



JOB DESCRIPTION

This form summarises the purpose of the job and lists its key tasks. It may be varied from time to time at the discretion of the Authority, in consultation with the postholder.

Job title	Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)
Reports to	Development Management Service Manager
Team	Development Management
Grade	Grade 9 - 10
Last updated	5 July 2022

Job Summary

- The purpose of the role, in combination with the rest of the DM planning officer team, is to provide a Development Management Service that is efficient, effective, meets and exceeds performance targets and provides high quality output. A service is delivered which is responsive to customer needs and works in a way that is proactive and seeks to improve, wherever there are opportunities to do so.
- This is a key opportunity to play a leading role in helping to shape and deliver transformation Growth in the Gilston Area which forms part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. In the Gilston Area Team, Principal Planning Officers are one of the more senior roles. Post holders are responsible for more complex work, for proactively managing work, to actively add value to development schemes, to exemplify place making and for seeking to identify solutions to problems that may arise during the delivery of the service. Principal Planning Officers play a key role, as part of the team, in supporting the delivery of the Gilston Area, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and wider District.

Key Tasks

Operational Responsibilities

- Principal Planning Officers are responsible for a case load of complex, generally major planning, and related applications, including pre-application submissions for the Gilston Area. Principal Planning Officer post holders work together as a team, deputising for team leaders and service managers and ensuring the work of other Principal Planning Officer post holders at this level is covered during

absences.

- Principal Planning Officers proactively manage their case load, project managing and being responsible for all stages from initial assessment, through to committee reporting, legal agreements, conditions, and appeals. Principal Officers will be expected to present their case work to decision making committees and in other public fora. They will identify the resources required to deliver their caseload and will work proactively to identify solutions to issues that arise.
- Principal Planning Officers are to proactively keep abreast of case law, national and local policies and community needs to ensure that the planning process can deliver the appropriate outputs and outcomes.
- Principal Planning Officers will, applying their professional judgement, seek to ensure that development of the highest quality is secured, meeting policy and corporate objectives, delivering in accordance with corporate aspirations, place shaping and creating quality new places. Principal Planning Officers take a proactive approach to identifying and resolving problems that arise in the course of the work. The process includes public consultation on the proposals, the identification of all relevant issues and the consideration, negotiation, assessment and resolution of issues and the preparation of a recommendation for the decision to be made.
- Principal Planning Officers play an important role in the delivery of the Gilstone Area, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and the wider District. This involves Principal Planning Officers leading the DM input regarding the Gilston Area or they may support other members of the team who are acting as a lead. In either case they are expected to support, guide, and ensure that emerging development proposals meet the East Herts Master Planning requirements and are aligned to corporate and planning policy objectives.
- Principal Planning Officers will generally deal with appeals that are to be determined through the hearing and public inquiry processes but can be assigned to cases delivered through all routes.
- Principal Planning Officers act as a decision-making officer with other staff in the team as appropriate, determining applications dealt with by more junior officer colleagues, in accordance with the scheme of delegation. Post holders will receive support and training to enable them to progress to the position where they are able to solely undertake delegated decision making for the more complex application types. They will assist managers to ensure that all planning and related applications are delivered to a high standard within agreed performance management indicators.
- Principal Planning Officers are responsible for ensuring proactive delivery of high quality outcomes, looking to achieve improvement in planning and development

schemes where appropriate and the delivery of cases in accordance with established performance management indicators. They are required to undertake all tasks appropriate to the senior level of the role to ensure the delivery of the service. There will be opportunities to, and Officers may request or be required, to input into project work outside of the delivery of the development management service, either through service improvement projects or into corporate project work.

- Principal Planning Officers will be expected to display and demonstrate the council's values and behaviours, looking to support, assist and improve the delivery of the service to customers.
- Whilst assigned to the development management service, Principal Planning Officers can request and may be required to input into, support and deliver the work of the planning policy service.
- Principal Planning Officers will be expected to make any needed changes to overcome any factor that puts a disabled employee or applicant at a disadvantage.

Management / Supervisory / Team Working Responsibilities

- Principal Planning Officers will deputise for team leaders in their absence. They are expected to work as a team supporting the delivery of the major planning application work and covering the work of their Principal Planning Officer colleagues in the team during absences.
- Principal Planning Officers are expected to provide guidance, training, support, provide mentoring and assist with problem solving for Planning and Assistant Planning Officers.
- Principal Planning Officers will be responsible for the procurement and management of the output of the work of external consultants including expert advice, in accordance with the Councils procedures.

