

Job Description

Job Title: Principal Planner	Directorate: Inclusive Economy and Housing	
Service Area: Planning and Development: (Planning applications, enforcement, and policy teams)	Post Number: Multiple	Job Evaluation: PO4 - 6466 PO5 - 6476 PO6 - 6477 PO7 - 6478
Grade: PO4 – PO7	Date last updated: August 2022	

Overall Purpose of Job

This Job Description relates to Principal Planner roles across the planning applications, enforcement, and policy teams within Newham's Planning and Development Service.

The postholder will work within Newham's Planning and Development Service playing a lead role in contributing to the delivery of high quality, robust, cost effective, and customer oriented planning functions for Newham, including through engagement with developers and other key bodies in the delivery of quality developments and a robust planning policy framework.

Job Context

The postholder will sit within one of the planning teams though may be required to work across a range of planning disciplines, including planning applications, enforcement, policy, related project work, and corporately.

The postholder will report to the Enforcement, Development or Policy Manager as appropriate, and depending on which team they are primarily situated within.

The postholder may have management responsibility for up to 5 staff. Additional agency or seconded staff may be included at various times. The postholder will be responsible for motivating, supporting, and supervising their staff and will have delegated signoff responsibility for planning applications (where applicable).

The postholder may have responsibility for commissioning external consultants to develop the evidence base for the Local Plan or to assess specific aspects of planning applications, e.g. viability. The postholder would then be responsible for managing the contracts.

The postholder will lead on a variety of complex Development Management or Policy Planning projects/cases which will require presenting in committees, examinations, public enquiries and hearings. This may include dealing with high profile and complex planning enforcement cases, which would include preparing evidence and appearing in court. This would include cases where an award of costs under the Proceeds of Crime Act is sought.

The postholder will be responsible for contributing to, and ensuring officers under their management contribute to the generation of income (in excess of £1m), by negotiating pre-application fees, Planning Project Performance Agreements, and Legal Agreements.

The postholder may be required to work evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays in order to meet service requirements.

Grading

A postholder's starting salary and grading will be based on both qualification and experience at the time of employment, in addition to an assessment of their competence against the Job Description including Person Specification. The responsibilities and expectations pertaining to each grade are outlined below in the Key Tasks and Accountabilities and Person Specification sections. Officers will normally start at the bottom of the Salary Scale band within the grade that they qualify for.

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the postholder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the postholder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time. The postholder will be given a portfolio of projects which may be within some or all of the planning functions.

PO4

1. To lead on all types of Development Management projects as necessary including:
 - pre-application casework
 - application casework
 - enforcement casework
 - appeal casework*
2. Within the Policy Team:
 - developing new sound spatial planning documents
 - undertaking consultation and engagement
 - statutory monitoring of planning objectives and outcomes
 - working with local and regional bodies on the creation of policy documents

- leading on a specific topic area

**Appeal casework would include hearings and public inquiries. For the former the postholder would represent the Council without a legal representative.*

The nature of the work above will be more complex and varied than Planner and Senior Planner workloads, and be likely to include the larger scale Major and/or more contentious or high profile developments. The postholder will be expected to work independently and lead on the development of Supplementary Planning Documents and other planning guidance documents and work with supervision on elements of the Local Plan and other examined documents.

3. To respond to statutory consultations from other boroughs, regional and national government on emerging policy documents or legislative changes.
4. To effectively and independently manage this varied and complex workload of projects, cases and/or applications in line with relevant legislation and statutory and corporate targets and timeframes.
5. To undertake delegated authorisation for decision making within the service.
6. To supervise, support, and guide the activities and performance of a variety of more junior staff and consultants and other temporary staff acting on the Council's behalf.
7. To motivate and nurture the talent and interest of other team members.
8. To ensure planning fees and other sources of income are correctly calculated and processed for your caseload and for other staff under your management.
9. To lead in securing Section 106 planning obligations and undertaking Community Infrastructure Levy work as required, and in the consideration of infrastructure provision to deliver the key priorities set out in the Local Plan, and to mitigate the impact of development.
10. To act as a lead for any court proceedings associated with planning matters, including, but not limited to, prosecutions and judicial reviews.
11. To develop and maintain effective communications, liaison and working relationships, both internally and externally, and with elected members, community and business partners, relevant organisations and individuals.
12. To provide technical solutions on various matters including, advice and guidance to Councillors, staff, developers and other stakeholders.
13. To assist in regularly monitoring work programmes, performance and quality targets of team members including appraisals, one-to-one meetings and all other HR policies to ensure that the service meets agreed objectives and delivers a consistent approach.

