

# LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Designation:</b>	Planner (Career Grade)	<b>Grade:</b>	SO2 - PO1
<b>Reports to (Designation):</b>	Team Leader	<b>Grade:</b>	PO8
<b>Directorate:</b>	Place	<b>Department:</b>	Planning

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### Main Purpose of the job:

Senior professional within Development Management for a busy caseload of complex and high-profile planning applications. Deliver high-quality, policy-compliant development that advances local growth and regeneration objectives.

Exercise delegated decision-making powers, provide professional advice to internal and external stakeholders and supervise junior staff while ensuring performance standards are met.

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### Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

#### SO2

##### Case, time and project management

Responsible for a varied and complex workload, including pre-application advice, all minor applications, adapting to frequent changes in the work programme and conflicting deadlines, either independently or with minimal support while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and meeting statutory and corporate targets and deadlines.

Manage small-scale projects, applying approved checklists and template reports, preserving the Council's reputational and political integrity and promptly escalating any emerging complexities for senior review and direction.

Produce clear, accurate reports that set out the reasons for recommendations and evidence that all relevant matters have been considered.

Validate cases, ensure consultations are accurate and comply with statutory and Lewisham requirements, and carry out quality-control checks on cases validated by others

##### Appeals

Research and collate evidence and documentation on behalf of senior colleagues on more complex appeals including Public Inquiries and manage all minor written representation and Hearings appeals with minimal support.

##### Decision-making

Apply ongoing creative thinking to assess issues, consider alternatives, and develop solutions, interpreting procedures as needed and supporting colleagues.

##### Representing

Build and maintain one-to-one client relationships over time, using a professional and attentive approach to foster rapport and aid productive ways of working.

##### Management

Supervise and support individual junior officers on simple diverse or project tasks, offering procedural guidance and coaching to secure high-quality outcomes.

##### Negotiation

Negotiate and secure relevant unilateral undertaking and S106 planning obligations for all minor cases with minimal support.

<b>Advice</b>	Provide advice, guidance and solutions for more complex applications.
<b>Complaints and enquiries</b>	Contribute to preparing timely, professional responses to complaints and Member enquiries relating to allocated casework by taking part in investigations and gathering relevant information.
<b>Service improvement</b>	Proactively propose ideas for projects that enhance services and boost revenue to managers and keep up to date with the latest process notes.
<b>Resources</b>	Promote paid planning services and deliver exceptional customer service to boost income; ensure planning fees are accurately calculated.
<b>Training</b>	Undertake independent learning proactively.
<b>Policy</b>	Undertake statutory monitoring tasks, including carrying out aspects of the starts and completions survey and contributing to data collection and analysis on policy outcomes such as housing delivery and town centre performance.
<b>Work conditions</b>	Attend meetings and site visits to provide information, explain planning procedures, and observe or report on planning matters.

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## PO1

<b>Case, time and project management</b>	<p>Responsible for independently and effectively managing a varied and complex workload, including pre-applications, complex minor and small-scale major applications, and appeal casework, adapting to frequent changes in the work programme and conflicting deadlines, either independently or with minimal support or by making a contribution to a sub-team while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and meeting statutory and corporate targets and deadlines.</p> <p>Manage simple and moderately complex, lower-risk projects, such as all minor and small-scale major schemes or developments, while preserving the Council's reputational and political integrity.</p> <p>Produce clear, accurate reports that set out the reasons for recommendations and evidence that all relevant matters have been considered.</p> <p>Oversee the validation of major and contentious cases and perform quality-control checks on cases validated by others.</p>
<b>Appeals</b>	<p>Manage complex and sensitive minor and small major appeals under written representation and hearings procedures with minimal support and Public Inquiry procedures with significant support.</p> <p>Support the appeals process of others through research and information gathering.</p> <p>Prepare background documents for Public Inquiries and attend to observe proceedings or provide logistical and administrative input to senior officers.</p>
<b>Decision-making</b>	<p>Apply ongoing creative thinking to assess issues, consider alternatives, and develop solutions, interpreting procedures as needed and supporting colleagues, while exercising minimal autonomy.</p> <p>Apply sound judgment and ongoing creativity to assess challenging issues, evaluate alternative approaches, and devise solutions, interpreting procedures and offering guidance to colleagues.</p>
<b>Representing</b>	Build and maintain one-to-one client relationships over time, using a professional and

attentive approach to foster rapport, deepen understanding, and secure productive working relationships.

