Position description

Position title:	Principal Specialist - Planning	**Unit:**	Resource Consents (North-West, Central, South, Streamline, Premium)
Directorate:	Policy, Planning and Governance	**Reports to:**	Manager Resource Consents (North-West, Central, South, Streamline, Premium)
Department:	Planning & Resource Consents	**Direct reports:**	Nil
Group:	Resource Consents	**Indirect reports:**	Nil

 **Our commitment to te ao Māori**	We honour te Tiriti o Waitangi, accord value to te ao Māori (the Māori world), support kaitiakitanga and are responsive to the needs of Māori. You participate in initiatives to embed te ao Māori into the way we do things. You are willing to develop and build your own understanding and capability to contribute to the delivery of the directorate's Māori outcomes and wider organisation's vision to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of Māori as outlined in the Māori Outcomes Performance Measurement Framework.

 **Purpose of the job**	The Principal Specialist-Planning will assist the Manager Resource Consents to deliver an effective and comprehensive resource consent service fulfilling council's statutory obligations through the provision of technical planning advice on consenting matters, including reviewing applications, complaint resolution, hearings, appeals and objections and Council's resource consents practices and procedures. The position drives planning and resource management best practice through the collaborative management and delivery of innovative continuous improvement initiatives locally and region-wide. This position also involves coaching and mentoring of staff to embed the professional, behavioural, and technical competence needed for the Planning & Resource Consents group to meet the statutory and customer service requirements in relation to the resource management area. The role will require working collaboratively across council, agencies, and communities to effectively contribute towards the delivery of the Achieving Māori Outcomes (AMO) and create a coherent linkage with the council's overall work programme to achieve Māori outcomes.

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Key responsibilities	**Leadership and Professionalism** • Provide accurate and timely technical advice on all consenting matters to consenting staff, the Lead Team, applicants, members of the public and other relevant stakeholders • Undertake technical peer reviews and determine consent decisions within your delegated authority ensuring all aspects of the consent process is appropriate, and reflective of legislative requirements • Manage objections, appeals, judicial reviews, declarations and other miscellaneous court proceedings. This includes providing advice, preparing and assisting others to prepare evidence or affidavits for Environment Court and High Court hearings, direct referrals, appeals and objections processes relating to consent applications and attendance at such proceedings, legal as appropriate • Liaise with Legal Services on behalf of Resource Consents and obtain legal advice and opinions, where appropriate • Contribute to projects as allocated, including processing applications for significant projects and contributing to organisation and unit wide projects • Undertake interpretations, including attending fortnightly AUP Plan Interpretation meetings to facilitate regionwide consistency • Recommend, coordinate and support commissioners (hearings and duty commissioners) as required for consent decisions and arbitration • Support the development and implementation of professional and technical training programmes for the Department and undertake training and mentoring of consenting staff to develop their consenting knowledge • Run monthly regional technical forums on a three-monthly rotation (NW, South and Central) and hub-based forums • Attend and participate in RC Community of Practice (CoP) monthly meetings • Attend, contribute to and present at Commissioner forums as necessary • Create, update and review Department related documentation including report templates, checklists, Practice guidance notes (PGNs), Quick reference guides (QRGs), Consent Procedure Manual chapters (CPM) and Conditions Manual • Utilise effective conflict resolution, negotiation, facilitation, and relationship management skills to proactively manage and resolve controversial or politically sensitive issues • Develop and maintain excellent relationships with colleagues across the Council organization to resolve technical issues, achieve greater consistency and 'best practice' consenting outcomes and working across the Council, including CCOs, to ensure a complete organisational wide approach is taken to the assessment and delivery of all resource consents

