

An
Bord
Pleanála

INFORMATION BOOKLET

Competition for appointment to the position of:

**Senior Administrative Officer
(Assistant Principal Officer)**

Closing Date for receipt of completed applications:

Friday 2nd May 2025 at 3.00 p.m.

AN BORD PLEANÁLA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

TITLE OF POSITION: Senior Administrative Officer (SAO)
GRADE: Assistant Principal Officer
NATURE OF POST: Permanent, full-time position*
LOCATION: 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902

1. Background Information

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

Staff Structure and Reporting Relationships

An Bord Pleanála currently has 293 employees including 15 Board members. An organogram is included at the end of this booklet **(Appendix 1)**. The overall structure is in a process of change arising from the Planning and Development Act 2024 which on enactment will appoint an external Governing Board and current Board members will become Planning Commissioners.

The SAO is a senior management position in An Bord Pleanála and is a member of the Management Committee. The SAO is responsible for the effective management of the area assigned which may relate to Corporate Functions or Planning Operations. The role is responsible for supporting the delivery of the organisational strategy and objectives as set out in the Strategic and Annual Business Plans. The SAO role builds relationships across the organisation and will interact with the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Board members, and staff in day to day work or as part of committees/working groups. The SAO will also build relationships with external stakeholders and relevant departments/local authorities where appropriate.

The overall structure of An Bord Pleanála which will be renamed to An Coimisiún Pleanála will change on the enactment of the Planning and Development Act 2024.

*Blended working is a feature of the organisation subject to operational requirements

Current Organisational Context

- Preparation for the implementation of Planning and Development Act 2024 which will change the current structure with the appointment of an external Governing Board, full time Chief Executive and mandatory timelines relating to case work.

- Increase in reporting and compliance in relation to Corporate Governance, Audit and Risk together with the pending change in the Governance Structure under the Planning and Development Act 2024.
- An increasingly complex planning regulatory environment with an emphasis on environmental protection, including protection of habitats and biodiversity.
- Making decisions on significant strategic infrastructure developments relating to renewable energy projects, transport, waste and other facilities expected in the coming years, including under new processes and legislation.
- Increase in litigations relating to the casework and the overall planning system

2. Purpose of the Role

This is a Senior Management position and a key leadership role. The Senior Administrative Officer is a member of the Management Committee with responsibility for leading a team to provide an efficient and effective planning service to the public through modernised, innovative, and cost-effective systems.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate a high level of ability or experience in management with strong leadership skills that delivers a high-performance focused approach among team members.

Principal Duties

Responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- responsible and accountable for the quality of the work and delivery of results of their assigned team,
- develops, empowers and mentors their team to reach their optimum in contributing to the overall goals and objectives of the organisation,
- provides leadership within their area of responsibility and motivates and engages their team to deliver best results,

- provide on-going feedback and conduct regular team meetings offering appropriate information and guidance,
- is responsible for monitoring and reviewing performance of staff, providing on going feedback, coaching and development as required in line with PMDS,
- day to day co-ordination of activity through line managers (Senior Executive Officer) where appropriate,
- assists in the development and delivery of training workshops and other learning initiatives,
- contributes to the development and implementation of priority projects/new functions/change initiatives, where appropriate,
- represents the organisation in relation to certain matters with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and other government departments, state agencies and other stakeholders, as required;
- promote and demonstrate the values of the organisation and complies with all policies particularly the Dignity in the Workplace Charter,
- critically analyse procedures and practices, undertaking reviews and implementing change and reforms as required in line with general public sector reform agenda,
- any other duties as may be assigned from time to time.

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 inhouse case management systems and digital transformation projects and other initiatives to support continuous improvement in customer service.

3. Qualifications and Experience

Essential Requirements

Candidates, must on or before 2nd May 2025 have:

- A minimum level 8 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications in a relevant discipline.
- A minimum of 5 years' experience of working at a senior level in a public sector or commercial organisation.
- Experience of change management and the implementation of organisational development initiatives.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills with an ability to interact with stakeholders at the most senior level.
- Demonstrate the competencies set out in Appendix 2 of this booklet.

Desirable Knowledge and Experience:

- A recognised, relevant third level qualification/professional qualification in a relevant discipline i.e. business, finance, HR, procurement, legal/legislation, project management, governance, facilities management, communications, and/or ICT.
- Experience managing cross functional teams.

