**Job title**: Senior Enforcement Officer

Generic job description: ES 587 e-g (Senior Technical Officer Level 1/2/Supervisor). This particular post is available at Dorset Council Grade 11.

**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**: Enforcement Manager

**Responsibility for:** The postholder will have a key role in ensuring that the Council achieves positive planning enforcement outcomes. The role involves overseeing the day-to-day enforcement casework for one of the Council’s three planning committee areas. The postholder will take a pro-active role in post-development work, ensuring development is taking place in accordance with approved plans, and taking action as necessary against planning breaches. Whilst the post does not have formal line management responsibilities, the Senior Enforcement Officer will oversee the work of enforcement officers and assistants, providing support and supervision. This will include allocating work, undertaking case reviews and signing off work under the Council’s scheme of delegation. The postholder will liaise closely with both the Development Management Area Managers and the Enforcement Manager to ensure consistency of approach.

The postholder will carry a caseload of planning, listed building and tree enforcement cases, including those of a complex and/or contentious nature. This will include preparing and serving statutory notices.

The postholder will ensure thorough assessment of whether breaches of planning control have occurred, through desk based research and site visits, and taking account of appropriate legislation, codes of practice, policies and procedures. They will ensure that any action undertaken has been subject to the appropriate sign-off, and that interested parties including elected members, are updated as appropriate. They will agree recommendations on the expediency of taking formal action, in discussion with their line manager and senior officers within the Council.

The postholder will investigate and gather evidence in relation to more complex and / or contentious possible breaches of planning leglislation and breaches of condition, and will make recommendations in relation to the outcome of such investigations. Where necessary, this will include negotiating appropriate action to minimize the need for formal action to landowners and developers. This may involve working with external agencies such as the Police, and Environment Agency and internal consultees including Highways, Conservation and Environmental Health.

The role will include drafting and reviewing Enforcement Notices, Breach of condition notices, Planning Contravention Notices and other planning related notices. The postholder will be required to prepare and take formal witness statements, including recorded interviews under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).

The postholder will be required to prepare enforcement appeal statements, supported by high quality evidence, and to represent the Council at planning enforcement hearings and inquiries. There will be a need to liaise with Legal Officers with regard to enforcement and prosecution matters such as Planning Contravention Notices, preparation for service of Enforcement Notices and in connection with the preparation of prosecution files for proceedings in both Magistrates and Crown Courts.

The role may include undertaking enforcement action in relation to CIL and S106 payments, in liaison with the Infrastructure and Delivery Team.

The role will include overseeing responses to general enforcement related enquiries, both internal and external, and ensuring that appropriate feedback is provided in a timely manner to any party where there are complaints regarding alleged breaches of planning control or where site monitoring reveals breaches.

The role will include preparing and presenting reports to Committee and senior Council officers for consideration under the relevant delegated powers.

The postholder will liaise with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, providing enforcement advice, and seeking stakeholders’ input to planning policy matters.

**Context of work**

The Senior Enforcement Officer role will make a positive and professional contribution to the provision of a comprehensive and efficient planning service. The post will oversee a varied caseload of enforcement cases, and will have a key role in ensuring that the Council achieves positive planning outcomes. Your knowledge and experience of planning enforcement (or a similar investigative role), and relevant policies and principles, will enable you to play an essential role in securing appropriate resolution of planning enforcement matters in Dorset.

Dorset Council is one of the largest local planning authorities in the country 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. Planning Enforcement matters are dealt with in line with the Council’s General Statement of Enforcement Policy, and the Development Management Local Enforcement Plan.

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 enforcement 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**

The job description is for a career-graded post spanning three levels, grades 9, 10 and 11. This particular post is available at grade 11.

Applicants are expected to have substantial post qualification experience in an Enforcement Officer role or similar (police or other investigative role). The ability to represent the Council at planning enforcement hearings and inquiries is an essential requirement for this role. Membership of a relevant professional body (RTPI / RICS or similar) is desirable.

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

Please note that Dorset Council uses generic job descriptions. AutoCAD ability is not a requirement for this role.

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| **Context statement prepared by:** | | | |
| Manager | Anna Lee | Date | 12 March 2020 |
| Updated | Anna Lee | Date | 18 October 2024 |