

Post Specification

Date	April 2025
Post Group Number	8599
Post Title	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Job Family	Organisational Support
Job Family Role Profile	OS15
Final Grade	15

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile

Service Area description

Planning Policy sits within the Strategy and Policy section alongside the corporate Strategy and Policy and Performance and Insight services. The planning policy team is responsible for producing the local plan and associated planning policy documents. These form the statutory policy framework for determining planning decisions and the delivery of Cumberland's strategic objectives relating to health, housing, the economy, environment and infrastructure.

Purpose of this post

To provide management and leadership in the planning policy team to deliver the statutory planning policy service; adherence to legislation and statutory duties. In particular;

Take a lead on key project areas to deliver the Local Plan and other strategic planning policy documents and policy objectives.

Provide professional planning expertise and advice to ensure that the Council can provide a statutory planning policy framework to meet the future development needs across Cumberland.

The postholder will be expected to input into the development of relevant Council strategies and master planning and effectively engage with a wide range of internal and external partners.

Key job specific accountabilities

- Lead work on all aspects of the Cumberland Local Plan including drafting local plan/SPD text and policies, carrying out or commissioning necessary consultations, evidence base and surveys and appraisals, meeting requirements of the Duty to Cooperate, and prepare background papers for Members and for Examination.
- Represent the Council as an expert witness at public examinations, inquiries and local hearings, preparing and presenting expert and professional evidence as required..
- Understand, interpret and apply complex information, regulation and legislation and translate this into strategy and policy.
- Undertake site visits, site surveys and assessments, interpret site constraints and apply technical studies and make judgements on the suitability of land for allocation in the local plan
- Make professional and expert contributions to the development of wider Council strategies, in particular placed based action plans, master planning, and key projects.
- Lead on the procurement and management of multiple externally commissioned elements of the local plan evidence base, (up to £100K)
- To assist in the appropriate budgetary controls to ensure effective and efficient use of resources, quality controls and reporting procedures and mechanisms

- Work corporately and with external partners to ensure that the Council's planning policies contribute to the priorities of the community and the Council.
- Work with Development Management colleagues to provide effective pre-application and master planning input with developers.
- Represent the interests of the Council with outside bodies, including in relation to sub regional plans and strategies.
- Lead and oversee the support and advice to Parish Councils and other local community groups with regard to Neighbourhood Planning.
- Manage projects or working with partners to deliver projects which implement Local Plan policies including environmental improvements and infrastructure projects.
- Provide expert planning advice both within the Council to officers and Members and externally to the public, businesses, developers and investors.
- Provide promotional material, represent the Council at public meetings and prepare exhibitions and press statements, in relation to the responsibilities of the post.
- Line manage and allocate the work programme of a team of planning officers.
- Keep up to date with all new relevant legislation, regulations, circulars and guidance and advise parties within the Council of their implications.

Please note annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process

Key facts and figures of the post

Budget Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead on commissioning, procurement and management of externally commissioned studies up to £100k • Delegated responsibility for revenue expenditure up to £5K • Work with in the agreed scheme of delegation to ensure services work within agreed budgets
Staff Management Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and mentoring a team of professional planning officers and technical support. • Provide line management, supervision, appraisal, mentoring, advice and support • Work closely with colleagues and partners in the public, private and third sector
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant working with senior officers, elected members, partners and residents. • Deputise for the Planning Policy Manager • Delivery of statutory services

Essential Criteria - Qualifications, knowledge, experience and expertise

Qualifications

- Educated to degree standard in planning or a related discipline
- Post graduate diploma / Masters degree in town planning or similar (desirable)
- Member of, or eligible for membership of, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

Knowledge

- Expert, comprehensive knowledge of contemporary planning policy and practice.
- Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the dynamics and complexities of public sector and local government
- Extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the planning system, including the role of local government in developing places

Experience and expertise

- Significant experience of production of local plan documents, commissioning work with external consultants and leading planning discussions with a wide range of stakeholders
- Experience of successfully attending, and presenting to Planning Committees and other Council Committees
- Proven ability to give sound advice and guidance on a range of topics or issues.
- Experience dealing with complex and/or contentious planning matters and politically sensitive issues.
- Skilled in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders including developers, government departments and agencies, local partnerships etc
- Strong negotiation and influencing skills
- Able to understand, interpret and analyse new legislation and regulations
- Good communicator in written and oral form
- Excellent organisation and time management skills, able to work on own initiative with minimum supervision and cope with competing/conflicting demands
- Experience of budget management and processes
- Experience of leading and managing commissions/procurements
- Experience of managing programmes of work
- Experience of supervising staff
- Computer literate with experience of MS Office products

Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job working circumstances

Emotional Demands	Ability to deal with stressful or emotive issues including with members of the public.
Physical Demands	The role is predominately office based, but there will be a requirement to carry out site visits and attend meetings potentially outside Cumberland
Working Conditions	Whilst the role is mainly office based, there is a requirement to carry out site visits which could include visiting operational construction sites.

Other Factors

- Requires ability to travel independently and extensively both within and outside Cumberland to undertake duties, including site visits if required.
- There is a general requirement to manage many different requirements at the same time which calls for high levels of prioritisation, time management and planning skills to ensure that all business needs are met in accordance with agreed timescales.
- There will be periods of work-related pressure from the need to meet tight deadlines and/or respond to conflicting operational and business demands
- Will be required to be involved in challenging negotiations where there is pressure on the role holder to achieve a successful outcome for the organisation
- Has visibility within the organisation and is expected to be a role model to others in terms of required behaviours and approaches
- Will use analytical, judgmental, creative and developmental skills to analyse and interpret very varied and highly complex information or situations and to produce solutions
- The role requires high levels of awareness and prolonged periods of concentrations
- The post holder will be expected to habitually switch between tasks during the course of the working day and it is likely there will be frequent interruptions from colleagues and external parties.