

Planning and Building Control Apprenticeship Roles and Career Pathways

This short guide has been developed by the Local Government Association in association with Spark & Associates, using the knowledge and experiences of Local Authorities (LAs) across England. It aims to help councils and their staff understand the career opportunities available through apprenticeships.

Building a Career in Planning and Building Control Supported by Apprenticeships

What this Career Pathway Guide Shows

This pathway shows how careers in Planning and Building Control within a council can be developed through apprenticeships, from entry-level support roles through to professional and leadership positions.

This guide provides a broad Planning and Building Control career pathway, illustrating how careers can develop across planning, development, building control, regulatory and related professional roles that may span multiple council functions.

Planning and Building Control teams play a vital role in shaping places and communities, supporting development management, planning policy, enforcement, building safety, regeneration, conservation, environmental priorities and sustainable growth. Increasing regulatory requirements, workforce pressures and demand for specialist technical expertise make effective workforce planning and skills development increasingly important. Apprenticeships provide structured routes to build skills, progress careers and, in some cases, achieve professional qualifications.

Why this matters (for councils and learners)

Local authorities often operate in a competitive market for planning and building control skills. Apprenticeships provide a practical way to attract new talent, develop existing staff and support long-term workforce planning, succession planning and "grow your own" approaches to hard-to-recruit professional and technical roles.

Clear and well-communicated progression routes:

- support recruitment and retention
- create opportunities for career development and progression
- help build sustainable in-house professional capability.

How to use this Guide

This guide outlines typical entry points, progression routes and relevant apprenticeships across Planning, Building Control and related roles. Entry routes may include A Levels, T Levels, higher education, career change, or internal progression from business support, regulatory or technical roles.

Development pathways are not always linear. Individuals may:

- move into specialist areas such as planning policy, development management, enforcement, building control, building safety, conservation, ecology or related technical fields
- progress into professional qualification or leadership routes
- take sideways steps to build broader technical or project experience.

Job titles and roles may vary between councils, so apprenticeship suitability should be reviewed against role requirements and prior experience. Training providers and employers can support this through initial assessment and guidance.

Details of apprenticeship standards and career progression routes can be found on the [Skills England website](#), including their [Occupational Maps](#).

Understanding progression

The pathway diagram on page 3 illustrates how careers can develop across Planning and Building Control roles, from entry-level to senior and specialist positions. It highlights:

- typical entry routes into planning and building control careers
- progression between levels and professional pathways
- relevant apprenticeships that support technical, operational and professional development.

Progression may involve changes in role, responsibilities or specialist area, or increased responsibility within similar roles as skills develop.

Typical Career Progression Routes

This table shows typical job roles by level within Planning, Building Control and related professional functions in a council, alongside examples of relevant apprenticeships. It provides an overview of how individuals can enter these careers, develop specialist technical or professional expertise, and progress into senior or leadership roles.

Guide to typical progression in Planning and Building Control linked to apprenticeship / qualification levels:

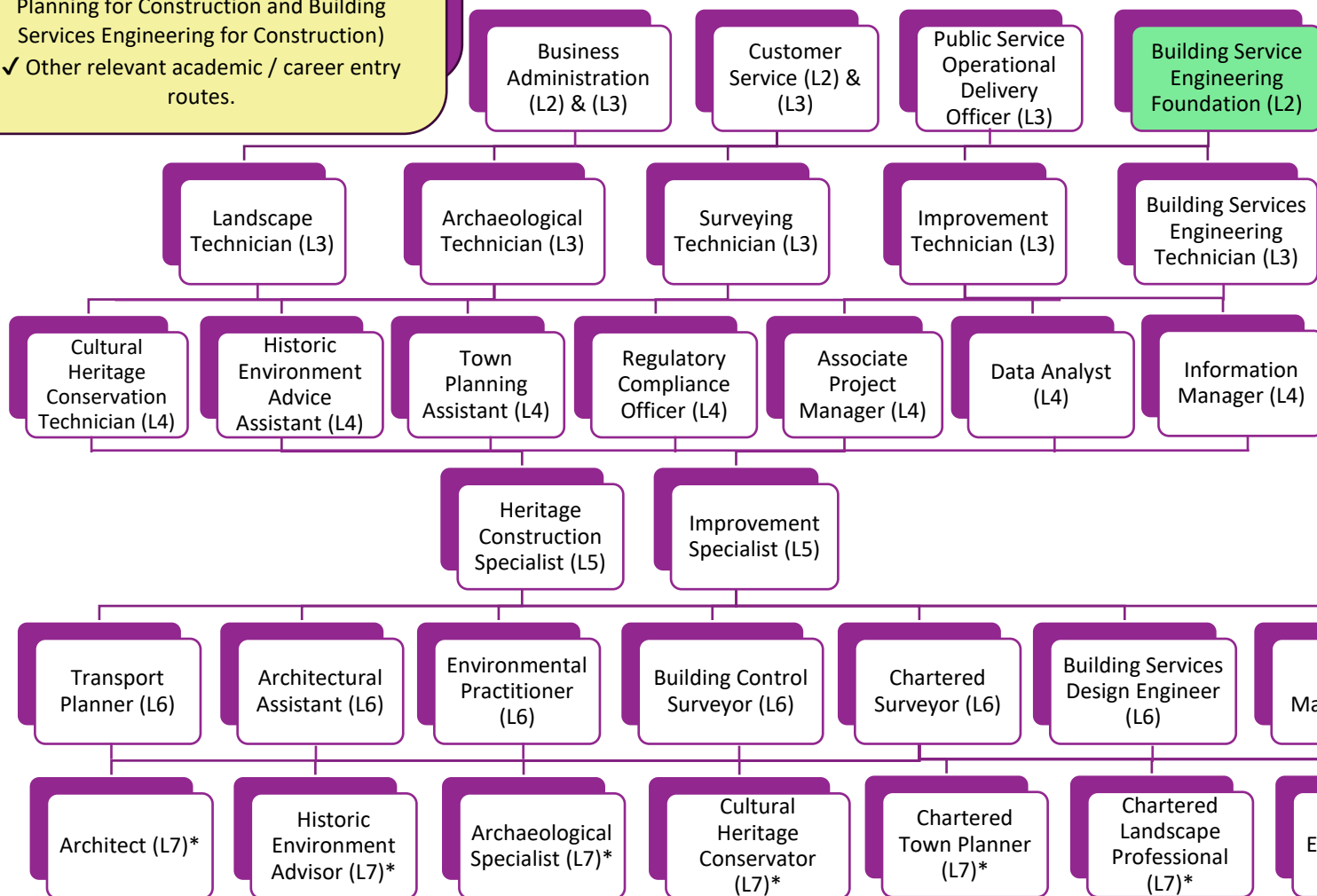
- **Entry (L2–3):** Build core administrative, technical or service support skills
- **L4:** Develop technical or specialist expertise in planning, compliance, surveying or related built environment roles
- **L5–6:** Progress into professional, specialist, management or project roles
- **L7:** Progress into chartered, senior professional or leadership roles (subject to policy / funding availability).

