

Context statement

To accompany job description and person specification when required

Job title: Planning Officer (Grade 8)

Generic job description: ES 587 c-d (Technical Officer (Level 1 and 2)). This particular post is available at Dorset Council Grade 8.

Directorate/Service/Team: This post is within the Development Management and Enforcement Service, part of the Planning service within the Place directorate.

Organisation structure

Reporting to: Development Management Team Leader

Responsibility for:

The Planning Officer will be responsible for dealing with primarily small scale applications submitted as householder and minor development proposals, reporting to a Development Management Team Leader.

The post holder will assist with the delivery of the development management service through assessing and determining planning and other applications against national legislation and guidance and local policy. This will include:

- All work related to pre- and post-application stages including the use of a development team approach to pre-application advice.
- Responding to permitted development and lawful development enquiries, notifications, applications for telecoms and work by statutory undertakers and applications for advertisements.
- Developing and maintaining approaches to community engagement at all stages in the planning process.
- Identifying issues to be addressed via Section 106 Agreements.
- Dealing with applications to discharge conditions.
- Liaising with and advising the planning enforcement team in relation to subsequent compliance and enforcement action.
- Dealing with any subsequent post decision amendments.

The post will include providing general advice on development management issues to the public, elected members, applicants and developers where necessary under the supervision of more senior officers.

The post holder will act proactively to bring forward suitable development for consideration through the planning process through developing working relationships with internal and external partners in the planning process.

The role will include preparing reports and recommendations on planning applications and other proposals for consideration by Committee and Senior Officers under the Council's scheme of delegation. As part of this it will be essential to ensure work is completed in a timely manner to agreed deadlines.



The post holder will be responsible for writing appeal statements in respect of appeals to be dealt with by way of written representation and will assist where necessary in the preparation of evidence for planning appeals by hearing or public inquiry.

Whilst this post will predominantly deal with small scale applications, the post holder may also be required to assist planning officers and senior planning officers in dealing with applications for major development.

The post holder will work in conjunction with the Council's enforcement team on enforcement matters on cases with which the post holder is familiar, working with more senior planning officers.

Context of work

The Planning Officer role will make a positive and professional contribution to the provision of a comprehensive and efficient planning service. The post will deal with a varied caseload of smaller-scale applications, helping to ensure that the Council achieves positive planning outcomes. Your knowledge of the planning system, and relevant policies and principles, will enable you to play an essential part in securing appropriate development for Dorset.

Dorset Council is a recently established unitary authority. It is anticipated that the Council will deal with around 5,000 planning applications each year, and the planning service offers a varied and fast-paced working environment. Planning applications are determined in the context of current adopted local plans which were prepared by the predecessor district councils and the Council has an ambitious programme for the preparation of the first Dorset Council-wide plan. There are also a significant number of neighbourhood plans, both completed and in preparation.

The Dorset Council area has an outstanding natural and historic environment, with national and international designations including internationally protected heathland habitats, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the 'Jurassic Coast' World Heritage Site. Within this challenging context we also need to plan for the future of the local economy, and for meeting significant housing demand. This post offers the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of interesting and challenging planning issues.

Travel requirement

This position has a significant travel requirement. This means that there is a requirement for a vehicle (or transport deemed to be suitable by the council) to be available on most working days in order to carry out normal duties. Employees in positions with a significant travel requirement are required to provide a replacement vehicle if their usual vehicle is not available over an extended period. Travel expenses will be paid at the Council's standard rate.

Other information

Applicants are generally expected to hold a degree or equivalent in Town Planning or a related subject; or a degree in an unrelated subject and previous relevant experience in a planning environment in either public or private sector. Whilst holding a degree would be an advantage, applicants who do not hold a degree can still be considered for this role, providing they can demonstrate relevant previous experience in a planning environment.

The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post.

Context statement prepared by:			
Manager	Anna Lee	Date	12 March 2020