

Role profile

Job Title:	Principal Planning Officer	Grade:	Grade 13 -15
Department:	Planning, Design and Sustainability	Post no.:	
Directorate:	Economy and Sustainability	Location:	Perceval House

Role reports to:	Development Management Manager
Direct reports:	Planning Officers, internal and external consultants on a project management basis
Indirect reports:	As above.

Job description

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Purpose of role

To lead and manage a caseload of complex, major and high-profile development proposals across the borough through the full planning lifecycle – from pre-application to appeal – in accordance with relevant planning policy, guidance, law and council objectives.

To contribute to the multi-million pound income for the authority and represent the Council by preparing and presenting expert and professional evidence.

You will act a senior member of the Development Management (DM) team, ensuring robust decision-making, high -quality service delivery, and the promotion of high-quality design, sustainable, inclusive development aligned with Ealing's corporate vision and the Local Plan.

You will be responsible for securing high standards of service and making a full contribution to the achievement of relevant performance targets and corporate outcomes.

To lead and manage complex S106 agreement negotiations including Major applications and Planning Performance Agreements, involving establishing project teams, matrix working and managing the risk to the council.

This is a career grade post (Grades 13-15) with duties increasing in scope, complexity, autonomy, and leadership expectations across the grades.

Key Accountabilities (All Grades)

- Lead on major, strategic, and complex planning applications, managing performance against statutory and local deadlines, and providing sound, policy-led recommendations.
- Deliver high-quality pre-application advice in accordance with adopted protocols and promote the development team approach. And provide professional advice to elected member and senior officers.
- Negotiate complex Section 106 agreements to secure infrastructure, affordable housing, and other planning gain. involving establishing project teams, matrix working and managing the risk to the council.
- Give advice and assistance to the public and other customers as and when necessary and represent the Planning Service at public meetings and site visits to discuss development proposals.
- Represent the Council as expert witness at appeals (hearings, inquiries) and in court proceedings, ensuring robust defence of decisions.
- Present complex proposals and report to Planning Committee, advising councillors clearly and concisely on legal, technical and policy matters.
- Provide project management oversight of Planning Performance Agreement (PPAs), coordinating internal and external stakeholders.
- Lead effective community and stakeholder engagement, including public meetings and statutory consultation processes.
- Maintain accurate case records, file notes and data to comply with transparency, legal and audit requirements.
- To support the Development Management Manager and Development Management Team Leader in the day-to-day management of the workload, decision-making and supervision of indirect reports.
- To exercise the Council's powers under the Town and Country Planning Acts and associated legislation in accordance with the agreed scheme of delegation, making decisions on behalf of the Council
- Support junior officers through coaching, mentoring and informal supervision.
- Monitor and respond to customers, complaints, FOIs and Member Enquiries within corporate standards.
- Uphold and promote Ealing's values and commitments to equality, sustainability and service excellence.
- Contribute to Central Government consultations on proposed changes in legislation, regulation and guidance.
- Ensure all management processes comply with the Council's procedures including but not limited to Health & Safety, Diversity and Equality policies, financial regulations and Code of Conduct.

Additional Responsibilities by Grade

Grade 13 (Entry Level)

- Manage a complex caseload with minimal supervision.
- Provide advice to residents and applicants; escalate sensitive issues appropriately.

- Participate in planning policy development and provide technical input on planning guidance.
- Attend Planning Committee as presenting officer for allocated cases.
- Demonstrate progression toward leadership and mentoring responsibilities.

Grade 14 (Experienced Principal Officer)

- Independently lead on the most complex major application and negotiations, including PPAs.
- Proven experience of working independently and across teams demonstrating successful outcomes
- Extensive experience of coaching and supporting and guidance to the learning and development of staff in the Development Management Team and contributions to team training initiatives.
- Deputise for the DM Team Leader on a rotational or project basis.
- Initiate and lead cross-departmental collaboration on significant projects.
- Contribute to shaping team procedures, systems and service innovation.
- Regularly lead on programme management of area regeneration or key sites.

