

Job Description

JOB TITLE:	Principal Planning Officer
GRADE:	Grade K-L
POST NUMBER:	Various
DIRECTORATE:	Housing and Regeneration
SERVICE:	Planning and Building Control
RESPONSIBLE TO :	<p>One Team Leader at any one time, as allocated from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management East Area Team or - Development Management West Area Team
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Planning Officers, Graduate Planning Officers, internal or external consultants on project management, mentoring or case supervision basis
	<p>DBS Basic / Enhanced check not required</p> <p>This post is not politically restricted</p>
TRAVEL ALLOWANCE:	Zone 2-3 Travel Card allowance if based in Development Management.
JOB SUMMARY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the Team Leader in the management of the workload and supervision of the staff in the area team. • To provide high quality, specialised development management assessment and decision making in an area team that meets the needs of Tower Hamlets' multi-cultural communities, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - delivery of the council's statutory responsibilities for the determination of planning applications and under the Town and Country Planning Acts and related legislation; - assessment of pre- application submissions, as required, under the Town and Country Planning Acts and related legislation, in accordance with the Council's established protocols. - to lead on complex planning appeals, ensuring all statutory timescales are met and that the Council's position is defended robustly. • To work with other senior officers and service managers to ensure a co-ordinated service delivery and to promote the services of the Directorate, building working relationships at a senior level with London Local Government, Central Government agencies, business and with the local community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with the Team Leader with the management of the Area Team to ensure it contributes to the regeneration of the borough through the effective use of planning powers relevant to the post and partnership working with regeneration agencies within and outside of the Council. • To be the lead case officer for complex, high profile and strategic development opportunities, managing all aspects of case work, acting under own initiative with minimum supervision, taking responsibility for ensuring that statutory, regulatory and local policy requirements are met by the Council, developers or other relevant parties.
<p>ROLE REQUIREMENTS:</p> <p>This is a career graded post and the job description has been set out to reflect the two levels and the linked career grades.</p>	
1.	Providing high quality, specialist professional planning expertise and technical assessment relating to all aspects of development application and pre-application proposals, carrying a case load of more complex, politically sensitive or strategically important, major development proposals.
2.	Provide specialist expertise and act as lead case officer in project managing allocated proposals, applications or projects ensuring that all work is undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements, the Council's policies and procedures, and to the benefit of the residents of the Borough.
3.	Represent the Council as an expert witness on all issues involving development applications, pre-applications, projects and planning appeals at Examinations and Public Inquires and in court where necessary.
4.	Undertake under own initiative a variety of advanced project management tasks relating to complex proposals, applications, projects and planning appeals, carrying a case load relating to development application matters.
5.	To participate in advising and liaising with the development industry on their responsibilities under the Localism Act to deliver pre-application consultations on major proposals.
6.	To work with the Team Leader to develop and evaluate best practice approaches to the use of consultant services in the assessment of proposals, applications or appeals.
7.	Organise, prepare and deliver effective development application and related public consultation exercises including the preparation of all materials and other documentation ensuring that all relevant Council Directorates, community organisations, amenity and minority groups, external agencies and Government Bodies are

	consulted in accordance with the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
8.	To maintain and keep up-to-date all development application files and documents on-line (and hard copy where relevant) in an clear ordered system with all material discussions/meetings/paperwork recorded and material documents properly filed as part of any process, to enable the work of the allocated team to be undertaken, as required.
9.	Develop extensive personal skills and technical knowledge base necessary to undertake this post, keeping abreast of new Government policies, initiatives and legislative changes
10.	To use ICT systems including databases and information management systems to ensure the development application service operates as efficiently and effectively as possible taking all opportunity to deliver the service in a way which secures value for money for local residents.
11.	To formulate recommendations, either to committee or to the appropriate senior officer, for a decision on planning application matters and to be able to justify them in order to ensure that the decisions reached are in accordance with the law, planning policies and government advice, are reasonable and sustainable on appeal or through the courts.
12.	To produce and present reports and documents with guidance from the Team Leader on all development application area team matters at the Development Committees and other Member level bodies.
13.	To undertake complex and often politically sensitive pre-application and application process negotiations concerning planning obligations, affordable housing and infrastructure funding sources such as the Community Infrastructure Levy.
14.	Represent the Council at external meetings, including governmental department meetings, London Local Government meetings, Public Inquiries, Examinations in Public, court hearings as the Council's expert witness, and to prepare and present detailed advice and reports ensuring that the advice given is in accordance with the best professional standards.
15.	To make decisions on the most appropriate courses of action on development application and pre-application cases, using own initiative and professional judgement, under guidance from the Team Leader.
16.	Visit sites alone to check planning proposals and determine whether the scheme is in accordance with policy. Such visits will involve attending locations and encountering situations which may involve personal risk.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES	
17.	Actively contribute to the council's priorities and outcomes in a way that promotes a 'one organisation' approach.
18.	Develop and maintain positive relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and communities to ensure the council and the directorate strategic priorities are effectively implemented.
19.	Promote equality among all staff and ensure that services are delivered in a non-discriminatory way, that is inclusive of all disadvantaged groups.
20.	Support organisational change and learning, following and implementing appropriate systems of self-development, communication and engagement, quality measures, monitoring and review in delivering the functions of the role.
21.	Promote sustainability, including encouraging a culture of innovation and accountability amongst all council staff.
22.	Keep senior managers and elected members aware of issues and progress on complex and high profile development application negotiations in the area team in order to maintain a clear corporate policy stance.
PEOPLE	
23.	To act as supervisor, mentor or coach to other officers, especially junior officers in the team as required by the allocated Team Leader.
24.	Develop and maintain effective partnership working to promote the work of the area team and engage with the wide range of regular partners in delivery as relevant including but not limited to other Council Services, Members and their advisers, Central Government departments, The Planning Inspectorate, London Local Government, the business community and the local community including representative interest groups and organisations.
25.	To give sound advice to members of the public, other council departments, elected members and interested parties on development application matters either in person or through correspondence.
FINANCE	
26.	Appoint and manage technical consultants undertaking commissions for the Service Area to ensure that Council policies

