

Lancaster City Council - Job Description

Job Title:	Planning Officer (Maternity Cover)	Grade:	9	Job Code:	PDM0008MAT
Job Family:	N/A	Job Family Group:	N/A	Reports to:	Service Manager - Development Management

Job Summary

The nominated Case Officer for a range of complex minor and small scale major planning applications of local and regional importance and heritage related applications with responsibilities for undertaking other Development Management related work.

Direct Responsibilities

1. To manage and formally assess a varied and demanding caseload of complex minor and small scale major planning applications of local and regional importance and heritage related applications.
2. To screen and scope complex minor and small scale major planning applications, where required, under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, and assessing proposal in line with the Habitat Regulations.
3. To liaise with the general public, applicants, agents, local Councillors, Officers across the Council and external statutory and non-statutory consultees. In particular, the postholder will be required to foster strong working relationships with the key local and regional stakeholders and agents to deliver robust and timely decisions.
4. To provide an effective pre-application service for minor and small scale major development proposals of local importance, in accordance with the Council's formal pre-application procedures, including chairing and minuting pre-application meetings with external applicants and agents.
5. To negotiate, where necessary, on the proposed details required by conditions imposed on consents for minor and small scale major development schemes of local importance, or on any amendments to such consented schemes.
6. To attend and present, when required, applications (commensurate in complexity to the postholder's caseload) to the Planning Regulatory Committee and to participate at the associated Committee site visits and Briefings.
7. To manage the appeal process (including the preparation of appeal statements and to represent the local planning authority at public inquiries and informal hearings) on matters relating to minor and small scale major development proposals of local importance.
8. To assess and manage the legal requirements for planning contributions associated with minor and small scale major development proposals of local importance in consultation with Legal Services and to assist in the drafting of any associated legal agreement. The postholder will also be required to manage and critically assess any subsequent proposals to vary the planning agreement.
9. To know, interpret and apply planning legislation (and other environmental related legislation), procedures, policies and other guidance that is relevant to the type of applications that the postholder will handle. The

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postholder will be expected to undertake appropriate training and development to maintain and update their understanding of the planning and other related systems.

10. To demonstrate a strong working knowledge of planning related matters, including highways, drainage, flood risk, heritage, ecology, viability and landscape impacts.
11. To negotiate, problem solve and use professional judgement in assessing the planning applications that the postholder will handle against national and local planning policy requirements to arrive at innovative, unique and robust solutions, and to set out the assessment within the formal delegated and Committee reports and decision notices (including any legal obligations).
12. To demonstrate good time management and prioritisation skills to deliver decisions by the statutory deadlines as the role involves managing a demanding and varied caseload with regular interruptions throughout the day and frequent changes to priorities, policies, guidance and case law.
13. To undertake site visits in a lone working capacity.
14. To answer on a daily basis a broad range of planning related enquiries (proportionate in complexity to the type of applications that the postholder will handle) with detailed and bespoke responses, including supporting the Planning Technical Team and mentoring other members of the Development Management (planning applications) team.
15. To provide feedback and suggestions on how to improve internal processes and procedures, and help implement any changes made.
16. To participate, when required, in the planning enforcement process by liaising with Planning Enforcement Officers and providing guidance on the planning/legal implications arising from breaches of planning control.
17. To liaise with Planning Policy Officers and make contributions towards the emergence of local planning policies and documents, in order to shape future policies against which planning applications will be assessed, and when required to support colleagues at planning policy consultation events.
18. To know and act within the data protection regulations as the nature of the work involves sensitive and confidential matters. This is particularly important as for transparency purposes most of a planning application file must be published for the public to view, but this has to be achieved in compliance with the data protection regulations.
19. To assist, where necessary, with Freedom of Information requests and the Council's complaints procedure.
20. To undertake such other duties as may from time to time be required.

Primary Objectives

The postholder will be required to deliver high quality decisions that are made in compliance with all relevant legislation, procedures, policy and guidance at an European, national and local level and within central government's timescale targets that apply at the time.

Staff Management Responsibilities

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The postholder will be required to provide assistance and guidance to Planning Assistants and the Planning Graduate in the Development Management (planning applications) team and Technicians in the Planning Advisory Team.

Knowledge & Educational Requirements

Specialised knowledge:

- Full Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute
- Appropriate planning degree or equivalent

Functional knowledge:

- The postholder must have relevant Development Management experience, including the assessment and determination of minor and small scale major planning and heritage related applications and dealing with associated appeals. Ideally, the postholder will also have experience in other areas of planning, including policy and enforcement.
- The postholder must have knowledge of planning legislation, procedures, policies and other guidance that may be relevant to the type of applications that the postholder will handle.
- The role is public facing and involves a mix of interactions – face-to-face encounters, meetings, telephone conversations, e-mail correspondence, letters, report writing and presenting at Committee – so the postholder requires excellent verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills, as well as good ICT skills.
- As planning applications are often contentious, the postholder will be required to deal with agents, applicants, members of the public, external consultees, other Council Officers across the 3 Directorates, local Councillors and a range of businesses with conflicting priorities and views. In addition to planning knowledge, the postholder will need to have persuasive skills and diplomacy.
- The postholder must be able to demonstrate that they have the ability to work as part of a team as well as independently.

LCC specific knowledge:

- 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.

Other Requirements

The hours of work are 37 hours per week, working Monday to Friday. On occasion, work outside of normal working hours will be required in accordance to the needs of the Service.

It is a requirement of this post to provide sufficient office cover in conjunction with colleagues in the Development Management (planning applications) team during the Town Hall’s opening hours.

It is a requirement of this role to travel to multiple external sites across the District, in a lone working capacity, including some remote and challenging locations. Therefore the postholder must have a current full driving licence and be responsible for the use of Council’s resources, such as pool cars, laptops/tablets, cameras and measuring equipment.

Additional information

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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.