



Lead Planning Officer (Development Management)

JOB PROFILE

Incorporates

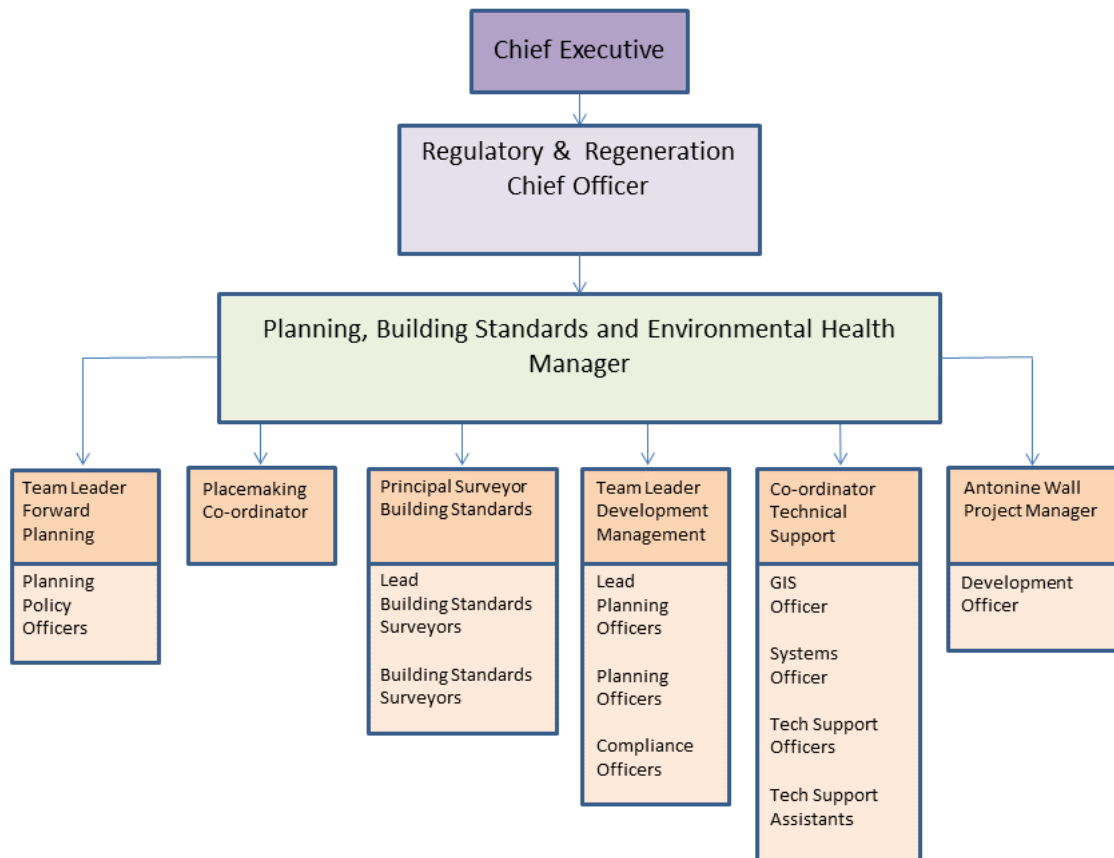
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SECTION 1: POST DESCRIPTOR

1. JOB DETAILS	
Job Title: Lead Planning Officer (Development Management)	
Service Area: Regulatory and Regeneration	Section: Development Management
Reports to: Team Leader (Development Management)	Grade: 8
Position Number: HE2863	Gauge Reference:
2. JOB PURPOSE <p>To deliver an effective professional development management service to all customers, including provision of high quality planning advice and recommendations to managers and committees, encouraging and facilitating new development of a high quality standard, the provision of excellent customer care, and the achievement of performance targets.</p> <p>Lead Planning Officers' caseload will normally include a predominance of major or more significant cases.</p> <p>To contribute to the delivery of an effective integrated Regulatory and Regeneration Service.</p>	
3. DIMENSIONS and SCOPE OF JOB (including budgetary and staffing responsibilities) <p>Budget: The post holder has no direct budgetary responsibility, but does carry out interpretation of planning application fee regulations in order to ensure that the correct fee is received, and is also responsible for negotiating planning gain/developer contributions involving significant sums of money or work in kind of significant value.</p> <p>Staffing Direct: The post holder has no direct staffing responsibilities.</p> <p>Staffing Indirect: The post holder has indirect staffing responsibilities for coaching, mentoring and supporting Planning Officers and the Planning Compliance Officer. In particular, the post holder will assist the Team Leader by overseeing the work of the Planning Officers and the Planning Compliance Officer.</p>	

