

Career Grade Scheme for Planning Policy Officers

1. Introduction

This career grade scheme (the 'Scheme') operates within the Strategic Planning Division. It is based on the following principles:

- (a) it is applicable to Planning Policy Officers of the Division between the grades of Bexley12, Bexley14 and Bexley15;
- (b) it is a career-based scheme, where grade relates directly to job responsibility, experience, qualifications and personal performance;
- (c) the pay level of an individual within the career grade is personal and will depend on personal achievement, and be in accordance with the Council's performance related pay scheme;
- (d) the necessary work at the appropriate level must be available; and,
- (e) the Scheme is intended to assist the organisation with the recruitment and retention of staff in the scarce skill area of spatial planning.

2. Pay determination

The Scheme:

- (a) comprises three grades, enabling progression where the conditions of the Scheme and performance criteria are fully met (a brief description of the level of work required at each grade is specified in Appendix A); and,
- (b) identifies, for each grade, the precise qualifications, experience and competence expected of an individual at that grade which, together with relevant work programmes, give a full definition of that individual's responsibilities.

3. Application of the Scheme

- (a) The Scheme will operate within the Strategic Planning Division of the Housing and Strategic Planning Department.
- (b) The job definition, experience, performance and qualification criteria for each grade are listed at Appendices B, C and D, with incremental progression within individual grades evaluated as part of the yearly appraisal process in the normal way.
- (c) An individual's contract of employment will specify the relevant grade. If an individual progresses to the next grade, a revised contract of employment will be issued.
- (d) An individual's progress will be regularly assessed by the Planning Policy Manager with feedback provided to individuals at 1 to 1s or quarterly review meetings. Any review periods and particular progression paths based on the individual's pattern of further education (where underway) may be agreed in advance.
- (e) Progression between one grade and the next will be dependent on the individual's ability to perform the job responsibilities for the higher grade as defined, meeting the personal criteria of qualification, experience and performance, the availability of the right level of work and there being sufficient funds within the Division's devolved staffing budget – see section 5 below for further information.

- (f) To be considered for progression between one grade and the next the individual must provide a written statement setting out how they meet the criteria and discuss that with their team manager. This can take place at any time during the year where an individual considers the criteria for progression is met. Where an employee is not deemed to meet the criteria by their team manager then no new application shall be considered until the individual has completed any necessary development plan and/or the conditions in 3e are met. Any dispute arising from the regrading process will be referred to the Head of Service for final adjudication.

4. Training and education

- (a) The Division will provide practical work experience at the relevant grade and access to appropriate education and training in accordance with the Council's published Workforce Development Policy and Related Procedures; departmental priorities; and financial resources.

5. Personal development and progression between grades

It is an expectation of this Scheme that the post holder will actively pursue continuous development of their professional skills and range of experience, as set out below. This includes attainments of relevant professional qualifications.

- (a) Relevant qualifications include Chartered Membership of, for example, the Royal Town Planning Institute, as well as the relevant degree level qualification in planning or a related discipline.
- (b) The Council will positively encourage personal and professional development, but it will be up to the individual to set the pace, in agreement with their manager.
- (c) Regular (usually fortnightly) 1-2-1s will be held between the post holder and their supervisor. In addition, appraisal conversations will be held quarterly, in accordance with the Council's appraisal procedure. Initially, the appraisal conversation should involve agreeing short, medium and longer term personal development goals in the form of a Personal Development Plan. At future appraisal conversations (and at other times, if appropriate), the post holder should then take the opportunity to review progress with their supervisor towards their development goals.
- (d) At the start of each financial year, the appraisal conversation should include agreeing performance and personal development goals for the year ahead – and longer ahead as appropriate, in accordance with the post holder's Personal Development Plan.
- (e) To achieve promotion from one Grade to the next, the post holder should be regularly demonstrating a level of performance that satisfies a significant majority of the requirements of that next Grade, including the relevant professional qualifications. It will not be sufficient simply to have had a particular length of time within the post.
- (f) To aid that assessment process, the post holder should:
 - (i) Keep CPD records in accordance with the requirements of the relevant professional body; and/or
 - (ii) Keep a personal log book (for which MS Notes could be used) that sets out particular achievements, skills learned or improved, and insights gained.

Appendix A: Planning Policy Officer Outline Job Description

The purpose of this post is to:

- To provide support on all matters related to the production of sound and robust planning policies, strategies and guidance, including monitoring and review of the Council's statutory local plans and other growth and planning related documents as expedient to meet targets and milestones.
- To provide good quality and timely advice and support for senior officers and Members of the Council with particular regard to planning policy, strategy and growth, including infrastructure planning, sustainability and conservation.