Prepare and deliver written and oral reports and briefings, using clear communication, structured arguments, and engaging presentation to hold the attention of and impart insight to sizeable, mixed-interest audiences.

Influence the opinions of Planning Committees including Planning Committees, elected Members, Inspectors and external stakeholders, by presenting persuasive, well-reasoned professional advice in committee, hearings, and other formal forums

### **Management**

Support junior officers on tasks within training or service improvement projects, offering procedural guidance and informal coaching to secure high-quality outcomes.

Undertake supervisory responsibilities for the most junior and technical staff day-to-day, motivating and developing them through ongoing guidance, feedback, and coaching to foster engagement and professional growth.

### **Negotiation**

Lead in negotiating and securing relevant Section 106 planning obligations for moderately complex applications and contribute to Community Infrastructure Levy work.

Negotiate using reasoned argument, compromise, and rapport to achieve advantageous outcomes and secure high-quality schemes that maximise the planning balance in the public interest.

### **Advice**

Provide frequent, on-going professional advice, guidance and solutions to Councillors, staff, developers, and other stakeholders on complex minor and small major cases. This includes interpreting relevant planning policy, identifying key issues, and supporting sound, defensible decision-making throughout all stages of the development management process.

### **Complaints and enquiries**

Prepare draft responses to complaints and Member enquiries in a timely and professional manner.

### **Service improvement**

Identify service improvement and revenue generation opportunities, using sound judgement and creativity to evaluate options and propose solutions to managers, and make a moderate contribution as part of a sub-team of officers to plan and deliver projects while training and advising colleagues in new methods.

### **Resources**

Promote paid planning services and deliver exceptional customer service to boost income; ensure planning fees are accurately calculated, processed, and received; manage a single consultant within an established budgetary framework.

Provide minimal support to finance staff to ensure the timely issuance and payment of invoices.

### **Training**

Undertake independent learning proactively, make a contribution as part of a sub-team to deliver training, and keep up to date with the latest planning laws, policies, methods and technology.

### **Policy**

Undertake moderately complex statutory monitoring tasks, including carrying out the starts and completions survey and contributing to data collection and analysis on policy outcomes such as housing delivery and town centre performance.

### **Work conditions**

Undertake frequent year-round unaccompanied site visits including building sites requiring some physical effort and the wearing of PPE.

Represent the council at meetings and site visits, including, when needed, outside normal office hours and away from the usual office location, handling contentious issues with professionalism, tact, and resilience, working alone where necessary and mitigating emotional or physical risk.

Internal Contacts: These include:

- Planning Service colleagues such as Enforcement, Conservation and Urban Design
- Legal Services
- Other specialists such as Highways, Environmental Health, Local Lead Flood Authority, Sustainability and Biodiversity
- Elected Members including Ward Members

External Contacts: This will include:

- Applicants, agents, architects, planning consultants and developers
- Local residents and amenity and community groups
- Neighbourhood Forums
- Statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, TfL, and Network Rail
- Planning Inspectorate
- External consultants
- MPs
- External solicitors

To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's relevant policies, codes and procedures.

To carry out duties with due regard to the Council's values and behaviours

All employees are required to participate in Appraisal and Performance Management processes and to undertake appropriate training and development, including mandatory induction training, identified to enhance their work.

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Consideration will be given to restructuring the duties of this post for a disabled postholder.

**THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.**

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Job Title:** Planner (Career Grade)

**Grade:** SO2, PO1

**Department:** Planning

### **Note to Candidates**

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person and are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

## SO2

<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	
Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community	<b>S</b>
Understanding of how equality and diversity relates to this post	<b>S</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	
Qualified and developing Town Planner	<b>S</b>
Sound knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National legislation and regulations (e.g. Town &amp; Country Planning Acts, Development Management Procedure Order, General Permitted Development Order, Fee Regulations, Community Infrastructure Levy)</li> <li>- National policies and guidance (e.g. NPPF and NPPG)</li> <li>- Regional plans and guidance (e.g. The London Plan, London Plan Guidance)</li> <li>- Local plans and guidance (e.g. The Local Plan, SPDs)</li> <li>- Neighbourhood plans</li> </ul>	<b>S</b>
Evidence of continuing professional development	
Aware of commercial aspects of, and key pressures for, SME house builders	
<b>Aptitude</b>	
Capable of prioritising work to respond successfully to regular changes while maintaining performance	
Very good numerical literacy, able to interpret and manipulate minorly complex datasets such as tenure splits, spot errors, and present clear numeric summaries	
Quickly absorbs moderately complex policy, legislative and process changes and applies learning	
<b>Skills</b>	<b>(To Be Tested – T)</b>
<b>Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested</b>	
Very good verbal communication skills, including explaining moderately complex matters in plain language to customers, staying calm and courteous when questions are challenging or views differ	<b>T</b>
Very good writing skills for clear, accurate written communication on minorly complex matters	
Consistently drafts clear, evidence-based committee and delegated reports minorly complex matters that are defensible at appeal and resistant to judicial review with limited senior officer revisions	
Good negotiation skills to independently secure improvements to minorly complex schemes, offering constructive pre-application advice and securing S106 agreements.	
Skilled in applying procedural and local and national policy and guidance on a wide range of minorly complex matters to advise customers, delivering clear guidance in a positive, proactive style that identifies and measures risks, and promoting chargeable services where appropriate.	
Represent the Council at meetings and site visits, engaging effectively with residents and Councillors, working collaboratively while mitigating emotional and physical risks with professionalism.	
<b>Experience</b>	
Developing experience of independently processing a highly varied caseload of simple cases from validation to decision, with sound experience of pre-application advice and appeal work, with exposure to PPAs.	<b>S</b>
Experience in dealing with moderately sensitive issues of concern to elected Members and the public.	<b>S</b>
Basic experience of supporting and motivating individual junior staff on straightforward tasks, giving guidance and informal coaching.	
Exercises very good professional judgement when balancing policy and relevant material planning considerations on minorly complex matters	
Regularly devises creative and analytical solutions to minorly complex planning challenges, applying some innovative thinking and considering alternative approaches to produce deliverable actions	
Demonstrates good persuasive reasoning on minorly complex matters, providing compelling arguments at forums such as stakeholder meetings and committee, and securing favourable outcomes.	

<b>General Education</b>	
Town Planning or recognised related undergraduate degree (e.g. Geography, Economics) or equivalent experience, qualifying for RTPI membership.	<b>S</b>
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	
Demonstrates tact and developing diplomacy, sustaining constructive relationships in routine and moderately contentious situations, and escalating complex issues when needed.	
Self-motivated with a strong drive to deepen planning knowledge and committed to continuing professional development.	
Strongly exhibits Lewisham's inclusive, trustworthy and accountable values by acting with honesty and openness, and by treating residents and colleagues consistently, fairly and with respect	
Good resilience, remaining composed and tactful when minorly complex enquiries, site visits or other meetings become tense, defusing tension and keeping discussions constructive.	
Very good attention to detail to consistently produce accurate validation, consultation, quality assurance and case handling on minorly complex matters, spotting and correcting errors in own work.	
Shows capable political awareness, being conversant with member priorities and reputational implications on the occasional contentious case, and seeking guidance when sensitivities arise	
<b>Circumstances</b>	
Able to attend off-site events outside normal office hours	
<b>Physical</b>	
Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post	