4. ORGANISATIONAL CHART

(shows levels directly above and includes grades of posts)



5. ROLE OF SECTION

The Planning and Building Standards service is part of Regulatory and Regeneration Services, and has approximately 26 staff.

The Development Management Team has 6 of these staff. Technical and administrative support for the Development Management team is provided by a centralised support team.

The Development Management Section is responsible for:

- Fulfilling the Council's statutory obligations in respect of the regulatory requirements of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and related legislation.
- Providing professional assessment of applications for planning permission and related consents, including the provision of advice and recommendations to the Planning Committee, and determination of applications under delegated powers.
- Providing information and advice on the development management process to all customers, including developers, members of the public, elected members and other

Council services.

- Monitoring development to ensure compliance with planning regulations and conditions, and exercising enforcement powers when appropriate.
- Facilitating and encouraging high quality development which contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of West Dunbartonshire.
- Protecting the natural and built environment of West Dunbartonshire from inappropriate forms of development, and securing improvements to proposed development in order to rectify or mitigate against any negative impacts.
- Assisting in the delivery of Council policies, including development plan objectives Council key outcomes.
- Working together with the other teams within Planning and Building Standards, as well as other Council teams and external partners, in order to deliver an integrated service and achieve shared goals.
- Delivering an efficient and effective development management service, including compliance with statutory and local performance targets.

6. KEY ACTIVITIES, RESPONSIBILITIES and OUTCOMES

1. Assist in the delivery of the Development Management service and in the achievement of the Council's corporate and service objectives.
2. Deal with applications for planning permission and related consents quickly and effectively, with particular responsibility for applications of scale and/or importance in terms of the impact on the area and ensuring high quality development is achieved.
3. Provide high quality reports for the Planning Committee, Planning & Building Standards Manager or the Team Leader as appropriate, having regard to Council policies, legislation and all relevant material considerations.
4. Be pro-active in encouraging developers to complete planned developments on time and to consider other development opportunities in line with Council policies and priorities, and undertake post application liaison with developers to ensure that development is progressing and provide any necessary aftercare.
5. Managing time and using initiative to ensure that workload is dealt with in accordance with statutory and local performance requirement, whilst maintaining a high standard of customer care at all times.
6. Assist the Team Leader when required in overseeing the work of Planning Officers in respect of applications of a minor nature, including allocation of workload, provision of guidance and the determination of certain classes of minor application under delegated powers.
7. Provide advice, information and assistance to developers, members of the wider public, other Council services and other customers in relation to development projects, in particular projects of a larger scale.

8. Co-ordinate and undertake early pre-application meetings with developers and other stakeholders in order to ensure that quality development is achieved and that applications can be dealt with speedily, including the negotiation of processing agreements.
9. Work in partnership with the Building Standards Team to deliver an integrated service to developers, and with other Council services, external agencies and other stakeholders in order to achieve shared objectives.
10. Negotiate with developers and other parties in order to gain improvements to proposed development, engaging with the Place and Design Panel, and the provision of appropriate developer contributions/planning gain, and prepare conditions and legal agreements to secure these.
11. Prepare the Council's case in respect of planning appeals and represent the Council as an expert witness at appeal hearings, public local enquiries, Local Review Bodies and other formal legal proceedings, as required.
12. Monitor the progress of development to ensure compliance with conditions and legal agreements. Investigate potential breaches of planning control and prepare/serve enforcement notices and related documents and give advice to the Planning Compliance Officer as required.
13. Contribute to continually improving service delivery and the performance of the Development Management service.
14. Deputise for the Team Leader in his/her absence in order to ensure continuity of service.
15. Participate in internal and external working groups as required.
16. Undertake continuous individual development engaging in Council development programmes and be responsible for their own CPD in order to contribute to the improvement of the service and to remain familiar with current legislative requirements and good practice advice.
17. Contribute to service policies and strategic plans, in particular contribute to the development of the Service Plan for Planning and Building Standards and the annual Planning Performance Framework.
18. Explore opportunities for additional external income to augment current budgets and recommend those which could be taken forward for implementation.