At all grades, officers in the Planning Policy Team will support the Strategic Planning Division's matrix management practice, to support the wider work of the Division, as required.

Grade Bexley12

Officers will be responsible for assisting with work on allocated projects in connection with any or all of the following:

- the production of an up-to-date local plan for the borough, including research and analysis of information for policy formation,
- the preparation of contributory material and monitoring of policy, guidelines and advice, including the preparation of materials for inquiry;
- the associated processes of economic development, viability assessment, sustainability appraisal and other impact assessments, such as health and equalities, biodiversity assessment, and community engagement, which are regarded as integral to plan preparation; and,
- borough contributions to London-wide evidence studies conducted by the Greater London Authority to support the preparation of the London Plan, including the production of opportunity area planning frameworks for Bexley.

Officers may also be required to be involved in commissioning, managing and controlling the work of consultants for allocated projects.

Grade Bexley14

Officers will be expected to work on their own initiative with little direct supervision and support the Planning Policy Manager as required.

Officers will be responsible for the management of allocated projects, including budgetary and programme control, particularly in connection with:

- the production of an up-to-date local plan for the borough, including research and analysis of information for policy formation,
- the preparation of contributory material or actual formulation and monitoring of policy, guidelines and advice, including the preparation of materials for inquiry;
- the preparation of growth and planning strategies and detailed planning guidance, such as planning statements for key development sites, design guides, master plans and conservation area appraisals and management plans;

- the associated processes of economic development, viability assessment, sustainability appraisal and other impact assessments, such as health and equalities, biodiversity assessment, and community engagement, which are regarded as integral to plan preparation; and,
- borough contributions to London-wide evidence studies conducted by the Greater London Authority to support the preparation of the London Plan, including the production of opportunity area planning frameworks for Bexley.

Officers will be required to commission, manage and control the work of consultants for allocated projects and to direct, guide and monitor staff allocated to a project (whether temporarily or permanently).

Grade Bexley15

Officers will be expected to work on their own initiative with minimal direct supervision and support the Planning Policy Manager and Deputy Planning Policy Manager, including supervision of junior members of staff as required.

Officers will be responsible for formulating, coordinating and leading allocated projects, including budgetary and programme control, and in ensuring the coordination of the work across the Strategic Planning Division, the Housing and Strategic Planning Department, and wider Council as appropriate, particularly in connection with:

- the production of an up-to-date local plan for the borough, including research and analysis of information for policy formation,
- the preparation of contributory material or actual formulation and monitoring of policy, guidelines and advice, including the preparation of materials and providing evidence for Inquiry;
- the identification, specification and preparation of growth and planning strategies and detailed planning guidance, such as planning statements for key development sites, design guides, master plans and conservation area appraisals and management plans;
- the associated processes of economic development, viability assessment, sustainability appraisal and other impact assessments, such as health and equalities, biodiversity assessment, and community engagement, which are regarded as integral to plan preparation; and,
- borough contributions to London-wide evidence studies conducted by the Greater London Authority to support the preparation of the London Plan, including the production of opportunity area planning frameworks for Bexley.

Officers will also be required to commission, manage and control the work of consultants for allocated projects and to direct, guide and monitor staff allocated to a project (whether temporarily or permanently).

Appendix B Planning Policy Officer Job Description

Job Description: Planning Policy Officer			
Principal accountabilities	Planner Bexley12	Senior Planner Bexley14 Perform all duties of the planner grade, plus:	Principal Planner Bexley15 Perform all duties of the senior planner grade, plus
(a) To prepare an up-to-date local plan for the borough, including research and analysis of information for policy formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist in the development and monitoring of planning policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare accurate specifications for consultants to support evidence base work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review and monitor internal officers and consultants' work
(b) To prepare and implement the Council's growth and planning strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist with the research for the preparation of town centre strategies, site development proposals and planning briefs provide development and design advice in accordance with planning policies to achieve local regeneration, quality design and improvements to the public realm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare accurate specifications for consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review and monitor internal officers and consultants' work
(c) To provide up-to-date technical advice on spatial planning matters across specialist topic areas, including advice for Council Committees and/or Public Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist with advice on matters related to the conservation of the built and natural environment, with regard to strategic planning, including the discharge of the council's statutory obligations advice given in accordance with level of responsibility and specialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advice given in accordance with level of responsibility and specialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advice given in accordance with level of responsibility and specialism, which may include presenting at Committee or providing evidence at inquiry
(d) To advise on pre-application discussions and on development proposals coming forward for key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist in the research required to provide advice for pre-application discussions and development proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide relevant advice on pre-application discussions and development proposals, including attendance at any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the advice being prepared for pre-application discussions and development

