

Job Description and Person Specification

Post Title: Senior Planning Officer

Reports to: Development Services Manager

Scale: 5/6

Politically Restricted: Yes

Overall Purpose

1. To make development acceptable in planning terms.
2. To work within the Development Services Team under the guidance of the Development Services Manager and Team Leaders to process planning and other applications and respond to planning enquiries. This will include advising customers, registration and validation and consulting on applications, determining/making recommendations on applications and preparing reports to Planning Committee.
3. To work closely with and assist the other members of the Development Services Team to ensure that all aspects of the service are constantly kept under review and improved and that the department is able to respond to events and workloads using a customer focused approach.
4. Provide advice, guidance and support to the Development Strategy Team including assisting with the formulation and preparation of policy as may be required.
5. Provide advice, guidance and support to the Planning Enforcement Team.

Key Roles, Tasks and Responsibilities

1. Providing written and verbal advice on development management to members of the public, developers, Parish Councils, District Councillors and others.
2. Processing and making delegated decisions and recommendations to Planning Committee on planning applications and other applications. This will include:
 - a. Completing all stages of the registration and validation processes including ensuring that the fee is paid correctly in accordance with statutory requirements.
 - b. Undertaking consultations in accordance with statutory and local requirements.
 - c. Carrying out site inspections.

- d. Negotiating and communicating with applicants, agents and consultees.
 - e. Advising members of the public, Parish Councils and District Councillors.
 - f. Assessing proposals against their conformity with national and local planning policies and guidance and all other material considerations (including representations made by consultees).
 - g. Preparing reports and making recommendations to Planning Committee.
 - h. Attending Planning Committee site visits and presenting applications at Committee.
 - i. Issuing decision notices in accordance with the statutory and other procedures of the department including incorporating conditions and reasons for refusal.
3. Carrying out all tasks associated with the processing of planning appeals including completion of questionnaires, preparing appeal statements and evidence, dealing with applications for costs awards, working with legal representatives and appearing as a professional witness at Informal Hearings and Public Inquiries.
 4. The making of Tree Preservation Orders.
 5. Liaising with Planning Enforcement Officers and providing advice, guidance and support to the Enforcement Team.
 6. Liaising with the Development Strategy Team and other Council departments in dealing with development protocols.
 7. Providing advice, guidance and support to the Development Strategy Team.
 8. To assist all other sections within the Council in the provision of information and advice on development management matters such as providing information for the Freedom of Information Act requests.
 9. To undertake work as part of the broader Planning service.
 10. To work closely with and assist the other members of the Development Services Team under the guidance of the Service Manager to ensure that all aspects of the development management process and performance are constantly kept under review and improved using customer focussed approach and that the section is able to respond to events and workloads as appropriate.
 11. To maintain an up to date knowledge of new legislation and local and national policy and issues relevant to the development management function.

12. Attendance at designated training sessions as necessary, which may be out of normal working hours and/or at other establishments as may be required.
13. Attendance at evening meetings will be required.
14. (At scale 6) Proactively supporting the personal development of team members. This will include:
 - a. Providing productive, accurate and consistent advice to team members.
 - b. Holding regular 121's with specified Planning Officers
 - c. Having a thorough knowledge of the team's performance.
15. (At scale 6) Reviewing recommendations made on delegated planning and other applications by Planning Officers.
16. (At scale 6) Undertaking quality audits on delegated planning applications files on a rota basis.
17. (At scale 6) Organising Planning Committee site visits and other aspects of Committee process.
18. (At scale 6) Leading team meetings in the absence of the Development Services Manager and Team Leaders.
19. (At scale 6) Involvement in organising and providing training on development management for District Councillors and Paris Councils.
20. Any other duties as may be required by the Development Service Manager.

Post Characteristics

Allowances: Essential Car User, Payment of Professional fees.

On call/emergency situations: No

Security/safeguarding checks: None

Health and Safety Responsibilities

1. To be familiar and comply with the Council's health and safety policies and procedures and local department specific health and safety policies and procedures as amended or added to from time to time.
2. To report any unsafe practice, accident, incident, dangerous occurrence or hazard found during the course of your work to your line manager or the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser for action.
3. To take reasonable care for health and safety of yourself and others.

4. To co-operate with all staff and members of the authority so far as is necessary to enable all health and safety requirements are complied with.
5. To not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything that has been provided in the interests of health and safety.
6. To maintain any Personal Protective Equipment that you are issued and required to wear, and to report any defects to your line manager.

Emergency Planning/Response Responsibilities

1. To carry out the duties specified in relation to the post in the Emergency Plan, Business Continuity and other associated documents.