14. To assist in providing day to day support and direction to technical support officers assisting them in their duties as appropriate and necessary.
15. To identify gaps in or improvements needed in service provision and investigate solutions. To take the lead on the delivery of such service improvements, and exhibit self-motivation in leading on such.
16. To represent the service on internal and external working events as required including Cabinet, Committee, Design Review Panel and Members' Forum and any such other decision making and advisory structures.
17. To assist in dealing with all member enquiries, FOIs, and complaints.
18. To provide cover in the absence of comparable officers, and deputise for Managers as required where more senior Principals are not available.

PO5

All of the above and in addition:

1. To deal with the more complex largescale Major and/or contentious or high profile developments which may include applications circa 50 to 8000 new dwellings or lead on the development of strategic spatial planning documents or related tasks across the Borough, such as Area Action Plans or key sections of the Local Plan.
2. To procure and contract manage, including undertaking budget management, consultants acting on the Council's behalf.
3. To ensure that all statutory, legal, and contractual obligations and deadlines are met.
4. To take decisions on all matters delegated to this post, using discretion and professional judgement to deliver a pragmatic and effective approach to service delivery, and to conflict and problem resolution.
5. To utilise information technology to improve service delivery, and to encourage staff to work innovatively to maximise resources.
6. To play a lead role in regularly monitoring work programmes, performance and quality targets of team members including appraisals, one-to-one meetings and all other HR policies to ensure that the service meets agreed objectives and delivers a consistent approach.
7. To identify the training needs of staff and develop, introduce, and contribute to co-ordinated training programmes for all staff to ensure they are adequately resourced to carry out their roles. To participate in the recruitment and selection of staff.
8. To represent the authority at a senior level when dealing with partners, developers, external stakeholders, and other interested parties, to ensure a joined-

up approach to the delivery of the service, including interface with other government departments.

9. To lead on, present at, and be the most senior officer at engagement events with members of the public or other stakeholders.
10. To liaise and foster strong working relationships with other external agencies.
11. To assist in the management of recruitment, inductions, probations and capabilities procedures.

PO6

All of the above and in addition:

1. To deal with the most significant, complex, high profile, and contentious enforcement casework or major developments, including all pre-application and application work associated with these; or independently lead and project manage additional resources on the most complex Spatial Planning tasks including the creation of a sound Local Plan or other examined development plan documents, and appeal work including leading at Examinations.
2. Responsible for the preparation and presentation of written or oral reports and briefings to the Mayor, Cabinet, Planning Committees, Members' Forum, and other bodies, and to attend and lead meetings with Members as necessary.
3. Under the supervision of the Team Manager lead on the preparation and management of agendas, meetings and relevant attendees for such meetings as delegated by the Managers of the Planning functions within the Service. For example including Strategic and Local Planning Committees, Development Control Members Forum, Design Review panel.
4. To undertake significant staff line management responsibilities over and above the responsibilities of the PO4/PO5 level. This may include leading on recruitment, inductions, probations and capabilities procedures.
5. To fully deputise for Development Management Managers as required.

PO7

All of the above and in addition:

1. To assist in the management of delegated budgets and assist Managers in monitoring the revenue budget and generating costs savings measures as appropriate.
2. To lead on the preparation and management of agendas and meetings and relevant attendees for such meetings as delegated by the Managers of the Planning functions within the Service. For example including Strategic and Local Planning Committees, Development Control Members Forum, Design Review panel, Cabinet, and Examinations.

