

# Job description

**Job title:** Chief Planning Officer (Corporate Director for Planning)

**Grade:** Chief Officer Grade Job Evaluation

**Job family:** Chief Officer

## Purpose and impact

The role of the Chief Planning Officer (Corporate Director for Planning) is to act as the corporate lead for, and provide advice to the Council as a whole on, all aspects of spatial and land use planning, land use planning policy, development management, urban and nature conservation and sustainable development.

Lead on the production of Dorset's Local Plan and other Development Plan documents, to guide sustainable development in Dorset, meet housing needs and provide for Dorset's future economic growth and renewal.

Engage with the emerging Strategic Authority for Wessex and the future Spatial Development Strategy for Wessex.

Act as the Council's strategic lead officer for the increasingly important agendas around biodiversity net gain and nutrient/phosphate neutrality, liaising as appropriate with colleagues in peers in other Council departments, particularly but not solely those responsible for highways, engineering, assets and property.

Work with the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Corporate Directors and Elected Members to develop, shape and embed the Council's strategic vision into transformational plans; working across the whole organisation, actively fostering collaborative working across services and the organisation to deliver the intended service outcomes.

Take responsibility for driving growth, continuous service improvement, innovation and good practice across the function's allocated services. Providing corporate leadership for employees within the Council, and with wider partnership bodies and agencies.

The allocated operational units within the portfolio currently contain the following Service managers as direct reports:

- Service Manager Building Control
- Service Manager for Development Management
- Service Manager Spatial Planning including Dorset Local Plan
- Service Manager Conservation
- Service Manager Business Improvement



## Key responsibilities

1. Provide clear strategic direction for 'place shaping' and foster a culture of collaboration and excellence in the allocated service areas.
2. Lead and manage all spatial and land-use planning functions, particularly and especially the production of the Dorset Local Plan, and all matters relating to development management and planning enforcement. Ensure that the Council's planning functions satisfy all statutory duties and meet national targets and performance indicators.
3. Focus the structure and operation of the planning service in such a way as to fully support the Council's outward-facing policy priorities of economic development, housebuilding and protecting Dorset's environment.
4. Build on the existing high performance of Dorset Council's planning functions, to further improve performance, focus on the needs of planning applicants, agents and developers as customers, and utilise new technology and AI to make swifter and better planning decisions.
5. Engage with regular planning applicants, agents and developers to understand their perspectives on the planning process and develop new ways of working to reflect the fact that swifter and better planning decisions are required to secure investment for Dorset in a competitive economic environment.
6. Lead the continuing transformation of planning services in line with corporate objectives. Review the structure and operating systems and processes in use in the planning service and remodel them, if necessary, to ensure they focus on customers and take full advantage of the opportunities for improvements in performance and efficiency presented by new technology and AI.
7. Lead the Council's heritage and nature conservation services with due regard to the value of Dorset's natural and built heritage and the importance of these assets for quality of life in Dorset and Dorset's visitor economy.
8. Lead for the Council on regional spatial planning and the regional planning functions of the future Strategic Authority for Wessex and other regional collaboration of Councils.
9. Work closely with the Council's economic development service and other service areas, to further Dorset's objectives around clean energy, offshore wind power and Hydrogen; the urban regeneration of Weymouth, Portland and Chickerell; and the core economy of market towns across Dorset.
10. Develop the Council's approach to the increasingly important agendas around biodiversity net gain and nutrient/phosphate neutrality, liaising as appropriate with colleagues in peers in other Council departments, particularly but not solely those responsible for highways, engineering, assets and property – and with statutory undertakers, such as water companies.
11. Work closely with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Chairs and Vice Chairs of Planning Committees to ensure that members are always supported and well-briefed in these roles, and that proper training is provided for them and for Planning Committee members.
12. Support town and parish councils in their work to produce Neighbourhood Plans, recognising that Dorset's town and parish councils are already leaders in neighbourhood planning and that this is to be encouraged and sustained in the future.
13. Ensure that allocated services are delivered within budget and that available resources are used to the best effect.



