

**INFORMATION BOOKLET**

Open Competition for Appointment to the position of:

**Planning Inspector**

**Closing Date for receipt of completed applications:**

**Friday 10 March 2023 at 3.00 p.m.**

**AN BORD PLEANÁLA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER**

**February 2023**

<b>TITLE OF POSITION:</b>	Planning Inspector
<b>NATURE OF POST</b>	Permanent, full- time office-based position
<b>LOCATION:</b>	64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 D01V902

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## 1. Background

An Bord Pleanála plays a critical role in the Irish planning system deciding appeals of planning decisions made by local authorities and direct applications for strategic infrastructure and other categories of development under the suite of Planning and Development Acts and other Acts including new functions under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. The Board's role is to carry out independent assessments of appeals and applications and make decisions which respect the principles of proper planning and sustainable development in a fair, equitable and timely manner. An Bord Pleanála's mandate is to provide high quality professional planning assessments and decisions in a timely manner having regard to the principles of transparency, impartiality and independence.

In carrying out its functions, An Bord Pleanála operates within a legislative framework that interfaces with EU legislation and policy and is constantly evolving particularly in the areas of environmental protection and sustainable development.

An Bord Pleanála's mandate is to provide high quality professional planning assessments and decisions in a timely manner.

Further details on the role and work of An Bord Pleanála can be found at [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie)

### Staff Structure and Reporting Relationships

An Bord Pleanála currently has 210 employees and 9 Board members. An organogram is included at the end of this booklet (**Appendix 1**).

A PI is a member of the Planning Operations Division with a day to day reporting relationship to a Senior Planning Inspector (Area Co-ordinator) and Assistant Director of Planning. The role also involves interaction with the Director of Planning, SPIs, other PIs, planning administration sections and staff across the organisation

The overall structure is due to change arising from recent draft legislation and recommendations following the Office of the Planning Regulator Review and the Minister's Action Plan of October 2022.

## **Current Organisational Context**

- An increasingly complex planning regulatory environment with an emphasis on environmental protection, including protection of habitats and biodiversity.
- Preparation for the implementation of new comprehensive planning legislation anticipated for 2023 which will significantly reform the Board, including implementation of recommendations arising from the review by the Office of the Planning Regulator and the Minister's Action Plan of October 2022.
- Preparation for and implementation of the provisions of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 to deal with the range of significant Marine infrastructural development applications as specified in the Act, together with the proposed developments from the Climate Action plan relating to the marine environment and renewable energy sector.
- Making decisions on strategic infrastructure developments relating to energy, transport, waste, and other facilities expected in the coming years, including under new processes.
- Dealing with the challenges associated with new case types such as Large Scale Residential Developments (LRD) appeals.

## **2. Purpose of the Role**

A Planning Inspector (PI) is a member of the Planning Operations Division. A PI is required to make quality, timely planning assessments and recommendations on a variety of case work.

### **Principal Duties**

#### **Operational**

- Carry out site inspections and provide reports and recommendations to the Board on all assigned cases.

- All reports should be carried out in a professional and timely manner meeting targets and deadlines which have been set to ensure compliance within the statutory objective period (SOP).
- Manage and conduct oral hearings and meetings in an efficient and effective manner.
- Be available for consultation with the Director of Planning, Assistant Directors of Planning, Senior Planning Inspectors and Administrative staff on a daily basis.
- Prepare and present files to the Board when/if required in accordance with agreed protocols.
- Attend area team meetings, general Planning Operations Divisional Meetings and training events.

### **Continual Improvement of Organisation**

- Partake in internal and external working groups/committees as required.
- Contribute to developing and implementing in-house CPD/training initiatives.
- Contribute to the ongoing Plean-IT project and other initiatives to support public sector reform and continuous improvement.

## **3. Qualifications and Experience**

### **Essential Requirements**

#### **Candidates, must on or before 10 March 2023:**

- Hold a professional qualification in planning recognised by the Irish Planning Institute or the Royal Town Planning Institute or an equivalent.
- A minimum of 5 years suitable planning experience.
- Have the ability to prepare written reports in a timely manner that are clear and concise and presented to the highest professional standard.
- Have an excellent knowledge and experience of planning, its nature, objective and place in public policy in Ireland and in the international context.