7. PROBLEM SOLVING

The post holder is required to manage and resolve problems which arise in relation to their own caseload and their geographic area. These problems may be diverse in nature, and may arise from the complex interaction of legal, technical, environmental, economic, social or political considerations. It is necessary for the post holder to balance conflicting considerations and determine how much weight to give to each. The post holder is required to identify design solutions to address weaknesses in development proposals, and to propose these to applicants and engage with the Place and Design Panel, when appropriate

This calls for high levels of knowledge and judgement gained from considerable experience of all aspects of development management, including an awareness of other related disciplines.

Based on sound analysis of complex problems and issues, the post holder will undertake research and provide reports and options to enable the Team Leader and the Planning and Building Standards Manager to make recommendations to committees and the Senior Leadership Group.

8. PLANNING

The post holder works closely with the Team Leader in the planning and delivery of the Development Management service, including the management of major application processes in order to deliver the agreed outcomes.

The post holder will contribute to the development of the Planning & Building Standards Service plan and Planning Performance Framework and will take the lead in a number of medium to long term projects.

9. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

The post holder reports to the Team Leader (Development Management), with whom annual objectives are jointly agreed as part of the personal development planning process. There is a broad framework of delegated authorities to develop and progress initiatives autonomously.

Work is largely driven by the need to deliver a responsive development management service for applicants, objectors and other stakeholders. However, in dealing with caseload, the post holder is required to use subjective judgement to identify issues requiring amendment or additional investigation, and opportunities for improvement requiring exploration. Work can also be generated through the identification of external drivers, such as changes to national planning regulations, policies and good practice advice as well as internal drivers such as changes to Council policy, aims and objectives.

Throughout the year there are regular meetings with the Team Leader to discuss progress against timescales and key deliverables, and to ensure ongoing communication on current issues and workload.

10. COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Internal communications:

The post holder will have daily contact with the Manager, Team Leaders and other employees within the Planning and Building Standards Section, discussing cases, service improvements, and providing support and advice to colleagues. They will also have frequent contact with managers and employees from other services throughout the Council in relation to consultations on planning applications and the provision of planning advice to those services.

The post holder will prepare reports for the Planning Committee. They will have regular contact with elected members in relation to enquiries from members about constituency matters, briefing members on contentious planning issues within their wards, and participation in joint working groups.

External communications:

The post holder will have daily contact with members of the public, including applicants, agents, objectors, community groups and other interested parties, providing advice on the planning process, seeking changes to applications and explaining decisions. Communication is with a broad range of individuals, ranging from professionals with expertise in their field to persons wholly unfamiliar with the planning process.

The post holder also has regular contact with external agencies, such as SEPA, SNH, Historic Environment Scotland etc. in relation to consultations on caseloads. They may also attend external working groups with employees of neighbouring planning authorities or other external agencies.

The post holder is required to represent the planning authority as an expert witness in formal legal proceedings such as public local enquiries when required.

11. DECISION MAKING

The post holder operates within a framework of national planning legislation/regulations and Council policies/procedures. Within the post remit, however, the post holder is expected to work autonomously and to use initiative in seeking solutions and resolutions to a range of situations which may be without precedent.

Advice and guidance may be sought from the Team Leader when required, but within the framework of agreed objectives the post holder is expected to make decisions to progress the work as appropriate. The post holder is responsible for deciding how to deal with situations calling for fine subjective judgement in the assessment of applications, and is responsible for determining certain applications upon their own authority.