14. Ensure effective corporate governance with financial, performance and risk assurance systems and processes in place.
15. Develop best-in-class pre-application advice services for planning, as a means to improve customer satisfaction, ensure a greater proportion of planning applications are valid when presented to the Council, and earn income to support planning service delivery.
16. Represent and promote the Council at local, regional and national levels, raising the profile of Dorset and sharing best practice from a range of sources to influence national policy making.
17. Recognise and promote all opportunities to share service provision and facilitate entrepreneurial new income generation opportunities.
18. Recruit, select and develop senior managers and other colleagues within the Directorate, instilling positive leadership behaviours within a continually developing cultural environment. Promoting commitment to valuing diversity and providing equal access to services and opportunities.
19. Comply with risk management and health and safety standards.
20. Drive effective budgetary, planning and performance frameworks, to ensure that the performance of services is demonstrably effective against national, regional, and local indicators, that objectives are achieved, and that high standards of probity are met.
21. Participate in the Council's Duty Gold / Silver on-call Rota providing resilience and major incident response leadership when required and to undertake appropriate training as set out in the emergency response plan and ensure these skills are kept up to date.

NB: The duties and responsibilities of this post are not restrictive, and the post holder may be required on occasion to undertake other duties. This will not substantially change the nature of the post.

### **Supervision and management**

Reporting to: Executive Director for Place

Responsibility for: Dorset Local Plan, Development Management, Enforcement, Spatial Planning (Minerals and Waste), Building Control, Conservation and Heritage.

### **Other factors**

The postholder leads a Directorate of approx. 200 people with a staffing budget of approx. 3.5M million.

### **Our values**

Our values act as guiding principles, defining what we believe is important in the ways we work together. Our values are Respect, Together, Accountability, Openness and Curiosity. You will need to be able to demonstrate these values in action through the way you work, regardless of your role within the organisation. Information about our values can be found on our website.



# Person specification

Your application will be assessed based on your demonstration of how you fulfil the following criteria; you should include clear examples of how you meet these criteria within your application form and during the assessment process.

## Essential

Essential criteria are the minimum requirement for the above post and will be assessed through a combination of your application form, assessment and interview (as specified below). We'll also use references to confirm that you meet the criteria for this role. We will require evidence of the qualifications, training or registrations listed below.

<b>Qualifications, training or registrations</b> Required by law or essential to the performance of the role or both	<b>Assessed through:</b>
1. Educated to a degree level or equivalent.	Application form
2. Relevant professional or managerial qualification	Application form
3. Evidence of continued professional, managerial and personal development.	Application form
<b>Experience</b>	
4. Experience of working successfully as a senior leader in a large, complex organisation.	Application form
5. Experience of successfully leading transformation and cultural change programmes.	Application form
6. Experience of delivering significant improvements through robust individual and service performance management.	Application form
7. A record of achievement in leading and influencing decision making, policy formulation and service delivery.	Application form
8. Success in developing effective working relationships, building trust and influencing partnerships to deliver services.	Application form
<b>Knowledge</b>	
9. Understanding the broad range of issues facing local government and the implications for service provision and delivery.	Application form Interview Assessment
10. The ability to interpret and understand complex financial and budgetary information to effectively manage resources.	Application form Interview Assessment
<b>Skills &amp; abilities</b>	
11. Be creative and innovative in developing, and leading initiatives to support the achievement of organisational goals.	Interview Assessment
12. Be collaborative, flexible and able to foster a positive organisational culture in an ever-changing environment.	Interview Assessment
13. Able to deliver successful outcomes through others using leadership and motivational skills, as well as directly inspiring and developing high performance in direct reports.	Interview Assessment



14. A high degree of political awareness, sensitivity and commitment to working closely with all councillors, local organisation's and communities.	Interview Assessment
15. Exceptional communication skills as a credible and convincing advocate for the Council,	Interview Assessment
16. Highly developed negotiation and influencing skills.	Interview Assessment
17. Professional credibility and self-awareness to build rapport, credibility, trust and confidence.	Interview Assessment
18. A proven ability to challenge others respectfully and constructively, driving colleagues' performance through coaching/mentoring skills.	Interview Assessment
19. Personal commitment and evidence of achievement in the promotion of equality and diversity, both in service delivery and employment.	Interview Assessment
<b>Our values</b>	
20. Respect	Interview Assessment
21. Together	Interview Assessment
22. Accountability	Interview Assessment
23. Openness	Interview Assessment
24. Curiosity	Interview Assessment

