

Job Pack

Senior Home Ownership Officer



Lewes District Council



Working in partnership with Eastbourne Homes

Location

Thank you for taking the time to look at the details of this post.

Located in the heart of the Sussex countryside and one of the principal towns of the South Downs National Park Lewes offers the best of town and country. It is no surprise that the District is considered among the most desirable places to live and work in the UK.

Lewes town is one of the jewels of the South Downs National Park and the District also possesses many picturesque towns and villages, all with their own unique character.

Whilst nearby Eastbourne is a resort town on England's southeast coast. On the seafront are Victorian hotels, the 19th-century Eastbourne Pier and a 1930s bandstand. Discover a wide range of shops in Eastbourne from high street shopping at The Beacon to the quaint Victorian shopping streets of Little Chelsea, and the boutiques in the Enterprise Centre.

One of the most attractive aspects of living and working in the Lewes and Eastbourne area is the quality of life it has to offer. It is a truly exceptional location. Make the most of the area by enjoying a wide range of activities including country walks, water sports and much more.

Our offices in Lewes and Eastbourne are located close to Train Stations with direct connections to the coast and London. However, the Council provide all the necessary IT and infrastructure to enable home working and maintain a good work life balance

“The best of town, country and coast”

We are able to offer our staff a range of benefits and access to discounts as follows:

- Membership at local leisure centres who are part of Wave Leisure across the District and Borough and at the Sovereign Centre in Eastbourne.
- Kaarp Benefits which are only available to Local Government employees and includes between 3 and 4.5% savings at supermarkets when purchasing a gift card as well as savings on attractions and discounts on many other things.
- Chorus Workplace Savings Scheme
- Boundless which includes up to 10% off high-street and supermarket goods through discounted pre-paid shopping cards.
- CSSC which includes free entry to a number of tourist attractions and a free tastecard as well as discounted cinema visits and 4% saving on supermarket shopping through pre-paid shopping cards.
- Public Sector Discounts – by paying £9.99 for a Black Card £2.99 staff are able to access discounts such as 2.5% cashback – ASDA, 3.5% cashback – Sainsbury's, Waitrose and M&S, 4.5% cashback on B&Q and Primark and 5% cashback – Boots, Carpetright, Clarks, feelunique, Halfords, Harvester, John Lewis, National Express, New Look, River Island, Body Shop, Nike, The White Company, The Works, Waterstones, Wilko etc.
- Easit – the Councils have joined the Queens Award winning easitNETWORK group through which we hope to influence travel behaviour in the area by providing a full range of transport options to encourage staff to adopt more sustainable commuting habits. EasitNETWORK is a social enterprise, not for profit organisation that is all about sustainable travel. Our staff can benefit from many transport discounts including 15% discount on Southern rail journeys across the network (except central London zones 1,2,+ 3); including peak time travel; 10% discount at Halfords on all bikes, cycling accessories, servicing and parts; 15% discounts on monthly and annual bike insurance and 25% discount on new, electric, folding Beat Bikes.
- Eyesight tests vouchers are available for all drivers and computer users which include a discount off selected glasses and when glasses are required solely for VDU use.
- Vouchers for fully funded flu vaccinations through Boots which staff can redeem, arrange and book at a participating Boots Pharmacy of their choice.
- Cyclescheme - The UK's leading provider of the cycle to work scheme and the founding member of the Cycle to Work Alliance. It enables our staff to get a bike tax-free, saving between 25-39%. Participants can choose from over 2,000 retailers and enjoy the ability to shop in-store or online.
- We also understand that balancing everyday life together with the requirements of work and home can create pressures for all of us. To support our staff in achieving this balance we have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in place. Our EAP

is currently provided by Health Assured an independent external organisation who work to a robust professional code of strict confidentiality.

- They offer both emotional and practical support to our staff when they feel they need it. They also have qualified legal advisors who will assist with any legal matters. They will provide advice and guidance on matters such as writing a will, tenancy and housing concerns, divorce procedures, boundary disputes, probate costs, motoring issues, property and partnership rights and immigration information.
- Our EAP is available 24/7, 365 days and year. As part of this service we are also able to offer staff access to an app where they can find useful articles and webinars alongside an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and engaging features to support wellbeing and wellness.
- Within the Councils we have a number of staff trained to provide 'first aid' to staff experiencing mental health issues. Mental Health first aiders are trained to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis – and even potentially stop a crisis from happening.
- They are able to empower others to access the support they might need for successful management of symptoms. This could include self-help books or websites, accessing services via their GP, the EAP, other support groups and more.

Job Description

Post Title	Senior Home Ownership Officer
Department	Property Services
Division	Property and Development
Grade / salary	Band D
Reports to	Home Ownership Manager
Date prepared	July 2024

Job Purpose

1. To provide assistance to the Property Services function within the Property and Development Team by supporting the business and administration processes that underpin the services delivered to leaseholders, shared owners, Right to Buy applicants and other stakeholders.

