

Career Progression Guidance for DM Officers

Planning/Senior DM Officers are appointed within the linked grade G-K (spinal column points 16 to 31 inclusive).

SCP salary matches may be given at any point of the career progression process for new employees who meet the qualifying requirements.

Progression within any single grade can be achieved through normal annual salary incremental rises based on the achievement of the agreed performance criteria and as set out below. Progression to the next grade will be dependent on demonstrating the relevant criteria.

Planning Officer career progression scheme	
Planning Officer – Level 1	<p>This is a career graded post. At entry level the postholder will need to demonstrate they have a willingness to learn and the potential to develop and operate at the higher level.</p> <p>The postholder will:</p> <p>Hold either a professionally accredited degree/masters in planning, or be working towards a professionally accredited degree/masters in planning, or hold a degree/masters in a related subject, or have sufficient experience of working in a planning department to have acquired the required knowledge and ability to fulfil the duties of the role.</p> <p>Have a caseload of planning and associated applications. It is likely that this would comprise householder applications, prior notifications, certificates of lawfulness, consultation notifications, discharge of conditions, etc.</p> <p>Have sufficient technical skill and knowledge to analyse and weigh-up planning applications and supporting information in the context of national planning policies and guidance, local planning policies, case law, material considerations, comments from statutory organisations, comments from other interested parties, the particular circumstances of the application site and its surroundings, etc.</p> <p>Analyse and interpret supporting information submitted alongside planning applications (such as planning statements, design and access statements, transport statements, etc) plus any other sources of information;</p>

draw appropriate conclusions based on a quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of the evidence and setting out the social, environmental and economic implications for the borough.

Accurately and succinctly summarise representations from statutory bodies and other interested parties; identifying the relevant planning issues which should be taken into account. Make recommendations on the appropriate response to the issues raised.

Carry out site visits – this will involve visiting sites, researching site history, land registry searches, correctly identifying physical, land use, legal and policy constraints, etc in order to identify the suitability of the site for development, its capacity and any deliverability issues.

Organise their work programme in order to meet deadlines and priorities. Identify where issues are likely to occur because of competing priorities and any knock-on implications. Play a positive role in the team.

Be proficient in the use of databases and Microsoft office packages, in particular Word, Excel and MasterGov document management system.

Demonstrate an understanding of how to use GIS for the spatial analysis of data.

Precisely record information for publication and decision-making.

Use problem solving skills to propose options and solutions to planning applications which meet national and local policy objectives.

Where appropriate use negotiating skills to propose amendments to planning applications to address concerns raised in consultation responses.

Prepare committee reports where planning applications must be presented to planning committee and to help their line manager to prepare for that meeting.

Prepare appeal statements where any planning applications are appealed to the planning inspectorate.

Provide appropriate pre-application planning advice and information to applicants, developers, landowners, members of the public, etc.

	<p>Act as duty officer to provide face-to-face pre-application advice to people who visit the Council's reception.</p> <p>Respond to general enquiries seeking wherever possible to resolve issues and be proactive in answering the phone.</p> <p>Listen and acknowledge concerns of consultees whilst at the same time presenting the Council's case in an assertive and non-confrontational manner. Refer more complex queries to senior members of staff.</p> <p>Have an understanding of health and safety legislation, data protection legislation and the requirements for the Equalities Act as it relates to the role and the planning service.</p> <p>In order to progress to the next level the postholder will need to have completed all WHBC mandatory courses for new starters, satisfactorily completed their duties and demonstrated they have potential to operate at the next level.</p> <p>Have delegated authority to sign pre-application advice letters, discharge of conditions and non-material amendments (where they were the original case officer) in accordance with the scheme of delegation.</p>
<p>Planning Officer Level 2</p>	<p>In addition to the requirements for Level 1 the postholder will:</p> <p>Have a caseload of planning and associated applications. It is likely that this would comprise minor applications and more complex pre-application cases in addition to householder applications, prior notifications, certificates of lawfulness, consultation notifications, discharge of conditions, etc.</p> <p>Ability to identify, succinctly summarise and articulate key issues.</p> <p>Have gained knowledge of and is able to interpret the requirements of wider environmental legislation as they apply to the planning system, appeal decisions and case law which have an impact on the planning process.</p> <p>Expectation that they can identify and resolve any discrepancies in site histories, GIS layers, MasterGov system, etc.</p>

	<p>To be increasingly aware of heritage matters such as listed buildings, conservation areas and tree preservation orders and the statutory duty to protect them.</p> <p>Demonstrate they have gained sufficient knowledge and experience of working in planning to carry out duties with limited supervision.</p> <p>Review technical evidence submitted alongside planning applications to ensure it is valid. Interpret implications of the evidence for the borough and propose appropriate decisions in light of the evidence.</p> <p>Drawing on research, best practice and legislative requirements, identify a range of options and select the most appropriate decision to address social, environmental and economic issues facing the borough</p> <p>Negotiate amendments to planning applications for delegated approval or approval at planning committee.</p> <p>Draft committee reports seeking approval for appropriate courses of action. Ability to present report to committee.</p> <p>Succinctly summarise more complex representations from residents, organisations landowners and developers correctly identifying planning issues and propose an appropriate decision.</p> <p>Write appeal statements setting out the Council's case for a particular application and present arguments why objector's argument is not valid. Where appropriate negotiate with objectors and propose suitable modifications.</p> <p>Before moving to the next level the postholder will have successfully completed their duties, demonstrated good decision-making and project management with a varied caseload of planning applications and exhibited successful negotiation skills in order to demonstrate they have the potential to operate at the next level.</p> <p>Have delegated authority to sign pre-application advice letters, discharge of conditions and non-material amendments (where they were the original case officer) in accordance with the scheme of delegation.</p>
Senior Planning Officer Level 1	The postholder will:

Hold either a professionally accredited degree/masters in planning, or hold a degree/masters in a related subject, or have sufficient experience of working in a planning department to have acquired the required knowledge and ability to fulfil the duties of the role.

