

Post Specification

Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title:** Development Management Principal Planning Officer
- **Date:** November 2024
- **Post Group Number:** 8646
- **Job Family:** Regulation and Technical
- **Job Family Role Profile:** RT15
- **Final Grade:** 15

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile.

Service Area Description

The Development Management service is responsible for overseeing and managing the planning process to ensure that all new development proposals align with local and national planning policies. This service reviews planning applications, providing guidance to developers, residents, and stakeholders on compliance with regulations related to land use, design, sustainability, and environmental impact. The service conduct assessments, facilitate public consultations, and collaborate with various departments to address concerns such as transport, infrastructure, and heritage conservation. Additionally, the service enforces planning conditions, monitors ongoing developments, and addresses breaches in planning laws to support sustainable growth and maintain the character of the local area, balancing economic, environmental, and social considerations.

Purpose of this Post

The Principal Planning Officer plays a key role in managing and assessing complex and high-profile planning applications, ensuring compliance with UK planning regulations, local development policies, and national planning frameworks. Reporting to the Area Manager (DM), this role provides technical expertise and guidance on planning applications, supporting other officers in their decision-making processes and contributing to the continuous improvement of development management services. The Principal Planning Officer collaborates closely with developers, stakeholders, and the public, ensuring that development proposals support the strategic goals of the local planning authority.

Key Job Specific Accountabilities

1. Application Review & Assessment:

- Lead on the management and assessment of complex and high-impact planning applications, including major residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments.
- Conduct thorough reviews of submitted plans, documentation, and environmental assessments to ensure compliance with local and national planning policies.
- Prepare detailed reports and recommendations, providing well-supported decisions on applications for planning committee consideration.

- As caseloads allow support on minor and householder applications when required.

2. Technical Expertise & Support:

- Provide specialist advice and technical guidance to Senior Planning Officers, Planning Officers, and other team members on complex planning applications and policy interpretation using your discretion and initiative over a broad area of technical competence when resolving problems.
- Analyse and interpret diverse and complex problems pertaining to compliance with national and local planning policy requirements and associated Planning Practice Guidance notes
- Support the Development Management Manager by advising on high-profile applications, potential appeals, and contentious cases.
- Keep updated on changes in planning legislation, local policies, and best practices, ensuring that guidance to the team is accurate and current.

3. Stakeholder Engagement & Consultation:

- Engage with applicants, developers, architects, and other stakeholders, providing clear guidance on planning policies, application processes, and compliance requirements, influence and persuasion through clear evidence of appropriate alternative approaches.
- Represent the planning team at pre-application meetings, site visits, and public consultations, ensuring effective communication and fostering constructive relationships with all parties.
- Participate in public meetings and consultations to address community concerns and ensure that public feedback is incorporated into decision-making processes.

4. Preparation for Planning Committee & Appeals:

- Prepare and present reports for planning committees, summarising key issues and providing professional recommendations on complex applications.
- Support the team in preparing for and managing planning appeals, including drafting statements and attending hearings or inquiries where necessary.
- Work with legal representatives and senior management on appeal cases, ensuring robust defence of the council's decisions and policies.

5. Mentorship & Professional Development:

- Mentor and support Planning Officers and Senior Planning Officers, providing technical guidance and helping to build their skills and confidence in planning assessments.
- Assist the Development Management Manager in identifying training needs within the team and contributing to the development and delivery of internal training programs.
- Promote a collaborative work environment, sharing expertise and encouraging knowledge exchange within the team.

6. Quality Assurance & Compliance:

- Ensure that all assessments, reports, and recommendations meet the required standards of accuracy, clarity, and compliance with planning policies.
- Contribute to the development of internal processes to improve efficiency and quality within the development management service.

7. Customer Service & Issue Resolution:

- Handle escalated queries and complaints regarding planning applications, working with the Development Management Manager to provide clear, professional resolutions.
- Ensure excellent customer service by providing clear and timely responses to applicants, stakeholders, and the public.
- Identify and implement strategies for enhancing customer service within development management, ensuring effective communication and responsiveness. Please note: Annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process.

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Key Facts and Figures of the Post

- **Budget Responsibilities:** None.
- **Staff Management Responsibilities:** No line management. Advisory on caseload and complex cases.
- **Other:** None.

Essential Criteria

Qualifications:

- Chartered membership of a recognised planning body (e.g., Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)).
- Degree in Town Planning, Urban Planning, or a related field.

Knowledge:

- Strong understanding of UK planning legislation, national and local planning policies, and development management processes.
- Advanced knowledge of planning processes, environmental assessment requirements, and policy interpretation.
- Competent in using planning management software, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and other relevant IT systems.

Experience:

- Significant experience in development management or a related planning role, with significant experience in handling complex applications.

Expertise:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present complex information clearly to varied audiences, including planning committees and the public.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to handle contentious or complex applications effectively.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job Working Circumstances

- **Emotional Demands:** Minimum exposure.
- **Physical Demands:** The post holder may be required to lift and carry equipment and walk across uneven ground.
- **Working Conditions:** Able to undertake site visits which can predominantly be outside which may include hazardous and difficult environments including working at height. Able to work in all adverse weather conditions.

Other Factors:

- Ability to travel throughout Westmorland & Furness and occasionally beyond.
- To model and display the corporate standards of behaviour.