Recruitment Information Pack

Job Title	Planning Officer Level 1
Reference No	510.65
Location	West Lothian Civic Centre
Hours	£41,050 - £44,955
Salary	36 hours
Status	Permanent

Thank you for your interest in this post, if you have any questions in relation to the recruitment process or if you are disabled and require any adjustment to the recruitment process please contact our recruitment team on 01506 28 22 22 or email recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk.

Privacy Notice – HR Services - Recruitment

Information held about you.

West Lothian Council will hold the following personal information:

- Full name
- Home address
- Email address
- Employment history
- Training/qualifications
- Registration with professional bodies
- Equal opportunities monitoring information (gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion and disability)
- Criminal convictions (if applicable)
- Pre-employment checks (health screening, references and PVG check if applicable)

Who is processing my information?

All personal information is held and processed by West Lothian Council in accordance with data protection law.

How will we use information we hold about you?

Personal information held by West Lothian Council will be used in the following ways:

- To assess the suitability of applicants for the job they have applied for
- Equal opportunities monitoring information will be used to monitor the councils compliance with equality legislation
- To populate the HR Payroll system for successful candidates (see privacy notices on performance of contract of employment for further details)

Who we will share your information with?

We will not share your information with any external bodies.

How long do we keep your records?

If your application is successful we will keep your information for a period of 6 years after you leave employment with the council. Information stored on the Myjobscotland website will be retained for 7 years from the date of your application.

If your application is unsuccessful, all information will be kept for a period of 6 months, following which it will be securely destroyed. Information stored on the Myjobscotland webstie will be retained for 5 years from the date of your application.

Your rights

You have a number of rights under data protection law, including the right to request your information and to request that the information be amended or, in some circumstances, erased if incorrect.

To request your records, you will need to put your request in writing to HR Services, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF

Email – hrsupport@westlothian.gov.uk

You also have a right to make a complaint about our handling of your personal information to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about how your information is used, please contact Data Protection Officer, West Lothian Council, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF or email DataProtectionOfficer@westlothian.gov.uk

More information about data protection and how it applies to you is available from the Information Commissioner's Office.

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About Planning Economic Development and Regeneration

Planning Economic Development and Regeneration covers the functional areas of Economic Development & Regeneration, Environmental Health and Trading Standards, and Planning Services. Much of the work of the service is regulatory in nature, covering a range of statutory processes including planning applications, building warrants and various licence applications and preparation of the development plan for West Lothian. In addition these regulatory functions cover food safety, workplace safety, trading standards, metrology and a range of consumer and environmental protection activities.

One of the key roles of the service is increasing and supporting economic activity in West Lothian, through proactive engagement with the business sector and promoting and supporting West Lothian as an attractive place to invest and do business.

Economic Development & Regeneration

Economic Development & Regeneration has a key role in monitoring the West Lothian economy and delivering services to individuals and businesses to help deliver the conditions for economic growth in West Lothian. The Business and Enterprise team deliver support, advice and assistance to individuals starting up businesses in West Lothian, assist existing companies to safeguard jobs and grow and expand locally and help attract new firms to relocate to the area. The employability and Regeneration Team engage with individuals and communities to improve their life chances and promote regeneration. The service is also responsible for the community Planning Partnership.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

The role of environmental health is to protect and enhance the application of statute, the health, welfare, environment, safety and trading market place of the people of West Lothian. Teams within the service deliver protection in relation to food quality, health and safety at work, pollution control, animal health, welfare and control, pest control, consumer protection and compliance with fair trading legislation.

Planning Services

Planning Services carries out the statutory planning and building standards functions of the council in addition to the Education Planning requirement which has a key role in ensuring that sufficient education capacity exists in West Lothian for predicted levels of demand in nurseries and schools across the area arising from new development. The service seeks to promote sustainable economic development and ensure protection of the environment.

Council Strategies

Planning Economic Development and Regeneration has responsibility for the development and implementation of the Strategic Development Plan, the West Lothian Local Development Plan, the Economic Strategy and the Climate Change Strategy.

Equality and Diversity

Equality is relevant to us all. Addressing discrimination and promoting equality are everyone's core business.

We want a West Lothian in which all people and communities have a say in their future and an equal opportunity for health, safety, education, fulfilling work, and a high quality of life. West Lothian Council has published equality outcomes, equality information on our workforce and our progress on mainstreaming equality. This reflects our commitment to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination as well as fulfilling our statutory duties under legislation.