Career Stage	Typical Roles+	Example Relevant Apprenticeships
Entry and Early Careers (Level 2/3)	Planning Support Officer / Technical Support Officer Business Support Officer / Administrative Officer Building Control Support Officer Customer Service Adviser (planning / regulatory enquiries)	Business Administrator (L2/ L3) Customer Service Practitioner / Specialist (L2 / L3) Public Service Operational Delivery Officer (L3) Improvement Technician (L3)
Technical and Developing Roles (Level 3/4)	Planning Assistant / Town Planning Assistant Planning Enforcement Officer Development Management Officer Assistant Building Control Surveyor / Building Control Officer / Surveying Technician Regulatory Compliance Officer	Town Planning Assistant (L4) Surveying Technician (L3) Regulatory Compliance Officer (L4) Building Services Engineering Technician (L3) Associate Project Manager (L4)
Professional and Specialist Roles (Level 5/6)	Planning Officer / Senior Planning Officer Building Control Surveyor / Registered Building Inspector Conservation Officer / Heritage Officer Environmental Officer / Ecologist	Building Control Surveyor (L6) Chartered Surveyor (L6) Environmental Practitioner (L6) Project Manager (L6) Improvement Specialist (L5)
Strategic and Leadership Roles (Level 6/7)	Principal Planning Officer / Principal Building Control Surveyor Planning Policy Manager / Development Management Manager Head of Planning / Head of Building Control	Chartered Town Planner (L7)* Architect (L7)* Ecologist (L7)* Senior Leader (L7)* / leadership development (subject to availability)

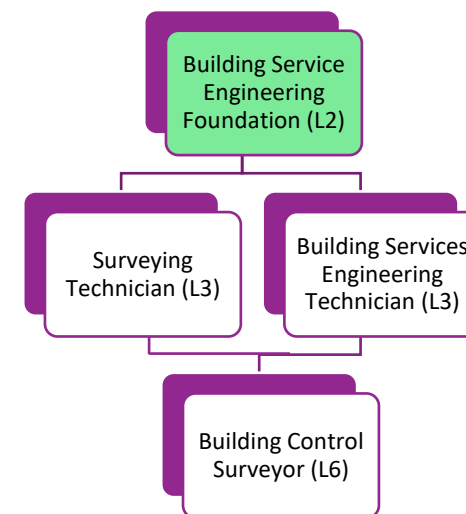
Pre-Entry, e.g.:

- ✓ A Levels
- ✓ T Levels (e.g. Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction and Building Services Engineering for Construction)
- ✓ Other relevant academic / career entry routes.

Broader Planning Services Progression Pathway



Building Control Apprenticeships



Information correct as at June 2026

Opportunities Across Departments

Planning, Building Control and related professional roles may be found across a range of council functions, including regeneration, housing, environmental services, climate and sustainability teams, transport, estates, conservation and wider operational areas. This can support both career progression and apprenticeship workforce planning across the council.

*Apprenticeship availability, particularly at higher levels, is subject to policy changes. Funding for Level 7 apprenticeships is subject to current government policy and eligibility criteria. Also check **Skills England's Revisions Status Report** detailing the apprenticeships undergoing revision, showing the stage they have reached and an overview of why they are being reviewed.