Communication & Contacts

- Principal Planning Officers come into contact with a wide range of customers. They are expected to display and demonstrate the values and behaviours of the Council in all contacts, to ensure the delivery of a high quality and respected service. Contacts should be dealt with proactively, seeking to maximise the benefits that can be delivered by the service in co-operation with customers.
- Contacts will include applicants, third parties affected by development, community, residents and special interest groups, statutory and non-statutory bodies, MPs, other public service providers including HCC, council members including Executive Members, other elected representatives, developer interests, service and

infrastructure delivery providers, internal customers including colleagues throughout the council, service managers, directors, other senior managers, chief executive as well as significant developers.

- Principal Planning Officers are expected to be able to understand and articulate planning issues to their audience. They will deliver planning information in a positive and proactive way ensuring that the benefits of the service are understood. All Principal Planning Officers must take responsibility for proactively dealing with all communications in relation to their case and other workload and assisting colleagues with their contacts where appropriate and guiding junior members of staff.
- Principal Planning Officers are expected to operate as a team, supporting each other to deliver an effective service to customers. Principal Planning Officers will be expected to ensure that they cover the workload of colleagues at that level during absences and maintain effective communication between them.
- Principal Planning Officers will be expected to engage fully and proactively with the Council's employment development and learning and management programmes, including the Performance Development Review (PDR) process or any future replacement of it. They are expected to take part in regular meetings with the Service Manager (DM) to ensure that performance and service delivery standards are established, understood and met.

Financial / Budgetary Responsibilities

None

Other

- Principal Planning Officers work to ensure the delivery of an effective, high quality and respected service to customers. They are responsible for ensuring continuous self- improvement and to support, assist and deliver improvements to the quality and delivery of the service.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

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We want the postholder to be able to demonstrate the following competencies to a high level and want to use these to the full in their work. This is more important than having a great deal of direct experience of the job content, and we will be looking for evidence of all the following key competencies during the selection process, if you are shortlisted.

- Personal effectiveness
- Proactive
- Managing relationships
- Communication
- Customer focus
- Commercial focus*

Key Criteria

Qualifications and Experience

- A degree in Town and Country Planning and/or post graduate qualification in Town and Country Planning is essential
- Membership of the RTPI is desirable.

Specialist Knowledge and Job Requirements

- Post holders should be able to demonstrate experience of dealing with work at a senior level with minimal supervision.
- *Separate criteria have been identified which will determine progression from Grade 9 to Grade 10 (see below).*

- Full knowledge and understanding of the legal and policy context within which DM decisions are made and demonstrate an understanding of how weight is applied to conflicting policy objectives.
- Significant experience of dealing with planning issues, reaching sound decisions and articulating planning issues in public including at committees and public meetings.
- Experience and understanding of the planning legal obligation process and its context and the ability to apply it correctly and consistently.
- Ability to use and manipulate complex information and databases to retrieve relevant information

Other

- Experience of workload management and project management.
- Demonstrate experience of delivering work to agreed timelines, problem solving and assisting colleagues to meet the same objectives.
- Previous experience of guiding, mentoring, and supporting junior colleagues.
- An ability to communicate with a range of audiences and through a range of mediums.
- Ability to demonstrate experience of managing their communications and engaging proactively with customers and colleagues.
- An understanding of and experience with delivering outcomes in accordance with performance management and quality indicators
- Able to demonstrate the ability to assimilate, understand and articulate issues rapidly and in a range of situations to a range of audiences.
- Demonstrate efficient, effective and proactive communication skills at all levels and across all media
- Display a positive and proactive approach to all customers and colleagues
- Principal Planning Officers are expected to visit and inspect land and development sites and other locations both within and beyond the district. They should be able to demonstrate that they can undertake this element of the role in an efficient and effective manner. This will almost always require that the post holder is the holder of a current valid driving license and has access to a motor vehicle when necessary and the ability to travel across the District, occasionally at short notice

- The council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its residents specifically children and vulnerable adults. The council expects all its staff to have an understanding of Safeguarding and to share this commitment