The council recognises and values the diverse range of talents, skills, experience and perspectives that exist within society and believes that those qualities and attributes should also be reflected within the composition of its workforce, its employment practices and in the planning and delivery of its services.

Central to the council's Equality and Diversity agenda, is the prevention of discrimination, victimisation and harassment against service users and employees on any grounds, but particularly in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- sex (gender)
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation

In addition, prevention of discrimination, victimisation and harassment in relation to gender identity, gender expression, non-binary identities, language, social origin, employment status, political belief, trade union membership or activity, or responsibility for dependants is key to ensuring we have a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

West Lothian Council is a Stonewall Diversity Champion and is committed to advancing LGBT equality and this is reflective in all our policies which are inclusive of all protected characteristics.

How to apply

Our preferred method of receiving applications is on line. In the interests of equality we do not accept C.Vs.

All applications must be received by the closing date stated on the advert and any late applications will not be accepted. Where there have been a high number of applications for a post, we may decide to revise the closing date for receipt of applications. We do not keep copies of application forms on file for any future similar vacancies and therefore you will need to complete a separate application form for each post that you apply for. However, when applying on line the system will remember your core details.

If you apply for a post on line we will contact you using the email address you have provided. If you do not have an email address you can sign up for a free account through internet providers such as Yahoo, Hotmail or Googlemail.

The information you provide in your application is used to determine whether or not you should be shortlisted for interview. It is therefore in your interest to complete the form fully and carefully. Your application form should contain sufficient information to demonstrate that you have the skills and experience required for the post.

What happens next?

Following consideration of your application you will be notified as to whether or not you have been selected for interview.

If you are selected for interview you will receive an email from us confirming this and asking you to log in to the Myjobscotland website and select a suitable interview time. If you are not selected for interview you will receive an email letter confirming this.

Successful Candidate

The successful candidate will receive a conditional offer of employment, pending completion of the following checks, as appropriate.

- Pre-employment health check
- References
- PVG
- Eligibility to work in the UK

A formal offer of employment will be issued only when all checks have been satisfactorily completed.

If you have any questions please email recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk

Terms and Conditions of Employment for Employees

Conditions of Service	Conditions of Service are those of the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government employees as adopted and amended by West Lothian Council.
Hours of Work	Hours of work for a full time post are 36 hours per week. The standard working hours are Monday – Thursday 8.30 – 5.00, Friday 8.30 – 4.00. School based staff are employed on sessional contracts of either 38, 39 or 40 weeks.
Pay	Employees are paid by bank transfer on the last Thursday of the month. Where appropriate you will receive an annual increment on the 1st April each year, until you reach the top of the grade.
Annual Leave	Depending on length of service you will be entitled to either 26 (187.2 hours) or 31 (223.2 hours) days annual leave, this will be pro-rated for part time employees. The leave year is 1st January to 31st December. School based sessional staff will receive additional pay, depending on their length of service, to reflect their annual leave entitlement.
Public Holidays	There are 7 paid public holidays across the calendar year. Part time employees will be given a pro-rated entitlement to reflect their particular working arrangements.
Sickness Absence	Your entitlement to sickness allowance will be in accordance with the Scheme of Sickness Absence set out within the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for Scottish Local Government employees.
Pension	You are legally required to make provision for your pension. Employees with permanent contracts, or temporary contracts for 3 months or more, will automatically become members of the Local Government Pension Fund, unless they apply to opt out. Pension contributions are based on your salary.
Appraisal Development Review	All employees are entitled to an annual review with their manager, to identify any development needs and set objectives for the coming year.

Employee Benefits	The council has negotiated discounts for employees with over 90 local businesses and over 1,000 businesses nationally. Employees can also take advantage of 20% off membership and free joining fees with West Lothian Leisure. As part of its commitment to having a healthy workforce the council offers physiotherapy, counselling and an Employee Assistance Programme.
Pool Cars	The council provides access to pool cars for employees who need to drive as part of their job.
Trade Union	The council supports collective bargaining and you have the right to join a trade union and take part in its activities and are encouraged to do so.
Health and Safety	The council is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. Health and safety responsibilities are set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Supplementary Policy and Safety Arrangements booklet for your workplace.

West Lothian Council

Job Description

Job Title	Planning Officer Level 1
Reports to:	Development Management Manager
Location:	West Lothian Civic Centre

Purpose of the job

The purpose of the job is to process planning applications, and related statutory applications, in fulfilling the council's role as planning authority for the area.