Grade 15 (Strategic Leadership Level)

- Act as the authoritative expert on complex applications and borough-wide planning issues.
- Demonstratable skills of tact, persuasion and advocacy skills in daily work when dealing with applicants, residents and businesses of the borough, managers and employees.
- Advise senior managers, Members and external bodies, including GLA, OPDC, Historic England.
- Manage politically sensitive and contentious proposals, finding solutions under high scrutiny.
- Initiate and deliver continuous improvement initiatives and service reviews.
- Lead multi-disciplinary project teams for major sites, aligning development with strategic planning and regeneration goals.
- Actively contribute to regional policy responses and consultation, shaping London-wide planning.

Career Grade Progression

Progression between Grades 13-15 will be assessed annually via the Council's performance and capability review process, subject to:

- Length and breadth of relevant experience
- Evidence of responsibilities taken
- Demonstrated competencies aligned with next grade
- Managerial sign-off and evidence of continued professional development

Working Conditions

- Occasional evening/weekend work to support engagement in panels, committees and training
- Site visits required.
- Hybrid working policy applies; attendance in the office and on-site based on operational need.

Key performance indicators

- Successful achievement of service plan and targets for development management services.
- Customer satisfaction and feedback
- Income generation
- Council values and behaviours

Key relationships (internal and external)

- Council Service departments.
- Elected Members – in particular, the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee
- GLA, TfL, Historic England, Government
- Developers, Landowners of Planning Applications.
- Local interest groups, community groups and residents.
- Local Business
- West London Alliance (WLA) and neighbouring boroughs.
- OPDC

Authority level

- Responsible lead on Development Management matters for the council.
- Authority to decide planning matters that meet the criteria for delegated decisions.
- Actively manage income opportunities with a view to effective resourcing of key activities
- Will indirectly officers and deputise for the Development Management Team Leader.
- To assist in the management of policy and project compliance with corporate and Council procedures, and best practice information and guidance.

Person specification

Essential knowledge, skills and abilities

1. In-depth knowledge and expertise of application of town and country planning legislation and national, regional and local policy and practices relevant to service area.
2. Demonstrable experience managing complex planning proposals and negotiating outcomes
3. Knowledge and understanding of the broad issues around regeneration and development and the role of town planning in the delivery of place making.
4. Experience of project management, leading and managing large scale complex projects.
5. Able to lead, manage and motivate, mentor and coach staff
6. Knowledge and experience of the application of the democratic process and the ability to create effective working relationships with councillors, to drive and prioritise service delivery and improvements.
7. Proven communication skills – both verbal and written - to present and work with a diverse range of internal and external audiences using a wide variety of media and approaches.
8. Strong analytical, research and numeracy skills.
9. High level of negotiation and influencing skills particularly with developers, strategic authorities and major stakeholders.
10. Sound and proven knowledge of the scope and content of current legislation and policy (at national, regional, and local levels) and spotting trends which affect, and influence Planning Legislation.
11. Excellent understanding of the public and private sectors, commercially aware and alive to external funding opportunities and the process of securing and spending that funding.
12. Excellent resource planning and income generation.
13. Sound knowledge of the issues facing local government and those relevant to service/functional responsibilities, together with the legal, financial, and political context of public sector activity.

Essential qualification(s) and experience

1. Degree level or equivalent qualification in town planning relevant to the Development Management Service.

2. Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) or eligible for membership.
3. Evidence of continuous professional development.
4. Significant experience at a senior level in Development Management in a public sector context.
5. A successful track record at senior level in a large service-oriented organisation, influencing multiple teams to deliver service improvement, including links with elected members, particularly working in a political environment.
6. Demonstrable experience of working on planning matters including complex planning applications and major developments,
7. Experience of management and supervision of people.
8. Significant experience of negotiating with developers on complex planning matters and projects.
9. Experience of working with a range of stakeholders at national, regional and local levels and from the public, private and voluntary sector to develop agreed objectives and consensus where appropriate and to handle conflict and differing views where these arise.

Values & Behaviours

Improving Lives for Residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is passionate about making Ealing a better place. Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view. Understands what people want and need. Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does what they say they'll do on time. Is open and honest. Treats all people fairly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships. Offers to share knowledge and ideas. Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback. Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost. Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance. Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes. Learns from mistakes and failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making. Makes things happen. Acts on feedback to improve performance. Works to high standards.