Auckland Council behaviours

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	• Analyse and implement Council Plan Changes and relevant case law (including assisting Policy with plan development and s35 monitoring) • Analyse and provide input to Council submissions on central government National Policy Statements (NPS), National Environmental Standards (NES) and legislative changes and assist with the application of resultant changes • Provide accurate and timely advice to elected representatives on resource management and consenting matters • Stay abreast of wider planning issues (including caselaw and legislative reform) to ensure ongoing professional development and up to date knowledge and attend training seminars as required • Develop and maintain technical knowledge of the Unitary Plan, bylaws, and other regulatory tools • Support the Unit Manager to undertake their duties and, when required, act as 2Ic for the Unit Manager • Assist with screening, interviewing and recruitment of new kaimahi • Be a leader, influencer, and communicator within the department in relation to resource consent matters and maintain a positive energy level during times when the consenting team is under pressure **Customer Service** • Demonstrate commitment to improving customer service and work proactively with customers and key stakeholders using empathy, professional and balanced judgments • Respond to queries raised by customers in a timely and efficient manner in accordance with departmental policy and procedures and legislative requirements • Manage all conflict situations that arise through the processing of applications, keeping the customer informed throughout the process • Escalate to the Unit Manager or Head of Resource Consents, as required any issue that needs their input. **Council Charter and Māori Outcomes** • Be aware of, and demonstrate, the principles of Our Charter. This sets out the expectations for conduct at Auckland Council. • Be aware of, and demonstrate, Our Behaviours in ways that support inclusivity and adaptability in every aspect of our work. • Support the efforts of the Māori Outcomes Lead, to develop and drive the delivery of the directorate's Achieving Māori Outcomes (AMO). • Action Auckland Council's good employer obligations and equal employment bicultural policies and practices. • As an employee of the Council, participate with Civil Defence Emergency Management or any exercise that might be organised in relation to this Council function.

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	• Promote activities and initiatives that assist Auckland Council achieve its vision and mission and one-organisation initiatives. **Health, Safety and Well-being** • At Auckland Council, "health and safety starts with me" (ka timata te hauora me te aria hauata ki a au) and everyone has a duty to keep themselves and others safe. Our Health and Safety Policy Statement and our Health and Safety Management Framework (SMF) explain the specific HSW duties applicable to this role, including Injury Management responsibilities applicable to people leaders.

Outcomes	• Consenting staff, the lead team, applicants, elected officials, and members of the public understand planning processes and controls • Consenting staff are up-to-date and have access to 'best practice' guidance and training resources and can develop as professionals • Your professional knowledge is up to date • Effective negotiation and resolution of complex consenting issues, conflicts controversial or politically sensitive issues through your relationship management skills and excellent subject matter knowledge • You are actively building and supporting a continuous improvement culture and customer service • Accurate documentation and communication of decisions on complaints, appeals and objections • A high-quality and consistent region-wide and cross-council approach to consenting, practice, and training • Auckland Council's reputation is enhanced within the community • Auckland Council meets its obligation under the Treaty of Waitangi and the Treaty Settlement Act • You can pronounce and use basic te reo Māori in emails, meetings and conversations and demonstrate and understand the use of tikanga where appropriate and contribute to the development of the directorate's Māori Responsiveness Plan actions and initiatives • Act in ways that demonstrate understanding of the Council Charter in dealings with both your work colleagues and in your interactions, both internal and external and support an environment of biculturalism, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace • Health and safety requirements are upheld

Key skills	• Relationship and stakeholder management, political management • Problem solving and finding innovative solutions to complex technical issues or problems • Leading through influencing, facilitating, and negotiating • Excellent subject matter knowledge including plan development, policy, and rule drafting

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	• Complaints resolutions and experience in the Environment Court and/or High Court • Personal resilience. Able to sustain a high level of energy and positivity during times when they, the organisation, or the group is under pressure • Ability to utilise technical skills and theories to resolve complex RMA issues • Customer service ethic and sense of personal ownership and responsibility • Ability to think strategically and understand interdependencies • Highly organised – plans and prioritises effectively to meet competing deadlines • Excellent knowledge and understanding of RMA and Local Government legislation
Job requirements	• A tertiary qualification in Resource Management, Planning or related disciplines • Full membership of the New Zealand Planning Institute preferred • Current full NZ Driver's licence • 8+ years' experience in all aspects of resource consents and planning application processing • Understanding of tangata whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi issues, including tikanga and a desire to work with Māori and within Māori paradigms

Disclaimer
The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by incumbents in the assigned job. They are not construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, or skills required of the incumbent. From time to time, employees may be required to perform duties outside of their normal responsibilities as needed.

Approving manager:	**Version date:**
Head of Resource Consents	November 2026

	Job function:	**Job family:**	**Job:**
Job framework			

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