Key Tasks

1. Deal with queries from right to buy applicants, leaseholders, shared owners, advocates and other stakeholders contacting the department about home ownership matters.
2. Respond to service enquiries received by telephone, email, letter, in person, via the web portal or through an advocate.
3. Deal with Right to Buy matters including processing applications, arranging valuations, sending offer letters and collating legal documents ready for sales.
4. Carry out statutory consultation with leaseholders and shared owners, following Section 20 of the Landlord & Tenant Act.
5. Assist in the calculation, preparation and submission of service charge estimates, reconciliation accounts and reserve fund charges.
6. Deal with other home ownership matters such as:
 - Answering solicitors' enquiries for re-sales for flats, maisonettes and shared ownership properties.
 - Lease extension requests.
 - Updating systems following transfers of leases and Right to Buy completions.
 - Permissions requests from leaseholders.
 - Service charge payment queries.
 - Leasehold arrears management.
 - Liaising with marketing agents for shared ownership re-sales and new builds.

7. Ensure (as much as is practical within the remit of the role) that Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council are fully compliant with the rights and obligations stated in leases and management agreements, as well as legislation and best practice across all home ownership activities.
8. Be involved in the review, implementation and monitoring of service improvement plans.
9. Process invoices from supply chain partners and prepare them for authorisation and payment.
10. Keep systems up to date by entering data in to IT systems, such as asset management, customer service and housing systems and indexing documents and emails to the contact management system.
11. Assist with other projects being undertaken by the Property Services Team.
12. Log and monitor complaints, Freedom of Information requests, Councillor enquiries, and MP enquiries in respect of home ownership matters.
13. Write letters, prepare mail merges and compile reports and statistics.
14. Take part in resident forums, surgeries and panels.
15. Review the information on the website and suggest changes and updates.
16. Undertake any other duties as required by the Head of Service.

In addition to the above, the Senior Home Ownership Officer's key tasks also include:

17. Provide advice and training to members of the team.
18. Deal with complex cases and work processes.
19. Report on team performance figures.
20. Keep up to date with changing legislation and best practices.
21. Deal with high end arrears cases including attendance at Court
22. Review and update procedures and suggest improvements to working practices.
23. Oversee complex projects.

24. Assist the Home Ownership Manager with supporting and managing the rest of the team.

Corporate Accountabilities

1. To promote equality of opportunity in service delivery in line with strategic commitment and corporate policies.
2. To promote a culture that is supportive of the Councils' purpose, aims and values, and to take all reasonable steps to maintain good employee relations.
3. Staff are encouraged to participate fully in promoting a safety culture to protect the safety and health of themselves, colleagues and other people affected by the Council's activities.
4. To understand and apply the council's Data Protection and Data Quality policy and procedures.
5. Any other duties commensurate with the nature of the post.
6. You will be required to support Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils' corporate priorities and to ensure business continuity e.g. emergency response, elections, deployment to critical services.
7. To work within the Councils' Core Competencies Framework.

Central to the delivery of the role are the values and behaviours set out below. These are shared by all employees and applied to everything we do. The bullet points for each competency are examples of performance required:

Core Competencies

<p>Sharing the Vision – Shaping the Future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the Council's purpose, goals, objectives and values, and is willing to behave consistently with them. • Knows the strategic direction of the Council and acts in support of it.
<p>Communicating Well</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to and participates in an organisation where high quality information flows smoothly both internally and externally. Works positively to gain understanding from others.
<p>Driving Improvement, Performance and Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes responsibility and ownership for decisions, actions and results. • Takes actions to improve skills, knowledge and level of contribution. • Seeks and delivers high standards for self, team and Council.

Self-management – Self-motivated and Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is organised and uses time and technology efficiently. Adopts a flexible approach to change.
Delivering for our Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a desire to identify and give priority to meeting the needs of internal and external customers, generating high levels of customer satisfaction.
Working Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively contributes to team working, sharing information, valuing the input of others. Works cooperatively and is committed to building productive, positive relationships. • Demonstrates commitment to achieving overall team objectives.

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. Such details will vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility involved.

PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR HOME OWNERSHIP OFFICER

1. QUALIFICATIONS

Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of four GCSEs or equivalent at grade C or above inclusive of English and Maths	Desirable <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business / Office Administration qualification• Degree / Diploma / NVQ in property management, property law or related discipline• Membership of relevant professional body
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2. TRAINING

Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer care• Complaints handling• Microsoft Office applications• MS Word and Excel at Intermediate level or above.	Desirable <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PowerPoint• MS Project
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3. SKILLS & ABILITIES

Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Methodical at co-ordinating, planning and prioritising work• Good accuracy in literacy and numeracy• Resilient, calm and effective under pressure• Able to manage customer expectations• Professional approach• Self-motivated• Positive attitude to change• Problem solving abilities• Good listener with empathetic attitude• Able to handle confidential and sensitive information appropriately• Effective at complaint handling	Desirable <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to remain calm and diffuse difficult situations• Ability to be assertive but fair when making decisions.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to understand policies and procedures and make decisions accordingly 	
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4. KNOWLEDGE