The postholder will also be responsible for processing planning appeals and providing professional advice on development management matters to elected members, developers, agents and members of the public. The postholder will support the Development Management Manager in achieving the council's aspirations in respect of performance and customer care.

In addition, the postholder will undertake specific projects, including preparing and contributing to the preparation of planning policy and planning advice. The postholder will, from time to time, attend committee, and other decision making bodies of the council, and may be required to support the council's local review body.

Job Scope

The postholder will be responsible for a range of development management activities, including the processing of planning applications and appeals, monitoring of development, contributing to policy formulation and implementing customer care and performance initiatives. The postholder will process a development management casework comprising mainly householder and local applications, but may also be expected to contribute to the processing of major applications.

The development management team is also responsible for the planning enforcement responsibilities of the council and the postholder will work closely with the enforcement team to ensure compliance with legislation and conditions attached to planning consents and may, from time to time, be expected to deal with enforcement matters.

Working relationships within Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration will include development planning & environment, building standards, economic development & regeneration and environmental health. The postholder will also work closely with other service areas within the council including, housing services and legal services, together with a wide range of external stakeholders.

The postholder will be supervised by one of the unit's senior/principal planners on a day to day basis.

The council seeks to ensure a joined up planning response as issues emerge and promotes a flexible approach to service delivery. Ensuring effective and efficient service delivery requires flexible working within Planning Services and the postholder may work outwith the Development Management Team in order to ensure overall service priorities are achieved.

Principal Accountabilities/Key Tasks

Process a range of planning applications, including applications for householder, residential, retail, industrial and commercial developments and changes of use.

Process a range of related applications including applications for advertisement consent, listed building consent and conservation area consent.

Process appeals against the refusal of planning permission, and act as a witness for the council at hearings and public inquiries.

Prepare written reports on planning applications and development management matters for the Development Management Committee and other decision making bodies of the council.

Attend Development Management Committee, and other decision making bodies of the council, and present agenda papers to committee.

Provide professional advice on development management matters to elected members, applicants, agents, members of the public and other stakeholders.

Help develop, maintain and implement the monitoring system for development on the ground.

Support the Development Management Manager by providing background and briefing material on development management matters, including specific planning applications.

Contribute to the formulation and review of planning policies, procedures and practice.

Maintain effective liaison with development planning, building standards, transportation, environmental health and other council units to ensure that the requirements of these service units are appropriately represented in development management decisions.

Carrying out negotiation on developer contributions and working with officers in development planning and legal services to ensure that appropriate developer contributions are secured through legal agreements.

Maintain effective liaison with outside bodies including the Scottish Government, agencies, infrastructure providers, community councils and other local representative groups on planning application matters.

Maintain effective record systems.

Assist with developing, monitoring and maintaining the service's case management system and other computer based systems.

Assist in ensuring the service's web pages are kept current with respect to development management matters.

Respond to enquiries and complaint in accordance with the service customer contact strategy and corporate complaints procedure.

Maintain an overview of legislative change and best practice and contribute to amending service procedures in response to any such change.

Assist with the delivery and development of the service to satisfy best value requirements. The postholder will provide support for maintaining the unit's Customer Service Excellence accreditation, contributing as appropriate to retention of the corporate Customer Service Excellence accreditation and contributing to the continuous improvement of the service through the West Lothian Assessment Model.

Occasional out of hours working to carry out public consultation and to attend meetings with community councils and other organisations.

Working within other planning services teams as necessary to provide a flexible approach to meeting agreed priorities for service delivery.

Carrying out other duties as may occasionally be required by the head of service / service manager / principal / senior, including deputising as necessary.

Qualifications, Skills, Knowledge

Essential

A degree in Town and Country Planning or equivalent qualification.

Membership of, or proceeding towards membership of, the Royal Town Planning Institute.

A demonstrable ability to deal with a range of planning applications.

A demonstrable knowledge and understanding of development management procedures law and practice.

An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities.

Good written and oral communication skills with an ability to work to tight deadlines.

Good administrative, organisational and inter-personal skills for liaison with other parties.

The ability to work within a team and as an individual with the need for minimum supervision

Desirable

Working knowledge of MSOffice, Uniform database, Objective, IDOX and Crystal Reports

Other Essential Information

The postholder will require a current driving licence in order to undertake site visits and meetings.