Job Description: Planning Policy Officer			
Principal accountabilities	Planner Bexley12	Senior Planner Bexley14 Perform all duties of the planner grade, plus:	Principal Planner Bexley15 Perform all duties of the senior planner grade, plus
development sites, including the preparation of planning statements		required meetings with developers	proposals, and provide further advice
(e) Advising on public consultation arrangements and commenting on public consultation responses regarding Local Plan documents and other associated documents, such as planning briefs and site development proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend and represent the Council at any required public consultations in relation to local plan documents and growth strategy • provide assistance in commenting on public consultation responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include work on more detailed responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be the central point of contact at public consultation events
(f) Commenting, on behalf of the Council, on consultations carried out by external agencies, including central government, the London Mayor and the Greater London Authority and participating, where required, on studies conducted by such external agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide assistance in commenting on consultations carried out by external agencies, including central government, the London Mayor, Greater London Authority and Transport for London • review progress and consultations relating to neighbouring boroughs' local plans under Duty to Cooperate legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comments on consultations, including involvement in more complex consultations • help develop links and cultivate good working relationships with key internal and external agencies and partners, including regional/sub-regional and local bodies as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead on providing consultation responses and contributions to external studies, including following up in more detail
(g) To take an active role in the management of the Planning Policy Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate actively in team meetings • produce work plans for allocated projects and monitor progress • complete personal development plan and appraisal documents in accordance with the Council's scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take a lead role in the preparation and monitoring of the team's overall work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take a lead role in the overall monitoring of the team's capital, revenue and operating budgets • supervise and support junior members of staff

Appendix C Planning Policy Officer Person Specification

Selection Criteria – Essential/Desirable (E/D)	Scheme Grade Bexley12	Scheme Grade Bexley14	Scheme Grade Bexley15	method of assessment
Education and formal training				
(a) Degree level qualification in a planning or a related discipline	E	E	E	A
(b) Possess a higher degree (e.g. MSc) in a planning or related subject	D	D	D	A
(c) Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) or similar organisation	D Student/ Graduate member or equivalent	D Associate Member or equivalent	D Chartered Member or equivalent	A
Relevant technical experience and knowledge				
(a) Practical experience in strategic planning	General experience related to post grade	Detailed experience related to post grade	Comprehensive experience related to post grade	I/A
(b) Proven ability to communicate effectively	E	E	E	I/A
(c) Able to work effectively in partnership and as part of a team	D	E	E	I/A
(d) Able to collate, analyse and interpret data	E	E	E	I/A
(e) Able to formulate, monitor and control budgets	D	E	E	I/A
(f) Able to prioritise workload and produce and monitor work programmes	E	E	E	I/A
(g) Experienced in the use of information and communication technology	D	E	E	I/A
(h) Able to produce cogent reports	E	E	E	I/A
(i) Able to present to public forums	D	E	E	I/A
(j) Able to travel around the borough	E	E	E	I/A

KEY: **A = Application Form** **I = Interview**

Applicants will be assessed against these criteria and the following high performance indicators throughout the recruitment process.

Appendix D High Level Performance Indicators

Post: Planning Policy Officer (Grades Bexley12 and Bexley14) Job Family: Professional 2		
Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
Innovation	<p>I respond flexibly and adapt to changing demands</p> <p>I am prepared to take managed risks to achieve better outcomes</p> <p>I ask, 'What if...?' to develop fresh thinking and innovative approaches to generate and implement solutions to improve performance and challenge the status quo</p>	<p>I routinely look for innovative and cost-effective ways to improve performance and customer service</p> <p>I champion change and deal successfully with ambiguity, enabling people to see positive and exciting possibilities for the future</p> <p>I take calculated risks based on available evidence and my professional judgement to learn and try new things</p>
Leadership	<p>I demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and direction, in line with organisational objectives</p> <p>I am willing to take difficult decisions</p> <p>My personal actions promote a positive image of Bexley</p>	<p>I take responsibility for my service and for making things happen to make a difference to my service users</p> <p>I create an environment where staff can thrive and show I value and trust staff, give praise and recognise good work</p> <p>I inspire, lead and encourage staff to move forward</p>
Partnership	<p>I show respect for others and value contributions from internal and external partners and customers</p> <p>I recognise the right solution, regardless of who initiated it</p> <p>I seek out and work with partners who can help me achieve the outcomes and objectives I need to deliver</p>	<p>I encourage the feeling that the team is a collective unit with shared goals</p> <p>I engage with service partners and other areas of the Bexley organisation to understand the demands on others and seek solutions as One Council</p> <p>I network internally and externally</p>
Listening and Responding	<p>I acknowledge other people's viewpoints and work with them to find a win-win solution</p> <p>I prepare and present information anticipating questions and problems</p> <p>I adapt my style to the audience and their needs, using the most appropriate communication channels</p>	<p>I seek regular service user feedback and review customer data to shape service improvements</p> <p>I ask staff for ideas on how to improve our service and how I can improve as a manager, listen to them and act on them</p> <p>I empower staff to make decisions and changes to improve value for money, customer service and productivity</p>
Open and Accessible	<p>I see issues from the customer / user perspective</p> <p>I monitor customer feedback and level of satisfaction with the service they receive, and</p>	<p>I am accessible to my service users, customers, staff and Members</p> <p>I communicate and share a clear vision for the bigger picture as well as specific service areas</p>