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of landlord and tenant law. • Basic business administration functions/processes • Understanding of property management and lettings in mixed tenure portfolios • Understanding of typical terms in residential property leases. • Understanding of the key rights and obligations of parties to residential property leases. • Understanding of the processes and key stages relating to purchase and sale of residential property. • Understanding of the landlord's obligations to consult with leaseholders about major repairs. • Understanding of landlord tenant law 	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of building maintenance and contract terminology • Understanding of shared ownership leases. • Knowledge and understanding of the Right to Buy.
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5. EXPERIENCE

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with customers by telephone, email and in person. • Working with suppliers such as contractors and consultants • Working effectively as part of a team • Handling customer complaints effectively • Letter writing 	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience within the building maintenance or property management sectors. • Working in a public service environment • Use of property management databases • Use of purchase order systems • Working with lawyers
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using spreadsheets • Data entry onto IT systems • Mail merges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing property information for new leases, property sales and purchases. • Experience of Chairing meetings.
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6. PHYSICAL, LEGAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to work within the councils' core competency framework • An engaging, enthusiastic and positive manner with a strong "can do" approach • Flexibility to attend meetings outside of working hours • Occasional fieldwork in customers' homes, suppliers' premises and other EBC and LDC offices 	<p>Desirable</p>
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All staff must be prepared to have an understanding of the Equal Opportunities, Customer Care and Health and Safety policies. Managers in particular, must have a commitment to implement and abide by these policies.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils have been on a transformational journey to fully integrate services. This has involved integrating staff teams, processes and systems whilst still retaining sovereignty of the individual councils.

The employer will be Eastbourne Borough Council.

Duration

This is a permanent contract.

Conditions of Service

The conditions of service for this post are for the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. The post is graded Band D.

Salary

The spinal column points (SCP) for the post are as follows:

SCP 15	£28,273	SCP 20	£30,816	SCP 25	£33,945
SCP 16	£28,761	SCP 21	£31,355	SCP 26	£34,834
SCP 17	£29,260	SCP 22	£31,906	SCP 27	£35,745
SCP 18	£29,769	SCP 23	£32,076		
SCP 19	£30,287	SCP 24	£33,024		

Hours

The hours for this post are 37 a week. These will be worked within operational requirements. Actual starting and finishing times will be agreed with your manager. Within these boundaries the Council operates a flexitime scheme for all but Heads of Service. Details will be supplied to the successful candidate upon appointment.

Place of Work

Your normal place of work will be from home, however you will be required to attend the offices at either Eastbourne or Lewes, or such other places within the boundaries of Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough as may be reasonably required.

In particular, you will be required to:

- Budget for and cover the costs of all expenses incurred (including travel costs) to attend Team Meetings or Events, as well as for training at any of the Councils' sites.
- Budget for and allocate time to travel to appointments in the Councils boundaries where required. For example, visits that need to be performed as part of your role and cannot reasonably or appropriately be carried out remotely.
- Budget for and cover all postage costs (including return postage from Councils sites to your home) for all IT and other work equipment, when this needs to be replaced or updated. This includes but is not limited to, your work phone/headset and your laptop, such as for updates to software that need your laptop onsite connected to the LAN.

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- Continue to participate in all meetings as reasonably required, such as 121 meetings, team meetings, attendance management meetings, or consultations on any proposed changes, such as restructures. Where possible and appropriate, these meetings will be conducted remotely but where it is not possible or it is deemed inappropriate for the meeting to be conducted remotely, you will be required to cover all expenses incurred (including travel) for your attendance at said meetings.

Probationary Period

All posts are subject to a six months' probationary period where your suitability for the post will be assessed. During this time your progress will be reviewed and discussed with you at regular intervals.

Casual User Car Mileage

You will be entitled to mileage as a casual user on official business. This mileage is reviewed annually.

Annual Leave

The leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March and entitlement varies with length of service. The current minimum entitlement is 26 days. This increases to 30 days in the leave year following completion of five years' service. Subject to the demands of the post, you will normally receive additional paid leave on each Public Holiday.

An employee who starts part way through the year will receive a proportion of the basic holiday entitlement. For operational reasons some Service Areas have to restrict the maximum amount of holiday taken at any one time and its timing in the year. Holiday commitments entered into before taking up an appointment will be honoured wherever possible.

Notice Period

The contract of employment applicable to this post will specify a minimum period of one calendar months increasing to two calendar months when paid from SCP 23, to be given by either side.

Pension

We provide membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to employees aged under 75 who have a contract of employment that is for at least 3 months. The LGPS is a qualifying pension scheme, which means it meets or exceeds the government's standards.

All employees are automatically entered into the Local Government Pension Scheme unless they choose to make alternative provision for pension. Scheme members contribute the percentage of salary as set out in the table below. We will also make an employer's contribution to the scheme.

The contribution bands with effect from 01 April 2023 are:

Pay Range	Contribution
Up to £16,500	5.50%
£16,501 to £25,900	5.80%
£25,901 to £42,100	6.50%
£42,101 to £53,300	6.80%
£53,301 to £74,700	8.50%
£74,701 to £105,900	9.90%
£105,901 - £124,800	10.50%
£124,801 - £187,200	11.40%
£187,201 or more	12.50%

The pay ranges will be increased each year from 01 April in line with inflation. Based on the salary for this role, the contribution will be 6.5%