12. MOST CHALLENGING PART OF THE JOB

The post holder will require substantial breadth and depth of knowledge of Planning legislation, regulation and policy, as well as an awareness of related disciplines. They must have the ability to interpret policies and good practice advice as it relates to the individual circumstances of development sites, for example assessing the design quality of a development using fine subjective judgement.

The post holder is required to identify and balance complex and conflicting issues, for example deciding whether to allow a development which will provide employment but which may be detrimental to a wildlife habitat.

The post holder requires high level communication skills and credibility, so that they may negotiate with developers and influence them to modify their proposals in ways that they may be reluctant to do. They must communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including professionals who are expert in their own fields, and in doing so they must be able to justify decisions which they have made.

The post holder is required to work within a high pressure environment, dealing with development proposals of a significant nature within specified timescales. The post often involves dealing with conflict and aggrieved persons, for example those who are upset with a planning decision.

13. GENERAL

The duties and responsibilities contained within the job profile are neither exclusive nor exhaustive as the post holder may be required to undertake other reasonably determined duties commensurate with the level and grade of the post without changing the general character and nature of the post. The job profile may be subject to revision depending on future needs of the post and the organisation, following appropriate consultation.

Disclosure: Not required for this post

Politically Restricted Post: This post is not politically restricted.

14. WDC TRAINING

West Dunbartonshire Council – Operates [Skills Passports](#) for all employees, which details the training available, including any mandatory courses and timescales for these to be completed. Skills passports are available via the Council's Intranet [Organisational Development & Change](#)

Skills Passport A – New Entrant Employee Passport

Includes WDC Induction; Equality & Diversity; Data Protection (GDPR) & Security Awareness and relevant i-learn modules;

Policy Reading: Code Of Conduct; ICT Information Security Policy and Acceptable Use Policy

Skills Passport B – WDC Employee Passport

Includes relevant i-learn modules

15.ROLE SPECIFIC TRAINING

No mandatory training required.

Post Descriptor Prepared by: PBSEH Service Manager **Date:** September 2021

SECTION 2: PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential	Desirable
Qualifications/Professional Membership	
Educated to degree level or equivalent with a relevant Town Planning qualification (e.g. BA, MSc, BSc)	Qualification in a specialism or related discipline such as urban design
Chartered Town Planner – a full member of the Royal Town Planning Institute	
Training	
Evidence of Continuing Professional Development	
Experience	
Considerable experience as a practicing Town Planner	Experience of working in a related discipline
Experience of dealing with a varied development management caseload, including applications of scale/importance	
Experience of dealing with complex technical issues (e.g. environmental/retail statements).	
Experience of working with and across a wide range of agencies.	
Experience of participation in appeal hearings, committees and/or public local enquiries.	
Experience of working effectively within a political environment.	
Knowledge and Skill	
Strong interpersonal skills and ability to challenge, support, influence and engage developers, consultees and the wider public	Full driving license and use of own vehicle
Excellent written and oral communication skills, including ability to prepare reports on complex issues and the confidence to present them.	
Sound appreciation of urban design principles, including ability to assess the aesthetic/environmental merits of development proposals.	
Sound knowledge and understanding of current/changing legislation, policies and good practice advice.	
Strong analytical skills which can translate strategic priorities through the delivery of operational services	
Broad range of planning knowledge, including an appreciation of related professions/disciplines (e.g. road engineering, environmental health, development economics etc.)	
Knowledge of IT Systems	
Disposition	
High level of credibility in order to influence developers and justify decisions	

Pragmatism, a 'can do' attitude and a high achievement drive.	
Ability to work on own initiative whilst meeting deadlines and balancing conflicting priorities.	
Ability to provide positive guidance and support for less experienced staff.	
Enthusiastic and self motivated	
Approachable and customer focused	
Commitment to participate in work requirements outwith standard working hours and/or outwith the boundary of the authority	