



Role Profile

Job Title: Career Grade Planner

Post Number: 204240

Grade: SO1-PO4

Directorate: Housing, Planning and Communities

Service: Development Management

Reports to: Deputy Planning Manager

PURPOSE OF ROLE:

- To assist in the provision of an excellent, high profile, customer focused Development Management Service.
- To process planning applications, appeals, customer complaints and advise officers, councillors, developers and members of the public on planning matters.
- To undertake training and personal development to ensure an up to date knowledge of the planning system and skillset associated with it is retained.

Responsible for: Dependent on requirement of Stage.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Corporate

1. To work effectively as part of the Council's Housing, Planning and Communities team, delivering corporate objectives through the work of the department.
2. To work as part of multi-disciplinary project teams to break down departmental barriers and ensure the delivery of transformational projects.
3. To work with the Assistant Director Planning and Development to ensure services are integrated at the point of delivery and at the strategic planning level.
4. To promote a philosophy of putting service user needs first at every opportunity and to put in place management arrangements that work to action this.

5. To work with key stakeholders in improving service quality and promoting creative and innovative ways of tackling local problems, ensuring services are developed which meet the needs of our community and are accessible to all users.
6. To oppose and where possible eradicate all forms of discrimination, making a positive contribution to managing diversity, both as an employer and service provider.
7. To raise performance by contributing to a culture of continuous improvement.
8. To promote a positive image of Hounslow and represent the Council as may be required.
9. To provide professional advice to Councillors and other officers on relevant areas of service delivery, ensuring compliance with the Council's standing orders.
10. To take active steps to contribute to the achievement of all the Council's priorities.
11. To participate in the Council's emergency planning and responses to emergency situations when required to do so.
12. To assist in the conduct of elections when required to do so.

Functional

Scale SO1

1. To maintain an up to date knowledge of all legislation, corporate objectives, government advice, case histories and a basic understanding of the technical skills required for the role.
2. Be case officer for non-complex planning applications, prior approvals, Lawful Development Certificates, tree and advert applications including carrying out site visits, researching planning histories, working competently with an electronic document management system, writing reports for decision making under delegated authority and for committee.
3. Checking applications to ensure that the correct information and fee/charge has been submitted for planning approval and assessing costs where instructed. Ensuring that all interested parties, including officers, residents and elected officials are consulted and fully engaged in the application process.
4. Be the lead contact and be able to give clear advice to developers, Members, the public, other departments and outside bodies verbally and in writing, and record such advice using IT systems. To include advice on permitted development and enforcement enquiries and to make assessments of permitted development, and being part of the planning duty officer system

5. Plan and programme own work within agreed time limits, using electronic document management and other office IT systems and work flexibly in an office environment.
6. Prepare written submissions for appeals and assist in preparing evidence in connection with informal hearings and public inquiries.
7. To participate, with appropriate supervision, in the full range of work of the team including responding to general enquiries, assessing works to trees and tree preservation orders, enforcement investigations and advertisement control. To respond to any urgent out of normal working hours planning issues in accordance with any scheme in operation, and to undertake early morning, evening and weekend work when considered necessary.

Scales – SO2/PO1

Generally as for scale SO1 but in addition:

8. Assist in the supervision and training of junior and temporary staff.
9. Able to work with less supervision than a scale SO1 planner and able to work flexibly and to deadlines, using the councils IT systems.
10. To deal with more complex planning applications, draft more complex committee reports, undertake pre-application advice for more complex planning applications and negotiate with developers and members of the public. To have a broad technical knowledge of all relevant planning considerations.
11. To take responsibility for small to medium sized projects and to assist senior staff in the implementation of major projects.
12. To investigate general enquiries and complaints of a more complex nature, dealing sensitively with all complainants and recording all information accurately on the council's electronic systems.
13. Prepare written submissions for appeals and be able to give evidence in informal hearings and minor public inquiries.
14. To assist Team Leader and the Head of Development Management in contributions to service improvements.

Scales - PO2 / PO3

Generally as for SO1 - PO1 but in addition

15. To take responsibility for dealing with more complex applications, including leading on pre-application advice, assisting more senior staff on major applications and PPA agreements and entering into negotiations with senior officers in the authority, and developers for planning gain.
16. Plan and programme own work and work of more junior staff, meeting fixed deadlines or timetables. Assist with checking reports, supervising, motivating and directing other junior planning staff in the team.
17. To maintain an up to date knowledge of all legislation, government advice, case histories and new techniques and give advice on these unsupervised. To draft, monitor and review planning policies and guidelines. Where appropriate, recommend changes in technical procedures. Identify and investigate problems making recommendations for creative and practical solutions.
18. To be the lead contact and key advisor to Councillors, cabinet members amenity groups, developers and top management in providing sound technical, legal and professional advice on development projects in the borough.
19. Deputising for senior managers in presenting reports for decision under delegated authority, and assisting in presentation of reports to committee.
20. To help manage the preparation of the councils case at all levels of appeal, including an ability to give evidence under cross examination at public inquiry and in court.
21. To specialise in an area of planning where there is otherwise a service deficiency and to undertake training and development in that area to act as the key contact for officers, developers and elected officials in that area.