### **Desirable requirements**

Relevant qualifications and/or experience in the following areas:

- A thorough knowledge of planning and environmental legislation including Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Directive
- Conducting oral hearings or meetings in an efficient and effective manner.
- Have the ability to properly plan and manage a diverse workload effectively and efficiently.
- Have effective oral communication skills coupled with the ability to build strong interpersonal relationships across an organisation.
- Have a clear understanding of and commitment to the role of An Bord Pleanála, and the challenges it faces in the planning environment.
- Have knowledge of and experience of using MS Office and GIS.

#### **4. Person Specification**

The ideal candidate should:

- Be committed to maintaining high professional standards at all times.
- Be reliable and flexible with the ability to work on a variety of case types.
- Demonstrate initiative and commitment to providing an excellent service to the public.
- Possess strong interpersonal skills and an ability to communicate effectively.
- Be thorough and accurate in their work.
- Be self-motivated, with a proven ability to get things done and work to deadlines.
- Have the ability to work both individually and as part of a team.
- Have the ability to work without guidance and on own initiative without excessive support.

#### **5. Key Competencies for effective performance**

##### **(Appendix 2)**

- Application of Specialist Planning Knowledge and Skills
- Report Writing and Communication

- Organising and Planning of work
- Initiative

## 6. Selection Process

The Selection Process may include some or all of the following:

- A shortlisting of candidates, on the basis of the information contained in their application
- a competitive report writing exercise
- a competitive interview which may include a presentation

Normally, the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future posts. While candidates may meet the eligibility criteria of the competition, if the numbers applying for a post are such that it would not be practical to progress all candidates to the next stage of the selection process, An Bord Pleanála may decide that only a certain number may be called for a remote report writing exercise/interview.

In this respect, a shortlisting process will be employed based on an examination of the application forms and the essential and desirable requirements for the posts, to select a group for the next stage of the process who appear to be the most suitable for the position. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of how your skills, personal qualities, qualifications and experience meet the essential and desirable requirements of the post.

If candidates are required to be available for remote testing and/or interview(s), it is at their own expense. It is not possible to alter the allocated testing and/or interview date(s) or time(s). **Candidates who do not attend for testing and/or interview(s) etc., when required, will have no claim for further consideration and their candidature will be deemed to be withdrawn.**

Any candidate who supplies false or misleading information in their application may be disqualified or have their employment terminated. We will endeavour to keep candidates informed of the progress of their application at the earliest possible date.

**Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.**

## **7. Application Process**

The **Planning Inspector** Application Form must be fully completed and submitted correctly to the specified e-mail address. Incorrectly submitted application forms will not be accepted, so please note the following information carefully:

**The application form must be in an editable Word document or in PDF format. Upon completion, please save the document as:**

**“Planning Inspector - your name.docx”.**

**You will be required to attach it to an e-mail for submission once completed.**

### **Submitting the form:**

On completion, you are required to submit the form to the following address [recruitment@pleanala.ie](mailto:recruitment@pleanala.ie)

Only applications fully completed in the appropriate format and submitted online will be accepted into the competition process. If you have difficulty completing or accessing the application form, please email [recruitment@pleanala.ie](mailto:recruitment@pleanala.ie)

We acknowledge receipt of all applications. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days of applying, please email [s.byrne@pleanala.ie](mailto:s.byrne@pleanala.ie)

**Please do not submit a Curriculum Vitae with your application as it will not be considered.**

**Closing Date:**

**10 March 2023 at 3.00 p.m.**

**Please Note**

We endeavour to give as much notice as possible for testing/ interview dates etc. It is, however, estimated that the report writing exercise and interviews would take place March/April. Candidates should make themselves available around this time.

**Shortlisting**

In the event of a shortlisting exercise being employed, the information provided in your application will be examined and assessed against criteria based on the requirements of the position.

A panel may be formed from which future temporary or permanent appointments may be made

**References**

Please consider names of people you feel would be suitable referees that we might consult (2 - 3 names and contact details). The referees should include your current employer. Please be assured that we will only collect the details and contact referees should you come under consideration after the interview stage.



## Principal Conditions of Service

### 1. General:

The appointment is to an established position in the Public Service. A probationary period of one year from the date of appointment will apply. Notwithstanding this paragraph and the paragraph immediately following below, this will not preclude an extension of the probationary period in appropriate circumstances. During the period of probation, the appointee's performance will be subject to review by an Assistant Director of Planning to determine whether the appointee:

- (i) has performed in a satisfactory manner
- (ii) has been satisfactory in general conduct and
- (iii) is suitable from the point of view of health with particular regard to sick leave.