Post: Planning Policy Officer (Grades Bexley12 and Bexley14) Job Family: Professional 2		
Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
	<p>use this to improve and pre-empt customer needs</p> <p>I seek to build and maintain positive relationships with customers and partners</p>	<p>I outline what is expected of individuals and their contribution to the whole, and am consistent in my expectations</p>
Impact	<p>I prioritise my activities and resources to focus on those which have the most impact for residents</p> <p>I take responsibility for making things happen and achieving my objectives</p> <p>I make decisions and clear recommendations based on my professional opinion and experience, informed by a range of information and evidence</p>	<p>I design services that provide value for money and deliver our outcomes, informed by evidence</p> <p>I produce, prioritise and adapt plans to meet changing requirements</p> <p>I set interim goals to achieve notable wins on the way to larger objectives</p> <p>I deal with poor performance</p>

Post: Planning Policy Officer (Grade Bexley15) Job Family: Professional 1		
Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
Innovation	<p>I respond flexibly and adapt to changing demands</p> <p>I am prepared to take managed risks to achieve better outcomes</p> <p>I ask, 'What if...?' to develop fresh thinking and innovative approaches to generate and implement solutions to improve performance and challenge the status quo</p>	<p>I routinely look for innovative and cost-effective ways to improve performance and customer service</p> <p>I champion change and deal successfully with ambiguity, enabling people to see positive and exciting possibilities for the future</p> <p>I take calculated risks based on available evidence and my professional judgement to learn and try new things</p>
Leadership	<p>I demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and direction, in line with organisational objectives</p> <p>I am willing to take difficult decisions</p> <p>My personal actions promote a positive image of Bexley</p>	<p>I take responsibility for my service and for making things happen to make a difference to my service users</p> <p>I create an environment where staff can thrive and show I value and trust staff, give praise and recognise good work</p> <p>I inspire, lead and encourage staff to move forward</p>
Partnership	<p>I show respect for others and value contributions from internal and external partners and customers</p> <p>I recognise the right solution, regardless of who initiated it</p>	<p>I encourage the feeling that the team is a collective unit with shared goals</p> <p>I engage with service partners and other areas of the Bexley organisation to understand the demands on others and seek solutions as One Council</p>

Post: Planning Policy Officer (Grade Bexley15) Job Family: Professional 1		
Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
	I seek out and work with partners who can help me achieve the outcomes and objectives I need to deliver	I network internally and externally
Listening and Responding	<p>I acknowledge other people's viewpoints and work with them to find a win-win solution</p> <p>I prepare and present information anticipating questions and problems</p> <p>I adapt my style to the audience and their needs, using the most appropriate communication channels</p>	<p>I seek regular service user feedback and review customer data to shape service improvements</p> <p>I ask staff for ideas on how to improve our service and how I can improve as a manager, listen to them and act on them</p> <p>I empower staff to make decisions and changes to improve value for money, customer service and productivity</p>
Open and Accessible	<p>I see issues from the customer / user perspective</p> <p>I monitor customer feedback and level of satisfaction with the service they receive, and use this to improve and pre-empt customer needs</p> <p>I seek to build and maintain positive relationships with customers and partners</p>	<p>I am accessible to my service users, customers, staff and Members</p> <p>I communicate and share a clear vision for the bigger picture as well as specific service areas</p> <p>I outline what is expected of individuals and their contribution to the whole, and am consistent in my expectations</p>
Impact	<p>I prioritise my activities and resources to focus on those which have the most impact for residents</p> <p>I take responsibility for making things happen and achieving my objectives</p> <p>I make decisions and clear recommendations based on my professional opinion and experience, informed by a range of information and evidence</p>	<p>I design services that provide value for money and deliver our outcomes, informed by evidence</p> <p>I produce, prioritise and adapt plans to meet changing requirements</p> <p>I set interim goals to achieve notable wins on the way to larger objectives</p> <p>I deal with poor performance</p>