Have a caseload of planning and associated applications. It is likely that this would comprise several small major applications (i.e. for 10-30 homes) in addition to minor applications, more complex pre-application cases, householder applications, prior notifications, certificates of lawfulness, discharge of conditions, etc.

Have a more advanced knowledge of, and is able to interpret the requirements of, planning and wider environmental legislation as they apply to the planning system, appeal decisions and case law which have an impact on the planning process.

To provide environmental impact assessment screening and scoping opinions when dealing with planning applications that exceed the EIA threshold.

Deal with and respond to complaints about planning matters.

Interact helpfully and positively with landowners, developers, agents and consultants.

Interact helpfully and positively with elected councillors.

To be aware of the risks and take sensible measures to reduce the risks that arise from dealing with small major applications if a decision is made in an incorrect way and the Council must defend itself at appeal or tribunal.

Present cases to Development Management Committee and Estate Management Appeals Panel, and respond appropriately to questions on the report and its implications.

Prepare statements of evidence and present evidence at planning appeal hearings and inquiries.

Be capable of identifying the implications of changes to national or local planning policies, and respond to Government consultations on changes to planning rules such as general permitted development where necessary.

	<p>Be capable of justifying and negotiating significant planning contributions associated with small major applications.</p> <p>Write tender specifications and assess tender submissions where it is necessary to obtain professional consultancy guidance on planning applications. Provide the day-to-day contact for the consultant ensuring they are meeting deadlines and coordinating feedback on consultants' drafts. Challenge the robustness of consultants' technical evidence where necessary, assessing appropriateness of their methodology and initial results. Negotiate changes to the evidence where appropriate.</p> <p>Before moving to the next level the postholder will have successfully completed their duties and demonstrated they are capable of managing a caseload of major and minor applications and dealing with all of the issues that can arise with such a caseload.</p> <p>Have delegated authority to sign pre-application advice letters for minor developments including up to 10 dwellings, discharge of conditions and non-material amendments (where they were the original case officer) in accordance with the scheme of delegation.</p>
<p>Senior Planning Officer Level 2</p>	<p>In addition to the duties for Senior Planner Level 1 the postholder will:</p> <p>Have a caseload of planning and associated applications. It is likely that this would comprise several large and complex major applications (i.e. for 30-100 homes) in addition to small major applications, minor applications, more complex pre-application cases, etc.</p> <p>Be capable of deputising for the Principal Planning Officer as necessary.</p> <p>Lead on the determination of large and complex major applications</p> <p>Lead on the negotiation of large and complex major applications, including any necessary changes to the scheme, the imposition of conditions and the securing of Section 106 contributions.</p> <p>Take the lead role when preparing statements of evidence and presenting evidence at planning appeal hearings and inquiries.</p>

	<p>Complete recruitment and selection training, be involved in the drafting of job descriptions / person specifications and the interviewing and appointment of staff.</p> <p>Run training events on specialist topic and mentor planning apprentice and planning officers.</p> <p>Give presentations to Members and outside groups such as town/parish councils and community groups.</p> <p>Represent the Council at meetings.</p> <p>Have delegated authority to sign pre-application advice letters for minor developments including up to 10 dwellings, discharge of conditions and non-material amendments (where they were the original case officer) and allocate post and applications in accordance with the scheme of delegation.</p>
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Guidance

Employees appointed to the bottom SCP point of the grade will progress by the normal incremental progression process until they reach the maximum SCP of the grade.

Thereafter in order to progress into the next grade, significant progression needs to be made and the criteria of the next grade needs to be worked towards or partially met in order to enter the bottom SCP point of the next grade. If no further progression is made the employee will remain on the top of the SCP in the lower grade.

Employees appointed directly into the top grade of a linked grade, or at, or above a SCP point within the grade, appointment at this point will be made upon the recommendation of the Head of Service and Director. Incremental SCP and grade progression will be made by the normal incremental process until the maximum SCP of the grade is reached, unless the contract of employment clearly states that incremental progression is not automatic.

Such criteria will be genuinely related to success or failure in the job role and will be amenable to objective appraisal and review of performance. Criteria will ensure that the employee has sufficient time to achieve the criteria set.

Criteria set will be regularly reviewed by the manager with the individual concerned. It is recommended that a 6-month review prior to the appraisal is made. The decision about the positive recommendation for incremental progression will made at the appraisal. If any increment is to be withheld this should be clearly stated to the individual at the earliest opportunity prior to the last review meeting.

