

Lancaster City Council - Job Description & Person Specification

Job Title:	Planning Officer (Housing and Communities)	Grade:	GG59	Job Code:	LCC373
Service/Team:	Planning and Climate Change – Planning and Housing Strategy	Role Type:	Hybrid	Reports to:	Principal Housing Strategy Officer
Line manages:	Not Applicable				

Job Overview

Overview

To work as part of the Planning and Housing Policy Team, to support and liaise with the Principal Housing Strategy Officer, providing professional planning input to help the Council meet the development needs of the community, particularly in terms of housing and other community services, including health and education.

Direct Responsibilities

Corporate

- Contribute, where required, to the development of the Council's overall strategic direction, policies and objectives.
- Provide professional advice, information and support in relation to planning policy and housing strategy matters to Councillors, Senior Managers and other colleagues, as required.
- Work with the Service Manager – Planning and Housing Strategy in respect of the development and review of strategies, policies and delivery to meet the Council's strategic objectives and statutory obligations.
- Contribute to the Council's customer service ethos and be part of a strong working culture, with sound values and positive behaviour.
- Contribute to the development of strong performance management across the Council to help drive effective service delivery.
- Work across council services to ensure an integrated approach to service planning and delivery, contributing to cross service projects, as required.

Specific

- Preparing statutory planning and housing policies and supplementary planning guidance to ensure that housing can meet the needs of all components of the community, particularly in terms of affordable housing, and also other community services, including the spatial aspects of health and education provision, and, providing professional advice on the assessment of the viability of development proposals
- Developing and maintaining competence in the appraisal of development viability.
- Supporting all aspects of the preparation of planning and housing policy documents including Local Plan documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, Area Actions Plans and policy practice and guidance notes, including giving professional evidence at independent Examination.
- Working with the Principal Housing Strategy Officer to address the community's housing needs through developing solutions to achieving affordable housing and solutions to meeting other identified housing needs of all the groups of which the community is comprised.

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- Working in liaison with Development Management Officers, negotiating appropriate complements of affordable housing or other solutions to meeting identified housing needs through opportunities presented by development proposals and supporting Development Management Officers through all stages of the planning proposal assessment process including participation potentially including giving professional evidence at appeals and inquiries.
- Contributing to the commissioning and management of district-wide and local housing needs studies, housing market assessments, viability appraisals and similar studies.
- Analysing planning and housing policy related internal and external documents, for example, national guidance and preparing responses to consultations.
- Preparing planning policy comments for planning applications to enable informed decisions to be made particularly with regards to securing housing to meet identified needs.
- Supporting communities in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- Contributing to the effective maintenance of a consultee and liaison groups which will assist with the development or implementation of planning and housing policy.
- Developing and maintaining effective working relationships with other professionals within the Planning and Climate Change Service, other council services and other relevant external bodies to enable reciprocal influence on planning and housing policy development.
- Preparing reports and attending policy development groups, Cabinet, scrutiny and overview groups or other elected member and working groups in order to provide advocacy and explanation of planning and housing policy development on meeting the communities housing and other needs.
- Monitoring and maintaining records on brownfield sites and on the self-build and custom build register.

Primary Measurable Objectives

1. Supporting the development of housing that best addresses community needs through the development of and advocacy of planning policy that response to evidence on the housing needs of the district's communities.
2. Acting as the lead planning policy officer on development viability and which maximises affordable housing delivery, and approaches to securing development contributions, potentially via tariff based development charging mechanisms.
3. Ensuring that the evidence base on housing needs and viability is maintained by acting as client officer in the procurement of specialist external consultants.
4. Developing and maintaining awareness of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs and addressing these through appropriate policy mechanisms.
5. Producing and maintaining high quality datasets, evidence and statistics which will underpin and correlate with the housing and planning policy framework.

Staff Management Responsibilities

Whilst there are no direct line management responsibilities the post-holder is required to set and oversee the completion of tasks for colleagues who support the professional planning function, including setting deadlines and establishing specifications. The post-holder is also required to use their experience to positively support, and provide advice to new colleagues and mentor junior colleagues whether they are in permanent or temporary posts or placements.

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Knowledge & Educational Requirements

Specialised knowledge:

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Chartered Membership, or demonstrable equivalent experience to be eligible to securing Chartered Membership status. RTPI Chartered Membership must be achieved within the probationary period and maintained on an ongoing basis (paid for by the employee).

Alternatively, for post-holders with a housing qualification; Chartered Membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing (MCIH) or demonstrable equivalent experience to be eligible to securing Chartered Membership status. MCIH Chartered Membership must be achieved within the probationary period and maintained on an ongoing basis (paid for by the employee).

Degree level (or equivalent qualifications) in town planning or housing management.

Functional knowledge:

Professional competence in the principles and practical application of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and Planning Legislation, including particularly; the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011, the Planning Act 2008, and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

Thorough understanding of planning concepts and their application at planning professional competency level; including; determining development requirements, assessing potential development sites, housing supply and delivery of solutions for identified housing need, residential development planning, development constraints and development viability.

The post-holder must provide the Council with assured, consistent objective, independent professional advice on planning matters and must be prepared to represent the Council at local plan consultations, examinations and planning enquiries.

The confidence and assuredness needed to negotiate to reach pragmatic implementable solutions to meet identified housing needs.

Ability to work accurately with both numeric and financial data.

Practical knowledge gained through experience of the roles of public and private agencies in delivering affordable housing and other meeting other identified housing needs.

