

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Employment and Personnel Committee on 26th April 2025

To create a new Career Graded Planning Policy Officer post in the Planning Policy & Housing Strategy team

Report of the Assistant Director of Planning and Planning Policy

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Sarah Kay – Assistant Director of Planning and Planning Policy

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To seek approval to create a new post in the Planning Policy & Housing Strategy team; and
 - To seek agreement to recommend to Council for the approval of a budget to create the post.
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REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 In February 2025, the Council reported the outcome of their Local Plan Review, which concluded it was necessary for the Council to commence undertaking preparation of a new Local Plan. Need has arisen as a result of the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024, which amongst other planning policy implications, revised the methodology for calculating local housing need and resultantly increased the local housing need figure for Bolsover District Council from 272 dwellings per annum (set out in the 2020 Local Plan) to 371 dwellings per annum (as at Dec 2024 with 5% buffer).
- 1.2 To embark on the preparation of a new Local Plan, the Council has updated its Local Development Scheme (LDS), with a new timetable for plan-making activities programmed over the next 5 years. Securing a wider scope of planning skills and capacity across the Planning Policy and Housing Strategy team dynamic will ensure the team are able to react to the demands arising from a new timetable of plan-making activities. This will afford the team longer term resilience and allow for succession planning, particularly in a competitive market where the Planning Service have successfully demonstrated the value of 'growing our own' at a time when professional planning skills are in high demand nationwide.
- 1.3 In addition to the demands arising from a new programme of plan-making activity and the associated evidence base work, the team also leads on the delivery of

Local Plan Implementation Projects. In addition, the demands on the team have increased recently as the team also leads on the Council's obligations under the Environment Act 2021 and this in particular has increased the need for this additional post.

2. Details of Proposal

- 2.1 Currently the Planning Policy and Housing Strategy team comprise of 1 x FTE Manager, 2 x FTE Principal Planning Policy Officers, 1 x FTE Career Grade Planning Policy Officer at the Grade 7 Senior level, and 1 x FTE Senior Planning Policy Information Officer and 1 x FTE Planning Policy Information Officer, so leaving a skills gap at the entry Planner level within the team.
- 2.2 The proposal is to create a new role within the Planning Policy & Housing Strategy Team to provide support and assistance for the Council's day to day plan making and strategic housing function.
- 2.2 The job description and person specification for the Career Grade Planning Policy Officer was prepared and processed through job evaluation in 2023, with a grading between 4 and 7 confirmed. Based on current pay scales (2024/25) the total costs of the post (per grade) is set out in the table below:

		<u>Salary</u>	<u>Pension</u>	<u>NI</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Grade 4	6	£25,695	£5,344.60	£2,290.13	£31,740.66
	7	£25,913	£5,389.80	£2,320.13	£33,622.45
	8	£26,947	£5,604.98	£2,462.89	£35,014.88
Grade 6	13	£31,057	£6,459.83	£3,030.05	£40,546.76
	14	£31,624	£6,577.75	£3,108.28	£41,309.83
	15	£32,754	£6,812.89	£3,264.29	£42,831.43
	16	£33,346	£6,935.88	£3,345.89	£43,627.35
Grade 7	17	£34,193	£7,112.20	£3,462.87	£44,768.37
	18	£35,064	£7,293.38	£3,583.08	£45,940.76
	19	£35,961	£7,479.86	£3,706.80	£47,147.51
	20	£36,886	£7,672.34	£3,834.50	£48,393.09

- 2.3 If a candidate is appointed at Grade 4 or 6 they would be supported through a degree apprenticeship, utilising the apprenticeship levy or other available bursary funding (see below), to enable the post holder to secure chartered membership to the Royal Town Planning Institute. This would require the release of the post holder 1 day per week to undertake apprenticeship training, and the support of a work-based mentor.
- 2.4 If creation of this post is agreed the Planning Service will partner with the Pathways to Planning initiative (being run by the Local Government Association). Through that initiative partnership recruitment to the post will be undertaken in the summer with the LGA, who have a recruitment pool of prospective

Graduate's interested in a Planning career in local government. The route and partnership would secure an educational bursary award of £10,000 per annum to cover the costs of the postholder undertaking a post graduate master's qualification commencing in September 2025.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to establish a Career Graded Planning Policy Officer post to support the work of the Planning Policy & Housing Strategy Team in its statutory plan making and additional Environment Act functions.
- 3.2 The role is also Career Graded, such that it will allow recruitment into the role at apprentice level that enables the Council to continue its programme of supporting and 'growing its own' pipeline of qualified Planners. This will build in resilience across the team and assist in future succession planning.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Committee elect not to support the additionality for the post and the additional resource demand therefore falls to the existing Planning Policy & Housing Strategy team with knock on effects with performance against other projects being accepted.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Committee considers and supports the establishment of a new Career Graded Planning Policy Officer post in the Planning Policy & Housing Strategy team; and
2. That the Committee recommend to Council that the budget be created to fund the new post via the Council's General Fund.

Approved by Councillor Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes ☒ No ☐

Details: The total cost for the additionality for this post based on the established posts job evaluation at Grade 4, 6 and 7 as follows:

Grade 4 - £33,329.90 - £35,014.88

Grade 6 - £40,546.76 – £43,627.35

Grade 7 - £44,768.37 – 48,393.09

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes ☐ No ☒

Details: There are no legal implications arising from this report.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details: In order to met its obligations arising from the Environment Act 2021, nature recovery and biodiversity activities are captured in the day to day duties operated by the Planning Policy team function.

Staffing: Yes ☒ No ☐

Details: The Council's policies and procedures will be followed for recruitment to this post.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	N/A
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Details: Portfolio Holder for Growth; and Portfolio Holder for Environment.

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing.

All are linked due to the varying nature of associated planning applications and the developments the subject thereof.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1.	Career Graded Planning Policy Officer Job Description and Person Specification

Background Papers

(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).

None.