Person Specification

The ideal candidate should:

- Demonstrate leadership capabilities, communication skills with the ability to influence and persuade others.
- Strong problem-solving skills and the ability to make decisions on difficult issues.
- Ability to present pragmatic alternatives and propose solutions.
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to forge strong relationships.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Be reliable, flexible and adaptable with the ability to manage diverse functions across the remit of the Senior Administrative Officer roles.

- Demonstrate high levels of self-awareness and the ability to make sound and balanced decisions.
- Proven ability to exercise good operational and strategic judgement on issues.
- Proactive in self-development and continuous improvement of individual knowledge and experience.
- Proven knowledge of An Bord Pleanála and how it operates.
- Be fully aware of external environment in which An Bord Pleanála operates in terms of the pressures on public sector organisations and the challenges which are/will arise out of the change and transformation agenda to drive improved performance outcomes in public sector bodies.

Key Competencies for Effective Performance (Appendix 2)

- Leadership
- Analysis and decision making
- Management and Delivery of results
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Drive and Commitment to Delivering results
- Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

4. Selection Process

The Selection Process **will** include the following:

- A shortlisting of candidates, on the basis of the information contained in their application
- Interview
- Optional Irish Language tests
- Post interview stage, further shortlisting will take place prior to the presentation stage of the competition
- Presentation/Analysis exercise

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 interview / presentation.

In this respect, a short-listing 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. A panel may be formed from which future temporary or permanent appointments may be made.

If candidates are required to be available for presentation and/or interview(s), it is at their own expense. It is not possible to alter the allocated interview date(s) or time(s). **Candidates who do not attend for interview and/or presentation) etc., when and where 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.**

How to Apply:

The **Senior Administrative Officer** 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 “**Senior Administrative Officer - 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 to 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 Aisling.litster@pleanala.ie

We acknowledge receipt of all applications. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within 3 working days of applying, please email Aisling.litster@pleanala.ie

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

Closing Date:

Friday 2nd May 2025 at 3.00pm

Please Note

We endeavour to give as much notice as possible for interview dates etc. It is, however, estimated that interviews / presentations would take place in May/June. Candidates should make themselves available around this time.

References

Please consider names of people you feel would be suitable referees that we might consult (2 - 3 names and contact details). The referees do not have to include your current employer but should be in a position to provide a reference for you. Please be assured that we will only collect the details and contact referees should come under consideration after preliminary interview stage

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Principal Conditions of Service

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 the Chief Officer/Director 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:

1.1. Salary scales for a Senior Administrative Officer (standard) post (1st March 2025) re as follows;

PPC Sale

€80,668.00 €83,639.00 €86,651.00 €89,672.00 €92,690.00 €94,431.00
€97,474.00¹ €100,530.00²

D Scale

€77,921.00 €80,757.00 €82,321.00 €85,189.00 €88,057.00 €89,714.00
€92,602.00¹ €95,502.00²

¹ After 3 years' satisfactory service at the maximum.

² 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 – 35 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 **30** working days a year. 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 old age pension. 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 Senior Administrative Officer is required to comply with the provisions of Sections 113 and 114 of the Planning and Development Act 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 Code of Conduct and all 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) Acts 1994 to 2014

Recipients

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

Recipient	Reason
HR	Storing application, acknowledging responses and corresponding with applicants
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 6 weeks from issuing of results 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