Prior to completion of probation, a decision will be made as to whether or not the appointee will be retained. This decision will be based on the appointee's performance being assessed against the criteria set out in (i) to (iii) above. The detail of the probationary process will be explained to the appointee and the appointee will be given a copy of An Bord Pleanála's guidelines on probation.

### 2. Salary:

The salary for this position is as follows: **(with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2022)**

#### Pay (inclusive of IPC allowance) – PPC scale

€70,321	€71,855	€73,386	€74,923	€76,456
€76,864	€78,376	€79,945	€82,499 <sup>1</sup>	€85,060 <sup>2</sup>

*Long Service Increment 1 (LSI1) after 3 years' satisfactory service at the maximum.*

*Long Service Increment 2 (LSI2) after 6 years satisfactory service at the maximum.*

Candidates should note that the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy. Increments may be awarded annually subject to satisfactory performance.

**Important Note:**

Different pay and conditions may apply, if, immediately prior to appointment the appointee is already a serving Civil Servant or Public Servant.

Payment will be made fortnightly in arrears by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) into a bank account of an officer's choice. Payment cannot be made until bank details have been supplied.

**3. Tenure**

This position is permanent and pensionable. The employment may be terminated at any time by whichever is the greater of three months' notice in writing on either side, or as set out in the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973 to 2005. In the event of misconduct, employment may be terminated at any time without notice or payment in lieu of notice. In any other case, any termination of employment by the Board must be for stated reasons.

**4. Duties**

The officer will be required to perform any duties appropriate to the position which may be assigned from time to time.

**5. Organisation of the Working Time Act, 1997**

The terms of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 will apply, where appropriate, to this appointment.

**6. Hours of Attendance:**

Hours of attendance will be fixed from time to time but will amount to not less than 41 hours 15 minutes gross per week – 37 hours net of lunch breaks. The position holder will be required to work a five-day week. The hours of attendance are normally Monday to Friday 9.15 am to 5.30 pm. However, where extra attendance is required to carry out designated duties or assignments, no overtime or additional remuneration is payable. Blended working is available to staff subject to the requirements of the role and section you are assigned to.

**7. Annual Leave:**

The annual leave allowance will be **27** working days a year rising to **30** after 5 years' service. This allowance (which is subject to the usual conditions regarding the

granting of annual leave) is on the basis of a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

## **8. Health:**

A candidate for and any person holding the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service. Those under consideration for a position will be required to complete a health and character declaration.

## **9. Absence due to illness**

Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with the provisions of the An Bord Pleanála's Absence Management Policy and relevant sick leave circulars as amended from time to time.

Appointees, who will be paying the Class A rate of PRSI, will be required to sign a mandate authorising the Department of Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts direct to An Bord Pleanála. Payment of salary during illness will be subject to the terms and conditions of sick leave in respect of the civil service and/or public service generally and the appointee making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Social Protection within the required time limits.

## **10. Assignment/Location**

The successful candidate will be based in the Offices of An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 D01 V902. When obliged to travel on official duty the appointee will be paid appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances, subject to normal civil service regulations.

## **11. Superannuation**

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate pension terms and conditions as prevailing in An Bord Pleanála at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment, (please see important note below) this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single

Public Service Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”). Candidates will be notified of which scheme will apply to them, at the time of being offered an appointment.

The Single Scheme, as provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012, came into effect on 1 January 2013. From that date onwards, new public servants will be members of the Single Scheme, which will provide CPI-linked defined-benefit pensions based on career-average pay. The Scheme’s minimum pension age will be linked to the State Pension age. Retirement for most members will be compulsory on reaching age 70. For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme for Public Servants please see: <http://www.per.gov.ie/pensions>.

### **Pension Accrual**

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme will apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

### **Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)**

This appointment is subject to the ASC in accordance with the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017 which is chargeable on pensionable income only.

### **Important Note**

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment, which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate. at the time of being offered an appointment, An Bord Pleanála will, in the light of the appointee’s employment history, determine whether he or she is a “new entrant”. Appointees will be required to disclose their full public service history.

### **Declaration:**

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment).

**For further information in relation to the pension scheme for Established State Employees please see the following website: <http://www.cspensions.gov.ie>**

## **12. Confidentiality and Standards of Behaviour:**

A Planning Inspector is required to comply with the provisions of Sections 113 and 114 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended which relate to the disclosure of confidential information and to the prohibition of certain communications in relation to any matter which falls to be considered or decided by the Board, or any of its committees or consulting groups. The appointee will agree not to disclose to third parties any confidential information either during or subsequent to the period of employment.

