

Career Grade - Planner to Principal Planning Officer (Including Planning Enforcement)

Various grades - D-J (H-I for Senior Planner Level)

Permanent role, based in Kingston

Job Description/role profile

Role Purpose

Kingston operates within a complex London planning environment characterised by high housing demand, ambitious regeneration priorities, climate-led design expectations, competing land uses and strong community engagement.

This career grade framework supports the delivery of Kingston's Planning Service across Development Management, Planning Policy and (where recruited as a separate function) Planning Enforcement, contributing to statutory responsibilities, the London Plan, and borough priorities for sustainable, high-quality place-making.

Postholders will develop professional competencies and provide professional advice to Members, applicants, residents and stakeholders, working flexibly and collaboratively across service priorities. The specific deployment of posts will reflect service needs and role design for each recruitment (i.e., DM roles, Policy roles and Enforcement roles recruited separately).

Reports to: Assigned Lead Officer / Team Leader.

Key Activities

Customer Focus

- a) Deliver timely, high-quality planning advice to residents, applicants, agents, developers, Councillors and community groups.
- b) Support responses to escalated enquiries, complaints, FOIs and Ombudsman cases.
- c) Promote inclusive engagement and excellent customer care.

Performance and Delivery

- a) Manage workload to meet statutory deadlines and borough performance standards aligned with London borough practice.
- b) Contribute to service improvement, performance management and digital transformation initiatives.
- c) Ensure work is evidence-based, policy-compliant and defensible.

Partners and Collaboration

- a) Work effectively with internal services (Regeneration, Housing, Transport, Legal, Environmental Health, Licensing, Climate Action and Design).
- b) Engage constructively with the GLA, TfL, statutory consultees, community organisations, neighbouring boroughs and the development sector.

Digital and Modern Working

- a) Use digital planning systems, GIS and case management tools to support efficient working, transparency and high-quality outcomes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- a) Ensure planning advice and decision-making supports fairness, inclusive growth, accessible design and equitable outcomes.

Development Management

(For posts recruited to Development Management)

- a) Assess and determine a range of planning applications and related submissions in line with legislation and policy.
- b) Undertake site visits, consultations, negotiations and pre-application discussions.
- c) Prepare robust delegated reports and committee reports, including clear recommendations.
- d) Prepare appeal statements and represent the Council at hearings/inquiries (Senior/Principal where required).

Planning Policy

(For posts recruited to Planning Policy)

- a) Support the development, review and implementation of Kingston's Local Plan and evidence base, aligned to the London Plan.

- b) Draft topic papers, monitoring reports, consultation material and supplementary guidance/SPDs.
- c) Provide clear policy advice on planning applications and corporate initiatives.
- d) Support Examination in Public preparation and participation (Senior/Principal where required).

Planning Enforcement

(For posts recruited to Planning Enforcement as a separate role)

- a) Undertake timely and proportionate investigations into alleged breaches of planning control, including unauthorised development, changes of use, works to listed buildings and unauthorised advertisements.
- b) Conduct site inspections, gather and record evidence in accordance with legal requirements, and maintain robust case files suitable for scrutiny.
- c) Prepare formal enforcement actions as appropriate, including Planning Contravention Notices, Breach of Condition Notices, Enforcement Notices and Stop Notices, working closely with Legal Services.
- d) Prepare clear, robust written statements and evidence for enforcement appeals and represent the Council at hearings, inquiries and court proceedings where required (Senior and Principal levels).
- e) Work collaboratively with applicants, agents, residents, Members and internal partners (e.g., Environmental Health, Licensing, Housing, ASB teams) to secure negotiated compliance where appropriate, in accordance with Kingston's Enforcement Plan and the principles of proportionality and public interest.
- f) Monitor compliance with planning conditions, Section 106 obligations and enforcement notices, escalating enforcement action where necessary.
- g) Contribute to the continuous improvement of Kingston's enforcement procedures and priorities, aligning with London-wide best practice and emerging issues (e.g., HMOs, short-term lets, heritage protection, adverts, town centre breaches).

Career Grade Progression (D–J)

Progression through the career grade is based on demonstration of competence, experience, professional behaviours and achievement of relevant criteria for the postholder's recruited specialism (DM / Policy / Enforcement).

Grades D–E: Assistant Planner

Minimum requirement:

- A good standard of secondary education and/or experience that allows for entry to an appropriate RTPI accredited qualification and a strong interest in a professional planning career.
- a) Developing technical competence and knowledge of the planning system and Kingston procedures.
- b) Supports casework, evidence gathering, consultations and customer responses under supervision.

Grades F–G: Planner

Minimum requirement:

- A strong commitment to a professional planning career (with the achievement of a town planning qualification being desirable), and
- Has met the criteria for progressing from Grade E
- a) Manages an appropriate caseload with decreasing supervision, producing clear reports/advice.
- b) Engages with stakeholders and contributes to timely, defensible outcomes.

Grades H–I: Senior Planner

Minimum requirement:

- Chartered membership or eligibility for chartered or associate membership of the RTPI, and
- Has met the criteria for progressing from Grade G
- a) Leads complex casework within the relevant specialism, mentors colleagues and supports Member engagement.
- b) Demonstrates strong professional judgement, negotiation skills and defensible decision-making.

Grade J: Principal Planner

Minimum requirement:



- Chartered membership or eligibility for chartered or associate membership of the RTPI, and
 - Has met the criteria for progressing from Grade I
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- a) Leads major/complex work, provides quality assurance, coaches staff and contributes to service improvement.
 - b) Oversees and mentors colleagues and has delegated authority to determine planning applications.
 - c) Deputises for the Lead Officer as required.
 - d) Represents the service at senior levels, committees, hearings/inquiries and cross-council initiatives as required.

Kingston's STAR Values

Lead Officers are expected to model Kingston's organisational values:

- Supportive – encouraging innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement
- Transparent – open, clear and constructive in communication
- Appreciative – recognising success and supporting staff wellbeing
- Respectful – fostering inclusion, equity and positive relationships