Scale PO4

Generally as for scale SO1 – PO3 but in addition:

22. Ability to process all aspects the most complex planning applications with little or no supervision.
23. To partake in training, to lead on aspects of planning and liaise with other departments to help mentor staff and relay knowledge of up to date legislation, corporate objectives and technical processes.
24. To assist Team Leaders and the Head of Development Management in developing refining systems and process to improve the planning service.

25. To specialise in an area of planning where there is otherwise a service deficiency and to provide training, support and policy advice on that area.

These are the values that drive us:

Lead with heart

We're here for the people of Hounslow. We work together with them and for them with care and compassion, with patience and in partnership. We put ourselves in other's shoes, remembering that every person is different, and every interaction is a real moment in their lives. We always feel first.

Do new

We need to do things differently if we're going to help Hounslow people thrive in the future. Hard work is important but it's not enough on its own. We need to challenge ourselves to break new ground, invent new approaches, try new ideas keep moving forward and keep improving. That means being ready to stop doing things we've done before. It means taking on risk and backing each other when we take a leap.

Pass on the power

The world keeps on changing and we need to change with it. We won't be able to adapt fast enough to the future needs of our residents if we stick to old fashioned command and control. We need to hand over responsibility and give people more power to make decisions and take action themselves. It's about being transparent and straightforward. It's about providing tools and support. But most of all, it's about being ready to trust each other to do the right thing.

Harness the mix

We work together, across disciplines and roles. We talk lots, share our insights, our skills and experience. We're not interested in siloes or defensiveness. We're always open to different approaches, we're flexible and ready to adapt. We break down the barriers between our parts and people to unlock the problem-solving power of our amazing mix of minds.

Be a rock

There's lots to do and people need us. It's up to us to take the initiative. To take responsibility. To stand up and be counted. Everyday. It's about being super focused, effective and efficient. It's about allocating our resources smartly and with good rationale – using data to help guide our decisions. But most of all, it's about having the strength and determination to keep on going through thick and thin.

The top 5 things about you that are most important:

- A passion for place and place making, improving the private and public realm and how our residents interact with public places.
 - A commitment to combating the causes of Climate Change and tackling it's impacts within an urban environment.
 - An ability to work as part of a wider team, to think creatively and solve problems with an appreciation of the needs of our residents.
 - An acknowledgement of the problems and pressure facing a Local Planning Authority and a focus on delivering the Councils Local Plan policies and Corporate Plan priorities.
 - A desire for continuous learning and development, and to work towards progressing through the following bars within the career grade:
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KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:

At All Levels

- Be competent in the full use information technology, with Training as necessary, to work fully with the councils electronic document management systems and planning systems.
- Able to deal sensitively with all sections of the community in accordance with Council/Departmental Customer Care initiatives.

Scale SO1

- An understanding of and commitment to the legislation, principles and practice of Town Planning. Basic knowledge of current legislation, case law and local authority planning policies and procedures.
- A practical awareness of the techniques involved in site visits and assessing planning proposal drawings and planning statements, including ability to carry out site visits and to read maps and drawings on paper and on the computer and make basic calculations relating to them, with training if necessary.

SO2/PO1 (as for Scale SO1 and in addition)

- An understanding of and commitment to the legislation, principles and practice of Town Planning. More detailed knowledge of current legislation, case law, technical reports and techniques of investigation, and Local Planning Authority policies and procedures.
- Proven ability to write clear, concise reports and make recommendations. Able to record data accurately and work within an electronic document management system Able to write planning policies and guidelines with training, if required.
- Experience of giving more complex advice to developers, top management, councillors and the public, dealing with more complex Committee reports and negotiating with developers at a higher level.
- Experience in writing appeal statements on knowledge of how to give evidence in informal hearings.
- A basic understanding of climate science, viability in planning and planning law.

