Northumberland County Council

Job Description

Planning Officer

Reference: RED003
Date: June 2026

Job Family:	**Regeneration Economic Development and Environment/ Planning**
Level:	**2**
Band:	**7**
Career Track:	**Professional / Technical / Supervisory**

Job Purpose

To manage and assess a range of development management applications, providing professional planning advice and producing recommendations in line with statutory requirements and planning policy. The role supports senior officers in delivering the Council's development management functions, contributing to high-quality, sustainable development that protects and enhances the natural and built environment.

Service Purpose

The Planning Service at Northumberland County Council exists to guide the sustainable development of the county, ensuring that growth, investment and environmental stewardship of Northumberland's unique environment are balanced in the public interest. The service is responsible for preparing and implementing planning policy, assessing and determining planning applications, and safeguarding the county's heritage, landscapes and communities. By providing clear professional advice, engaging with residents and stakeholders, and upholding statutory planning duties, the service supports well-designed places, economic prosperity and long-term resilience. Its work directly contributes to the Council's wider strategic objectives of Tackling Inequalities, Providing Value for Money and Driving Economic Growth.

Duties and Responsibilities

Development Management & Decision-Making

- Manage a caseload of planning and related applications from validation through to recommendation, including consultation, site inspection, and assessment against planning policy.
- Prepare clear, professional reports and recommendations for delegated decisions and Planning Committee, presenting applications as required.

Advice, Stakeholder Engagement & Representation

- Provide high-quality planning advice to the public, Elected Members, applicants, and stakeholders, including pre-application guidance.
- Liaise effectively with internal teams, consultees, and external partners to support decision-making and service delivery.
- Represent the Council in meetings, committees, and appeal processes as required.

Appeals, Enforcement & Compliance

- Prepare evidence and represent the Authority in planning appeals, including hearings and site visits.
- Support monitoring of developments and enforcement of planning control, ensuring compliance with legislation and policy.
- Administer statutory processes such as Tree Preservation Orders, including applications and reviews.

Policy, Projects & Service Improvement

- Contribute to the development of planning policy, guidance, masterplans, and service improvements.
- Undertake research and analysis to inform planning decisions, appeals, and wider service objectives.

Information Management & Governance

- Maintain accurate records, case files, and reports in line with service standards and data protection requirements.
- Ensure work contributes to service performance targets, quality standards, and statutory responsibilities.

Collaboration & Professional Contribution

- Work collaboratively across services and with partners to deliver effective, customer-focused outcomes.
- Contribute to the promotion and continuous improvement of the Development Management service and the Council's wider objectives.

Person Specification

Professional and Technical Requirements

Qualifications

- Level 6 in a relevant subject or equivalent vocational qualification.
- A relevant professional qualification such as MRTPI or equivalent
- Full UK driving licence.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Good knowledge of the main operational, procedural and practical issues relating to Development Management
- Good knowledge of current inter/national laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and developments relating to Development Management
- Experience in using GIS and DM IT applications
- Experience across a range of development management casework, including some major development projects
- Experience in the preparation and presentation of reports for Planning Committees
- Experience of preparation and presentation of evidence for planning appeals (written reps and Hearings)
- Experience in researching and providing accurate and consistent pre-application advice to the public and developers
- Experience in working collaboratively with service users.
- Experience in engaging effectively with others and building productive partnerships.

Core Competency Requirements

- **Communication**: Tailors communication to audience and context. Uses listening and questioning techniques to clarify complex issues and support team understanding.
- **Collaboration**: Coordinates with colleagues and partners to deliver shared goals and improve service outcomes.
- **Service Delivery**: Identifies and resolves service issues, improves processes, and ensures policy alignment. Promotes efficiency and avoids waste through practical improvements.
- **Decision-Making**: Uses evidence and judgement to resolve issues and improve delivery.
- **Digital & Data Literacy**: Interprets data to improve services. Applies knowledge of digital risks and ethical data use. Uses basic analytical techniques to support decision making.
- **Adaptability**: Adjusts approach responsively to evolving needs and priorities. Identifies opportunities for continuous improvement and supports others through change.
- **Problem-Solving**: Analyses problems and applies knowledge to develop practical solutions and suggest improvements.
- **Community & Customer Focus**: Engages with service users and customers to improve delivery, ensure accessibility, and reflect diverse needs.
- **Leadership**: Supervises day-to-day activity and supports team development. Coordinates tasks and resources to meet the needs of the service.

Strengths

- **Analytical:** You seek and analyse information to inform your decisions, based on the best available evidence.
- **Precise:** You concentrate on detail and make sure everything is accurate and error free.
- **Problem Solver:** You take a positive approach to tackling problems. You find ways to identify suitable solutions.
- **Disciplined:** You follow processes, operating well within set standards, rules and guidelines.
- **Influencer:** You influence others, you articulate the rationale to gain their agreement.

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Desirable