## **13. Ethics in Public Office Act 1995**

The appointee will be subject to the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995.

## **14. Code of Conduct – Political Activity:**

In accordance with the Board's Code of Conduct an employee must make a declaration to the Secretary regarding membership of any political parties.

## **15. Staff Requirements:**

All employees are required to comply with the Board's code of Conduct and all other policies and procedures in place and as may be laid down/amended by the Board from time to time.

## **16. Outside Employment:**

The position will be whole time and the appointee may not engage in private practice or be connected with any outside business, which conflicts in any way with his/her official duties, impairs performance or compromises his/her integrity.

## **17. Eligibility to Compete**

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

## **18. Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)**

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

## **19. Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)**

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider public service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

## **20. Declaration**

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

## **21. GDPR Privacy Statement- Recruitment Process**

### **Purpose of Processing Personal Information**

An Bord Pleanála conducts a competency based recruitment process to fill vacancies within the organisation. To complete this, interested individuals are asked to submit an application form for assessment by an interview panel. For the successful candidate, some of the personal information provided will form the basis of the contract of employment (e.g. name and address) and their personnel file.

### **Legal Basis for Processing Personal Information**

- Necessary for performance of a contract or to enter into such a contract
- Compliance with legal obligation (Terms of Employment Information Act) 1994 – 2014

### **Recipients**

The following shall receive your personal information for reasons outlined below:

Recipient	Reason
HR	Storing application, acknowledging responses and corresponding with applicants
TestReach	Enterprise for managing and delivering secure assessment of report writing
Interview Panel	The Interview Panel will receive your applications to conduct shortlisting and assessing of applicants
Referees	Successful candidates will be asked to provide referees who can be contacted to validate work records and comment on suitability of the applicant for the post applied for. They shall be contacted to complete a form and the applicants name/address will need to be provided to receive the reference.
Chief Medical Officer (CMO)	We may use your personal details to refer you to the CMO if any issues are highlighted in your Self-Assessment Health form. A copy of the declaration form will also be sent to CMO in the event of referral.

### Details of Data Transfers Outside the EU

No data is processed outside the EU.

### Automated Decision Making

This does not apply to this process.

### Retention Period for Personal Data

Applications shall be retained for 12 months for unsuccessful candidates. A successful candidate will have their application placed on their employee file and retained during their employment and for an appropriate period thereafter.

## Your GDPR Rights in Relation to this Process

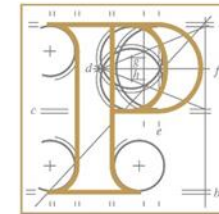
Right	Explanation
Access	You can request and receive access to the information requested in the process at any time.
Portability	You can request and receive a copy of this data, in electronic/transferable format, at any time
Erasure	You can request the data held be erased. We have outlined the anticipated retention period above.
Rectification	You can have any incorrect information, due to this being updated or otherwise, to be corrected. It should be noted that deadlines for applications still apply so no information except for contact information can be changed after the closing date for applications.
Objection	You can object to this information being processed and ask for your application to be removed from process.
Complain	You can make a complaint to our internal Data Protection Officer (contact details outlined below) and/or make a complaint to the relevant supervisory authority – Data Protection Commission in Ireland.