**PO1**

<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	
Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community	<b>S</b>
Understanding of how equality and diversity relate to this post	<b>S</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	
Developing experienced fully trained Town Planner	<b>S</b>
Comprehensive knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National legislation and regulations (e.g. Town &amp; Country Planning Acts, Development Management Procedure Order, General Permitted Development Order, Fee Regulations, Community Infrastructure Levy)</li> <li>National policies and guidance (e.g. NPPF and NPPG)</li> <li>Regional plans and guidance (e.g. The London Plan, London Plan Guidance)</li> <li>Local plans and guidance (e.g. The Local Plan, SPDs)</li> <li>Neighbourhood plans</li> </ul>	<b>S</b>
Conversant with broader Council-wide corporate issues.	
Evidence of considerable continuing professional development	
Conversant with development cycle, commercial aspects, and key activities for SME house builders	
<b>Aptitude</b>	
Capable of prioritising work to respond successfully to regular changes while maintaining performance	
Very good numerical literacy, able to interpret and manipulate minorly complex datasets such as tenure splits, spot errors, and present clear numeric summaries	
Quickly absorbs moderately complex policy, legislative and process changes and applies learning	
<b>Skills</b>	
<b>Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested</b>	
Excellent verbal communication skills, including explaining moderately complex matters in plain language to customers, staying calm and courteous when questions are challenging or views differ	<b>T</b>
Excellent writing skills for clear, accurate written communication on moderately complex matters	
Proven ability to draft clear, evidence-based committee and delegated reports on moderately complex matters that are defensible at appeal and resistant to judicial review with limited senior officer revisions	
Very good negotiation skills to independently secure improvements to moderately complex schemes, offering constructive pre-application advice and securing S106 agreements.	
Strong skills in applying procedural, local and national planning policy and guidance to a wide range of moderately complex cases, delivering clear, positive and proactive advice to a wide range of customers that identifies, assesses and mitigates risks, leading paid pre-application meetings and promoting Planning Performance Agreements and other chargeable services.	
Represent the Council at meetings and site visits, engaging effectively with residents, Councillors, developers and key stakeholders, working collaboratively while mitigating emotional and physical risks with professionalism.	
Build and maintain professional relationships and networks	
<b>Experience</b>	
Strong experience of independently processing a varied caseload of minorly complex cases from validation to decision, with good experience of pre-application advice and appeal work, with basic experience of PPAs.	<b>S</b>
Experience in dealing with moderately sensitive issues of concern to elected Members and the public.	
Sound experience of supporting and motivating individual junior staff on straightforward tasks, giving guidance and informal coaching.	<b>S</b>
Exercises very good professional judgement when balancing policy and relevant material planning considerations on minorly complex matters	

Regularly devises creative and analytical solutions to minorly complex planning challenges, applying some innovative thinking and considering alternative approaches to produce deliverable actions	
Experience presenting good persuasive reasoning on minorly complex matters, providing compelling arguments at forums such as stakeholder meetings and committee, and securing favourable outcomes.	
<b>General Education</b>	
Town Planning or recognised related undergraduate degree (e.g. Geography, Economics) or equivalent experience, qualifying for RTPI membership.	<b>S</b>
RTPI membership or eligibility for election	
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	
Proven diplomacy and tact; consistently sustains constructive relationships in contentious situations and escalating complex issues when needed.	
Self-driven to expand planning expertise and dedicated to continuing professional development.	
Models Lewisham's inclusive, trustworthy and accountable values by acting with unwavering probity, honesty and openness, and by treating residents, colleagues and partners consistently, fairly and with respect	
Strong resilience, remaining composed and professional when moderately complex enquiries, site visits or other meetings become tense, defusing tension and keeping discussions constructive.	
Willingly shares knowledge and offers guidance to less-experienced colleagues, contributing to a positive, inclusive workplace.	
Good collaborative working, freely sharing information, supporting teammates, partnering proactively with transport, design, legal and enforcement services on moderately complex schemes	
Shows capable political awareness, being conversant with member priorities and reputational implications on the occasional contentious case, and seeking guidance when sensitivities arise	
<b>Circumstances</b>	
Able to attend off-site events outside normal office hours	
<b>Physical</b>	
Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post	

**DBS Disclosure Required**    **Basic**     **Standard**     **Enhanced**

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor, if a DBS is not required please leave boxes blank)