3. Assist Managers with corporate and change management projects, including representing the team or service's interests and working with colleagues across other services.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

Person Specification

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Important information for applicants

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Documentation, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

Criteria	Method Of Assessment
Qualifications: A recognised degree or post graduate qualification in Town Planning; and/or MRTPI (chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute) or eligible for membership.	Application Documentation
Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the 	Application Documentation and Interview / Test

<p>professional and practical application of planning legislation, policy, procedures and related planning matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of the main functions of a local authority and of the wider corporate influences upon Development Management and Planning Policy. • Understanding of management concepts, practices and principles gained through experience. • Managerial and technical knowledge relevant to the efficient and effective delivery of a high quality Planning service. • Understanding of the issues and financial constraints facing local government and how this impacts on the Local Planning Authority. • Understanding of how to negotiate and secure revenue and cost savings measures through planning processes. • A knowledge of how to assess the impact of legislative or administrative changes affecting the service and to proactively implement changes to comply with those requirements. • A knowledge of the current trends and developments in local authority services. 	
<p>Experience of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working in an urban planning context. • managing a varied, high and complex caseload of development management or policy work in a high pressure environment whilst supporting others in their own work. • supervising a group of professional, technical and/or administrative staff within a service environment. • the professional and technical skills associated with a Planning service. • successful innovation, initiative and consistent achievement in a public sector environment. 	<p>Application Documentation and Interview / Test</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing good working relationships with a wide range of internal bodies, external customers and other stakeholders as part of developing effective service delivery. • negotiating S106, scheme viability (as a town planner), affordable housing and other relevant mitigation negotiations as pertinent to expected relevant role. • analysing complex information in order to develop and achieve local strategic objectives. • representing the Local Planning Authority at Committee, hearings, enquiries, examinations as pertinent to expected relevant role. • preparing reports and managing an agenda of committee or other similar internal and/or external meetings. • the application and development of IT solutions in a changing environment. • defining, procuring, operating and controlling services and projects by external consultants/contractors. 	
<p>Skills And Abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication and inter-personal skills and ability to build rapport with all people. • Excellent report writing skills and the ability to prepare briefing notes and other documents or research reports in clear and concise English. • Proven organisational skills with ability to effectively manage workloads and prioritise tasks to meet strict deadlines and respond flexibly to frequently changing needs and priorities. • Ability to use effective means of communication in order to resolve problems and conflicts and negotiate. • Ability to work collaboratively with a range of internal services, external agencies, community organisations in a facilitating, enabling and advisory capacity. • Ability to deliver high quality services efficiently and 	<p>Application Documentation and Interview / Test</p>

<p>effectively with limited resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to develop and operate appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure service delivery • Ability to use management information to judge the team's performance and to devise and implement service improvement strategies • Ability to translate corporate policies into tangible service improvements • Ability to effectively contribute to corporate projects on behalf of the Directorate • Ability to listen and respond sensitively to the needs of the community and to deliver the service around the needs of customers • Ability to build effective and productive working relationships with colleagues and other internal and external stakeholders • Ability to manage, lead and motivate staff, and foster their development • Ability to manage planning projects and processes effectively • Ability to respond flexibly to a constantly changing work flow. • Ability to make decisions promptly and accurately under pressure. • A good understanding of own strengths and development needs together with a commitment to self-improvement. • Proficient in the use of information technology, including generating written reports, use of databases and spreadsheets, and use of internet, email and virtual platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom and/or Skype. And ability to train others in such use. • Ability to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. 	
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<p>Personal Style And Behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven leader • Polite, helpful and professional in approach to communicating with people • Persuasive and able to manage and resolve conflict • Creative and innovative in solving complex problems • Persistent and determined in realising service outcomes • Articulate both in written and oral form • Probity and honesty • Politically aware • Have resilience and ability to work effectively when under pressure • Logical thinker with attention to detail • Committed to the achievement of equal opportunities • Respected team player 	<p>Application Documentation and Interview / Test</p>
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