As a Chartered Professional the post holder is expected to operate at level of competence appropriate to this post. Key competencies for this post are;

- A positive attitude to achieving effective team working.
- The ability to communicate effectively and influence the widest range of professional and non-professional audiences.
- Intellectual capacity: the development of local planning policy is unique to each local planning authority area. Planning policy is prepared to take account of highly dynamic and diverse evidence on; development requirements, economic opportunity, development constraints and development viability hence, it is essential that the post-holder has the intellectual capacity to analyse and synthesise interacting complex non-linear information and subsequently use their own judgment to prepare policy guidance on matters which have political sensitivity. The ability to apply initiative, be alert to the motivation of participants, and have the personal robustness needed to respond to challenge.
- Reflecting the complexity and timeframe over which local plans are prepared the post holder must have an ability to retain enduring motivation.

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- The capability to project plan in shifting dynamic circumstances, including changes in political direction and revisions in national guidance and legislation.

Other Requirements

The hours of work are 37 hours per week, generally working in normal office hours Monday to Friday. There is a requirement to attend and support meetings and consultation events on week day evenings, and, only very occasionally, on Saturdays.

The post-holder must have a valid UK driving licence and be prepared to and capable of attending site visits throughout the district which may include site visits in remote and isolated locations.

Additional information

General Statement

The above duties and responsibilities do not include or define all tasks that may be required of you. Duties and responsibilities may vary without changing the general character or grade of the role.

As a normal part of your job, you are expected to routinely undertake corporate activities on behalf of your Directorate, appropriate to grade of the role.

Learning and Development

You are expected to undertake any training and development appropriate to the current and future needs of the post.

Health & Safety at Work

All members of staff are responsible for fulfilling their health and safety roles and responsibilities, as outlined in the Job Description above. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the Council's health and safety policy, procedures, work instructions and relevant risk or other health and safety assessments pertinent to their work tasks, and that they carry out their work tasks in accordance with the significant findings of such.

Equal Opportunities

Lancaster City Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and has equal opportunities policies with which you are expected to comply at all times. The City Council condemns all forms of harassment and is actively seeking to promote a workplace where employees are treated with dignity, respect and without bias.

Community Safety

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act requires local authorities to consider the community safety implications of all their activities. Officers of Lancaster City Council should have an awareness of community safety and consider any community safety implications within their own area of responsibility.

Safeguarding

Lancaster City Council delivers a range of services and activities that impact on the lives of children both directly and indirectly. Safeguarding children, ensuring their welfare, safety and health is of paramount importance. We are committed to providing safe and supportive services that will give children the opportunities to achieve their full potential.

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Person Specification			
Knowledge & Educational Requirements	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria	Assessed by: App Form, Interview, Certificate, Test, Other...
Specialised Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree or Post Graduate Diploma in Town Planning/ Town and Country Planning/ Town and Regional Planning. • Chartered Membership of the Royal Town Planning Association (RTPI) or demonstrable equivalent experience to be eligible to securing Chartered Membership status. <p>Alternatively: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chartered Membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing (MCIH) or demonstrable equivalent experience to be eligible to securing Chartered Membership status. 	None	<p>App Form, Interview, Certificate</p> <p><i>Note: Applicants who do not have Chartered Membership of the RTPI or the CIH at the time of appointment but who can evidence in writing that they are committed to securing Chartered Membership within six months of appointment may be appointed on the basis that they secure Chartered Membership within their probation period.</i></p>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional competence in the principles and practical application of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and Planning Legislation, including particularly; the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011, the Planning Act 2008, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025. • Thorough understanding of planning concepts and their application at the fully qualified planning professional competency level; including; determining development requirements, assessing potential development sites, housing supply and delivery of solutions for identified housing need, residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience of working within a planning policy or strategic housing environment. • Previous experience of successfully working on an emerging development plan document with a local planning authority. • Experience of commissioning external specialist consultants 	App Form, Interview

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	development planning, development constraints and development viability.		
Job Related Skills, Knowledge & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong IT Skills including competency with Microsoft Office and Microsoft Teams. • Ability to absorb, assess and analyse large amounts of complex information the develop and present coherent and clear recommendations. • Strong report writing skills in order to prepare key documents including reports, policy and strategy documents. • Ability to work accurately with numerical and financial data. • Ability to effectively organise own workload, often set against competing priorities. • Possessing excellent customer care skills and an understanding of equality and diversity issues in the context of meeting housing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to use, interpret and assess plans, drawings and technical information. • Familiarity with ArcGIS Mapping systems. • Good knowledge of one or more specialist planning policy subject areas. 	App Form, Interview
Personal Attributes Including Interpersonal & Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong communication skills including sound abilities in delivering presentations of reports and evidence both in person and on-line (i.e. on Microsoft Teams) • Proven ability to work well under own initiative. • Proven ability to work well as part of a team. • Proven ability to advocate for a planning policy proposition by effectively responding to challenges. • Effective time management skills and ability to deliver to deadlines. 	None	App Form, Interview
Special Requirements/Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current full UK driving licence. 	None	App Form, Interview

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Additional information

Lancaster City Council Specific Knowledge

Once in post, demonstrate:

Understanding, implementation and adherence to Lancaster City Council's policies and procedures.

Understanding, implementation and adherence to Our Values.

Understanding of the post holder's own and their team's contribution to the Council's Corporate Plan.

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Equal Opportunities

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Climate Emergency

You will be expected to conduct your work activities in a way that demonstrates understanding of, and alignment with the requirements of delivering the Council's response to the Climate Emergency.

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Employee Signature:		Print name:		Date:	
Manager Signature:		Print name:		Date:	