	and financial including all procurement regulations are fully met and complied with.
SERVICE	
27.	To prepare and co-ordinate the response to complaints, Member Enquiries, FOI requests and other related information requested about the service in the area team ensuring they are handled in a timely and professional manner using best practice customer service.
28.	Assist the Team Leader to design, consult on and implement changes to improve the service, including policy development or setting out new procedures, processes and standards to ensure continual effectiveness and efficiency in delivering a quality service including value for money initiatives.
29.	Participate in the development and implementation of policies and procedures to ensure that all aspects of the P&BC Service Plan are delivered within corporate objectives.
PERFORMANCE	
30.	To assist the Team Leader with the monitoring of output volumes and quality of the development applications service in the area team, using the Council's agreed performance monitoring schemes but paying special attention to national performance indicators.
GRADE L (Additional Duties)	
31.	Support the Team Leader in the organisation, staff supervision, work programming, and delivery activity of an area team, providing high quality, specialist professional expertise and technical advice to other members of the team relating to development application and pre-application proposals.
32.	Determining non-contentious planning and other associated applications with guidance from the Team leader, ensuring that all work is undertaken reflecting the Council's strategic planning and renewal objectives and priorities and best professional standards for the benefit of the residents of the Borough.
33.	To support the Team Leader in the management of the work of the area team and represent the area team in the absence of the Team Leader including assisting with the recruitment, appraisal and development of staff in the area team ensuring that objectives are met in accordance with the Council's Leadership and Management Framework and Core Values
34.	To assist the Team Leader with the consistent review, assessment and evaluation of service costs, benchmarking against relevant

	other organisations and bodies to ensure that the service continues to offer value for money.
35.	To assist the deputy team leader to establish, maintain, monitor and review the quality and performance of the area team using management procedures, including actively participating in regular team meetings, briefing staff on current issues, and receiving and acting on feedback and generally support the management of the team in an efficient and effective way.
36.	To assist the Team Leader as appropriate in all national and local performance monitoring against key indicators for development applications, pre-application enquiries and appeals ensuring that monitoring is undertaken to a high quality and that it properly and meaningfully captures the service performance.
37.	Assist the Team Leader in the promotion of a culture of continuous improvement by adapting skills, knowledge and team systems to cope effectively with regular and often complex changes to national and regional planning policy and legislative context.

OTHER CONDITIONS:

To maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job and participate in appropriate training/development activities including the council's 'My Annual Review' scheme.

Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are discharged in accordance with the council's policies and procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant regulations and legislation.

To comply with the council's equal opportunities and diversity policies ensuring anti-discriminatory practice within the service area.

To undertake additional duties that may arise from time to time commensurate with the grade of the post, such as to be able to work evenings and weekends with appropriate notice.