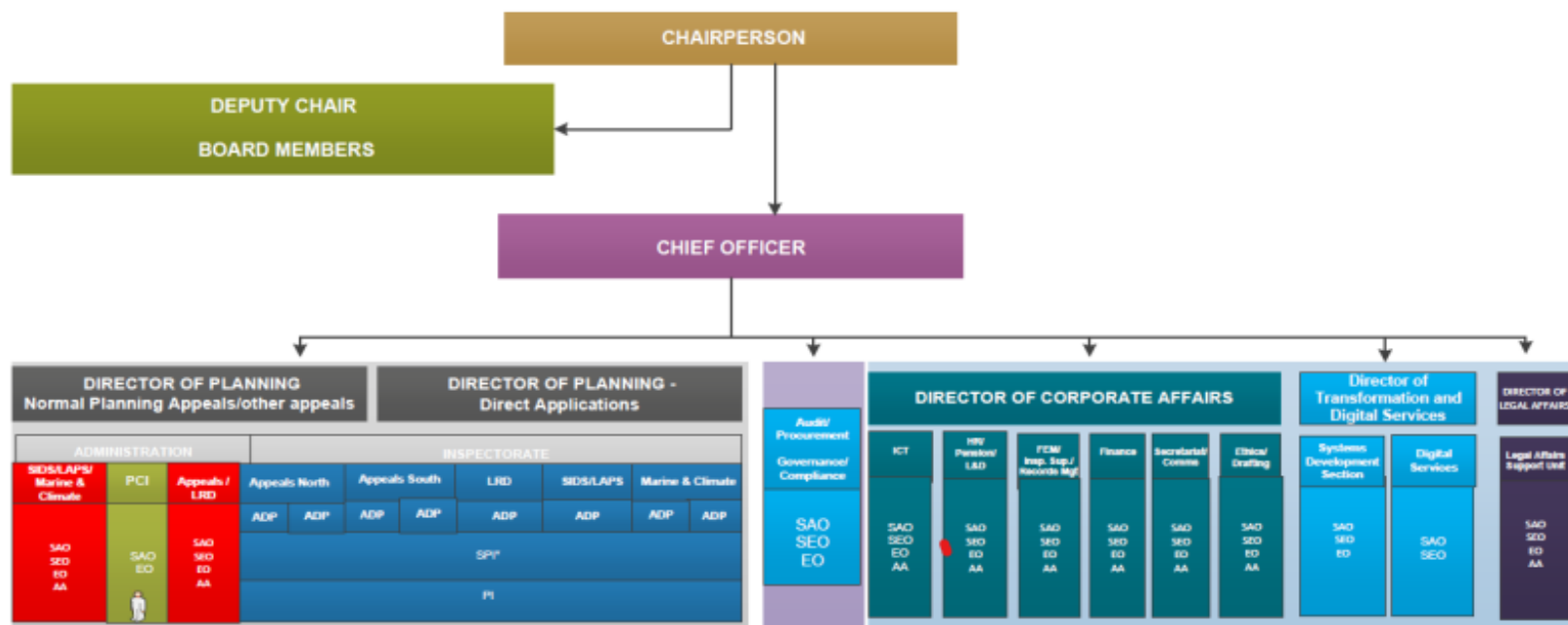
Right	Explanation
Access	You can request and receive access to the information requested in the process at any time.
Portability	You can request and receive a copy of this data, in electronic/transferrable format, at any time
Erasure	You can request the data held be erased. We have outlined the anticipated 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: dpo@pleanala.ie

Appendix 1 – Current An Bord Pleanála organogram



Legend:

ADP = Assist Director Planning

SPI = Senior Planning Inspector (incl. ECO/SCI)


PI = Planning Inspector

SAO = Senior Administrative Officer

SEO = Senior Executive Officer

EO = Executive Officer

AA = Administrative Assistant

Made up of existing staff 

Appendix 2 –Senior Administrative Competency Descriptors

SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	
Leadership	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively contributes to the development of the strategies and policies of the Board Brings a focus and drive to building and sustaining high levels of performance, addressing any performance issues as they arise Leads and maximises the contribution of the team as a whole Clearly defines objectives and goals and delegates effectively, encouraging ownership and responsibility for tasks Develops the capability of others through feedback, coaching and creating opportunities for skills development Identifies and takes opportunities to exploit new and innovative service delivery channels Promotes respect and dignity in the workplace and if necessary actively intervenes to ensure that this approach is fully appreciated in the section/division/organisation.
Analysis and Decision Making	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researches issues thoroughly, consulting appropriately to gather all information needed on an issue Understands complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data Integrates diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and linkages Makes clear, timely and well-grounded decisions on important issues Considers the wider implications of decisions on a range of stakeholders Takes a firm position on issues s/he considers important
Management and Delivery of Results	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes responsibility for challenging tasks and delivers on time and to a high standard

- Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of changing circumstances
- Ensures quality and efficient customer service is central to the work of the division
- Looks critically at issues to see how things can be done better
- Ensures controls and performance measures are in place to deliver efficient and high value services
- Effectively manages multiple projects

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Presents information in a confident, logical and convincing manner
- Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues
- Promotes teamwork within the section but also works effectively on projects across the organisation.
- Maintains poise and control when working to influence others
- Instills a strong focus on Customer Service in his/her area
- Develops and maintains a network of contacts to facilitate problem solving or information sharing
- Engages effectively with a range of stakeholders.

Drive and Commitment

- Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level
- Is personally honest and trustworthy and can be relied upon
- Ensures that quality customer service is at the heart of all services provided
- Through leading by example, fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

- Has a clear understanding of the roles' objectives and targets of self and the team and how they fit into the work of the organization.
- Has a breadth and depth of knowledge of the Board and is sensitive to wider political and organisational priorities
- Is considered an expert by stakeholders in own field/ area
- Is focused on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth to help carry out the specific requirements of the role