Scale PO2 / PO3 (as for SO1/ SO2/ PO1 and in addition)

- Able to demonstrate effective negotiation skills both inside and outside the authority, e.g. experience of negotiating major planning gain, complex enforcement matters.
- Ability to assess whether a breach has occurred in more complex enforcement complaints and to identify remedies to address harm.
- Able to manage the process of major appeal hearings and public inquiries within set deadlines. Able to present the councils case at informal hearings and under cross examination at more complex public inquiries.
- Experience in assisting with and able to present at planning committees, Area Forums and public engagement.
- Understanding and experience of Climate Science and how the planning system may operate within the Councils Climate Emergency agenda, including sustainable design and build, drainage, renewable energy systems and air quality.
- A broad understanding of Planning Law and an ability to manage and advise lawyers on the drafting of legal agreements.
- Able to demonstrate knowledge and experience in a specialised area of planning where there is otherwise a service need.
- Able to demonstrate experience in participating in projects on behalf of Team Leaders and the Head of Development Management designed to improve the planning service.

Scale PO4 (as for SO1 – P03 and in addition)

- Able to demonstrate experience and ability in processing planning applications at the highest level of complexity.
- Experience in presenting schemes at planning committee with minimum supervision.
- Understanding and experience of viability, land values and build costs and an ability to negotiate schemes to deliver viable building projects.
- An in depth understanding of Planning Law and an ability to manage and advise lawyers on the drafting of complex legal agreements.
- Ability to demonstrate a specialisation in an area of planning where there is otherwise a service deficiency and experience in training and mentoring staff in that area.
- Proven experience in leading on projects designed to improve the planning service.

SKILLS & ABILITIES:

At All Levels

- Ability to read plans and interpret planning proposals, good mathematical skills to calculate areas and volumes.
- Ability to use electronic document management systems to cross reference data.
- Able to record data accurately and work within an electronic document management system.
- Ability to have a broad understanding of the technical aspects of a planning application.

Scale SO1

- Able to carry a caseload of planning applications and appeals and determine these within set deadlines and in accordance with quality indicators. Able to work flexibly in a changing environment responding quickly to conflicting workloads and changing priorities. Able to identify the need for guidance from more senior staff (to avoid delays in meeting targets).
- Able to communicate in a sensitive and effective manner both orally and in writing and able to deal effectively with Members, the public, officers in other departments and outside organisations.

SO2/ PO1 (As for SO1, and in addition)

- Ability to work with less supervision than a scale 01 planner, and to train staff as required.
- Able to communicate in a sensitive and effective manner both orally and in writing and able to deal effectively with Members, the public, officers in other departments and outside organisations.
- Ability to prepare committee reports and appeal statements within set guidelines and to present the councils case at informal hearings and committee
- Experience of giving more complex advice to developers, members and the public, dealing with more complex Committee reports and negotiating with developers at a higher level.
- Able to organise and co-ordinate tasks to meet agreed work programmes and deadlines, and to manage workflow electronically.
- Able to work flexibly in a changing environment responding quickly to conflicting workloads and changing priorities. Able to identify the need for guidance from more senior staff (to avoid delays in meeting targets).
- An ability to review and analyse basic technical planning statements.

PO2/PO3 (As for, SO1 / SO2, P01 and in addition)

- Able to demonstrate effective negotiation skills both inside and outside the authority, e.g. experience of negotiating major planning gain, complex enforcement matters
- Able to make more complex recommendations for proposals of a technical and contentious nature, write more complex reports, record them in an electronic document management system and able to present reports to senior officers and members at committee
- Ability to interpret legislation, and to impart knowledge to a team. Able to co-ordinate and organise tasks to meet agreed work programmes and deadlines within a frequently changing environment. Able to assess existing work practices and make recommendations for improvements
- Able to manage the process of major public inquiries within set deadlines and performance indicators. Able to present the councils case at informal hearings and under cross examination at more complex public inquiries
- Ability to supervise, train and monitor more junior staff in the team and to train them in planning legislation, office procedures and IT systems

PO4 (as for SO1 – PO3 and in addition)

- Able to make highly complex recommendations for proposals of a technical and contentious nature, write more complex reports, record them in an electronic document management system and able to present reports to senior officers and members at committee
- Ability to establish where service improvements are required and to lead and mentor junior staff with minimum supervision in addressing the need.

Qualifications:

1. An RTPI recognised Degree in planning.
2. Eligibility to become a member of the RTPI.

Progression criteria

In order for staff to progress through the career grades they will be required to give practical examples of:

- Having achieved in key duties and responsibilities of their current stage.
- Having achieved in key duties and responsibilities of the next stages on the career grade.
- The experience levels and qualifications criteria as set out on the employee specification will apply in addition to the criteria set out above.

It is not intended to set quotas regarding the amount of staff allowed to progress through each stage. This will be up to the relevant Manager and will be dependent upon such factors as the complexity of work in the section at any one time and budget availability.