Person Specification

Requirements	Person Specification for the Post of Principal Planning Officer – Development Management (Grade K-L)	Grade K Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Grade L Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment A= Application Form T= Test I= Interview
Knowledge	<p>1. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of planning legislation and the associated town planning policy framework at national, strategic and local levels.</p> <p>2. Proven knowledge and understanding of key Development Management processes.</p> <p>3. Detailed knowledge of the operation of local government in London.</p> <p>4. Understanding of staff supervision, mentoring or management techniques.</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p>	<p>A/I</p> <p>A/I</p> <p>A/I</p> <p>A/I</p>
Qualifications & Experience	<p>5. Town Planning or similar qualification at post graduate level and eligibility for membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute.</p> <p>6. A proven track record as town planner dealing with a wide range in type and complexity of</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p>	<p>A</p> <p>A/I</p>

	planning applications, pre-application advice, appeals and other related work in an urban area.			
	7. Experience of project or programme management in a town planning or similar setting.	E	E	A/I
	8. Experience of representing the Council (or other organisation) at an appeal inquiry, hearing or examination in public.	D	E	A/I
	9. Experience of preparing and presenting reports and briefings on complex planning to senior managers, elected members or planning committees	D	E	A/I
	10. Experience using own initiative and creative solutions to negotiate and resolve planning issues (including dealing with third party representations) to secure positive outcomes.	E	E	A /I
	11. Experience of supervising or mentoring staff and/or experience of reviewing delegated planning reports.	D	E	A/I
	12. Experience of leading negotiations to secure planning obligations through completion of Section 106 Agreements.	E	E	A/I

Living the TOWER Values sets out the essential behaviours required of all staff.				
We work TOGETHER across boundaries and with partners to achieve the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets	13. Able to collaborate with other Council services, statutory bodies and partner organisations to resolve issues and achieve positive results.	D	E	A/I/T
	14. Experience of sharing information and engaging others in a timely way to achieve the best outcomes.	E	E	A/I/T
We are OPEN and transparent	15. Able to think about the people they communicate with and to adjust their communication style accordingly.	E	E	A/I/T
We are WILLING to challenge, innovate and be accountable	16. Accountable for delivering own work in accordance with agreed targets and sets themselves challenging goals.	E	E	A/I/T
We empower each other to be EXCELLENT and go the extra mile	17. Takes initiative to improve outcomes and can explain how it will make a difference.	E	E	A/I/T
We RESPECT all communities, they are the heart of everything we do	18. Takes ownership of complex issues, whilst keeping the customer informed.	E	E	A/I/T
	19. Values the diversity of all the people we work with and takes this into account when delivering planning services.	E	E	A/I/T
Additional Requirements	20. Willingness to work outside of contracted hours in the evenings and weekends subject to notice.	D	E	A/I/T

GUIDANCE ON APPOINTMENT AND MOVEMENT WITH THE CAREER GRADE

The academic qualification, competencies and level of experience criteria are set out below:

Salary Scale	Required qualification, experience & competences
Grade K	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RTPI accredited undergraduate or postgraduate qualification;• Eligibility for full RTPI membership;• Typically 4 years' post qualification relevant experience of Town Planning, Development Management or related work in complex urban environments (desirable);• Assessment of competence against grade K of the person specification and job description.
Progression from grade K to L subject to internal assessment by managers.	
Grade L	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RTPI accredited undergraduate or postgraduate qualification;• Eligibility for full RTPI membership• Typically 5 years' post qualification relevant experience of Town Planning, Development Management or related work in complex urban environments (desirable).• Assessment of competence against grade L of the person specification and job description• Past performance against targets.

Entry criteria

1. An officer's starting salary scale entry point will be based on both qualification and experience at the time of employment, in addition to an assessment of their competence against the appropriate level of person specification and job description. Basic entry requirements are defined in the table above for each salary scale band – Grades K and L. Officers will normally start at the bottom of the salary scale band that they qualify for.

Movement each year

2. Decisions on annual progression up the salary scale points within a salary scale band takes place in the normal manner through the Council's annual Performance Development Review (PDR) process. Subject to satisfactory evidence of progress against the criteria listed above, during the previous 12 months (up to 31 March) and the outcome of any internal interviews (if required), any promotion that is awarded will be backdated to 1 April.

3. An officer who starts employment with the Council between 1 April and 30 September in any year can for progression through the career grade to commence on 1 April, the following year, i.e. between 6 and 12 months from their start date. An officer who starts employment with the Council between 1 October in one year and 31 March in the following year can apply for progression through the career grade in April the following year, i.e. between 12 and 18 months from their start date.

4. Officers should only apply to move when they are confident that they have achieved the appropriate criteria for the next band (as set out above) as only one application to move to the next salary scale band can be made in any 12-month period.

5. Progression will be based on confirmation that they have reached the necessary level of qualification and experience plus an explicit assessment, by their line manager, of continued progress towards the requirements of the relevant person specification and that a satisfactory level and quality of work has been produced over the previous year. This assessment has to be agreed in writing by the relevant Service Manager. Any appeal against these decisions will be to the Service Head Planning and Building Control, whose decision will be final.