### Contact Details

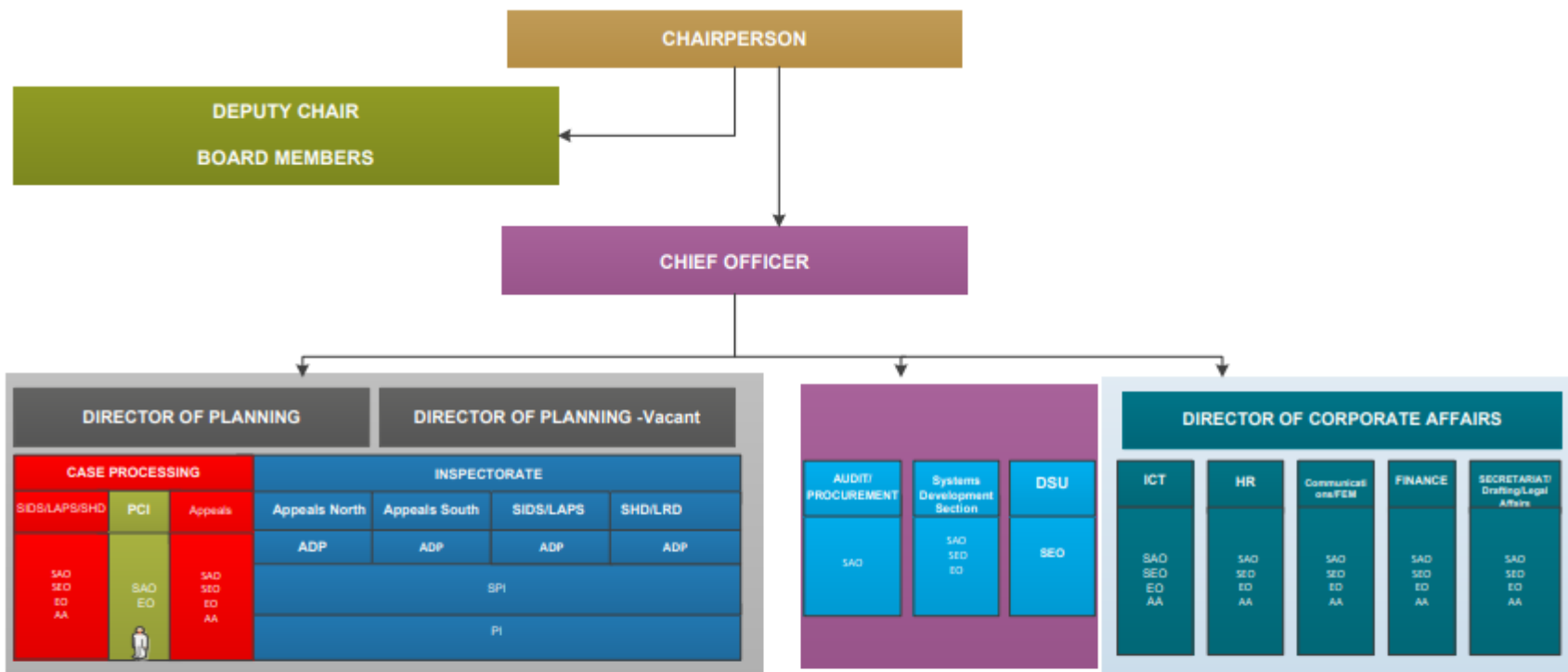
**Name:** Data Protection Officer

**Email:** [dataprotection@pleanala.ie](mailto:dataprotection@pleanala.ie)






Appendix 1 – Current An Bord Pleanála organogram

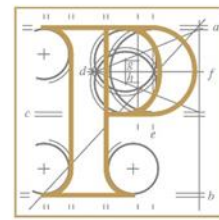


**Legend:**

ADP = Assist Director Planning  
 SPI = Senior Planning Inspector  
 PI = Planning Inspector

SAO = Senior Administrative Officer  
 SEO = Senior Executive Officer  
 EO = Executive Officer  
 AA = Administrative Assistant

 Made up of existing staff



## APPENDIX 2 COMPETENCIES - PLANNING INSPECTOR

### Application of Specialist Planning Knowledge and Skills

- Develops and maintains skills and expertise across a number of areas that are relevant to the planning and environmental field
- Keeps up to date with developments in planning and environmental matters including legislation at national and EU levels
- Can demonstrate expert knowledge and experience of planning, its nature, objective and place in public policy in Ireland and in the international context.
- Demonstrates effective application of knowledge and skills.
- Shows evidence of ability to share such knowledge/skills with other colleagues.
- Can see through to the core issues and uses sound judgment in coming to conclusions

### Report Writing and Communication

- Communicates clearly and concisely through written reports and orally.
- Identifies and focuses on core issues when dealing with complex information/situations
- Capable of assimilating large quantities of information/facts and thinks through issues logically and presents information succinctly.
- Builds rapport by listening and responding appropriately.
- Interacts effectively with a wide range of people both inside and outside the organisation.
- Conducts Oral Hearing's or meetings in an efficient and effective manner
- Presents all work to a high standard

### Organising and Planning

- Shows ability to plan for and manage a diverse workload in an efficient manner.
- Can meet targets and agreed timescales within the context of overall objectives set.
- Demonstrates effective performance within a teamwork environment.
- Demonstrates an ability to build relationships across an organisation
- Monitors progress against objectives and reviews plans where necessary

### Initiative

- Demonstrates ability to work without external guidance.
- Shows ability to initiate and carry out information analysis and research.
- Demonstrates a high level of motivation and consistently strives to perform at a high level.
- Demonstrates potential to contribute to the continual improvement of the organisation.