ability to identify solutions and the strong and sociable relationships we have built with our clients.

We are a small friendly team offering an enjoyable and fulfilling environment in which to work. Optimis is able to offer unique access to clients and projects. Career progression is supported and strongly encouraged.

Role as Senior

- Providing senior leadership across the business
- Building existing client relationships and generating new business.
- Role model for junior planners
- Mentor and guide for junior planners
- Expert in the profession and meet professional code of conduct
- Self-promotion to advance the business
- Assist in the appointment of new team members
- Assist to identify new instructions
- Assist to improve the methods of achieving new instructions

Role as a Planner

- To utilise all experience to provide guidance, assessment and advice to a client in all aspects of the planning process
- Prepare planning applications, appeals or engage in pre-application discussions
- Make representations to Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and attend and present at an Examination in Public as required
- To identify the role of other experts and manage their role within the planning process
- To appear on behalf of clients in all forums, including meetings, committee, appeal hearings and inquiries, at EiP sessions, where you are the most senior planner on the project
- Performing strategic planning research and policy development including assessments of development potential
- Making site inspections and assessing merits of proposals
- Communicate with all statutory authorities including the Local Planning Authority and Planning Inspectorate
- Keeping abreast of relevant legislation and latest planning laws

- Giving guidance to engineers/architects on the production of drawings and supplemental planning information in relation to planning submissions
- To give honest, accurate and clear advice to all clients and potential clients
- Coordination and management of multi-disciplinary teams for major projects
- Supporting the preparation and delivery of public consultation and stakeholder
- Manage files and cases efficiently and effectively
- Ensure the data and files associated with the planning function is well ordered and accessible
- Maintain CPD in accordance with Professional Standards
- Assisting the Marketing Manager in preparing and providing research articles, blogs, planning related news
- Assist at presentations at internal/external CPD

Role as a Consultant:

- Efficient and reliable Time recording
- Timely and efficient preparation of invoices throughout the month and at the end of specific stages of a project
- Mitigate risk of projects to ensure that all professional fees are charged and paid in accord with instruction
- Work efficiently on projects and within budgets
- Seek extension to budgets in advance to manage the client's expectation, where the most senior planner
- Maintain a steady workflow and invoice schedule
- Ensure that monthly invoicing data is provided as requested and in a timely fashion
- To avoid giving rise to a claim of negligence
- Meet minimum income earning requirements as an individual and as part of a team.
- Respond positively to all reasonable requests from Senior Directors and Board Members
- Preparing quotes where required and negotiate fees
- Managing client expectations

Key skills

- Advanced planning skills including a detailed understanding of the planning application process
- Client facing skills with the ability to present and communicate at senior levels and across a range of stakeholders
- Good knowledge and expertise of planning practice legislation
- Advanced project management skills coupled with timeliness and accuracy
- Excellent report writing with a natural ability to explain and discuss planning issues for a varied audience
- An emerging talent for line management and team leadership with the ability to mentor and develop junior colleagues
- Ability to prioritise workloads and juggle competing demands
- Advanced networking skills with the ability to build contacts across the industry
- Good communication across all media and in particular towards senior team members
- Skilled in planning software and data systems

- Good interpersonal skills and a team player
- Maintain a positive and approachable demeanour towards colleagues and clients
- Strong ability to generate fees for the business and assist more senior colleagues at new business meetings
- Adaptable and willing to learn
- Ability to show initiative, commitment and is commercially minded;

Person Specification

- A Degree/Masters Planning Degree with RTPI accreditation and a detailed knowledge of planning and the planning system;
- Minimum 3 years post-graduate experience within a Planning and Development role, with a track record of successful project management;
- Ideally have experience in both the public and private sector, but private sector consultancy experience is essential;
- It is essential that the candidate is fluent in English (both verbal and written) and be competent in report and letter writing and speaking with clients;
- The candidate must have a full UK driving licence and have access to their own vehicle;
- An excellent professional appearance;