Career Grade – Criteria for Progression

The post holder will be limited to salary scale 5 until all of the following criteria have been satisfied:

1. Evidence of knowledge and an ability to make sound judgements and recommendations/decisions on all planning applications and other applications with limited guidance and supervision.
2. Evidence that the postholder has sufficient development management experience and knowledge to be able to provide productive, accurate and consistent advise to other team members.
3. Proven track record of processing and making recommendations on large scale major development proposals (commercial development of over 2,500 sq metres and/or residential developments of over 100 dwellings), including being able to take initiative and use their own judgement to make balanced and clear recommendations based on local and national planning policy and any other material planning considerations.
4. Corporate Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute or a minimum of five years recent and relevant development management experience.
5. Evidence of an ability to take a proactive and positive lead and provide support to other team members in ensuring that all aspects of the Development Services function are constantly kept under review and improved and that the section is able to respond to events and workloads as appropriate utilising a customer focused approach.
6. Evidence of an understanding of the way that planning relates to the wider aspirations of service delivery and achieving the delivery of the Council's wider aspirations.
7. Good overall performance as determined by the Development Services Manager through the formal performance review process.

Once the above criteria have been satisfied incremental progression through scale 6 will be permitted. The assessment of the post holder against these criteria will be undertaken by the Development Services Manager.

Progression to scale 6 will require the post holder to undertake the additional responsibilities as detailed in the job description and person specification:

1. Proactively supporting the personal development of team members. This will include:
 - a. providing productive, accurate and consistent advice to team members
 - b. holding regular 1-2-1s with specified Planning Officers
 - c. having a thorough knowledge of the team's performance and acting on this.
2. Motivating other employees through positive and proactive leadership.
3. Reviewing recommendations made on delegated planning and other applications by Planning Officers.
4. Undertaking quality audits on delegated planning application files on a rota basis.
5. Assisting in the organisation of Planning Committee Site Visits and other aspects of Committee process.
6. Leading Team Meetings in the absence of the Development Services Manager and Development Services Team Leaders.
7. Involvement in organising and providing training on Development Management for District Councillors and Parish Councils.

Person Specification

Knowledge

Essential:

Clear understanding of the concept of development management and enabling good development (2, 3 & 4*).

An extensive knowledge of current planning legislation and statutory regulations (2, 3 & 4*).

A good working knowledge of the Microsoft Suite of IT Packages (3, 4*).

Scale 6: Understanding of the way that planning relates to the wider aspirations of service delivery and achieving the delivery of the Council's wider aspirations (3, 4*).

Experience

Essential:

A minimum of 2 years' experience of working in a development management role (3, 4 & 5*).

Recent demonstrable experience of interpreting planning policy and either submitting or making recommendations/decisions on planning and other applications (2, 3 & 4*).

Scale 6: Proven recent track record of processing and making recommendations on large scale major development proposals (commercial development of over 2,500 sq metres and/or residential developments of over 100 dwellings) including evidence of using own initiative and make balanced and clear judgments based on local and national planning policy and any other material planning considerations (3 & 4*).

Desirable:

Experience of working in a local authority planning department (3, 4 & 5*).

Presenting applications at Planning Committee (3 & 4*).

Appearing as an expert planning witness at a Planning Informal Hearing and/or Public Inquiry (3 & 4*).

Scale 6: Experience of supervising and mentoring staff (3 & 4*).

Skills/Abilities

Essential:

Strong IT skills (3 & 4*).

Ability to communicate effectively at all levels with good verbal and written communication skills (2, 3 & 4*).

Can demonstrate a strong customer care approach in all aspects of work and deal sensitively with customers/stakeholders (2, 3 & 4*).

Well-motivated and takes pride in delivering high quality services (2, 3 & 4*).

High level of accuracy and attention to detail (2, 3 & 4*).

Ability to work under pressure (3 & 4*).

Ability to organise own workload, prioritise and meet deadlines and make appropriate adjustments when required (2, 3 & 4*).

Ability to work within a team and be a team player (2, 3 & 4*).

Flexible and receptive to new ideas and ways of working (3 & 4*).

Ability to show initiative and demonstrate good problem solving skills (2, 3 & 4*).

Developed skills in negotiation and persuasion (3 & 4*).

Urban design skills (3 & 4*).

Can demonstrate an ability to take a proactive approach to ensuring that all aspects of the section's functions are constantly kept under review and improved and that the section is able to respond to events and workloads as appropriate (3 & 4*).

Ability to work with a wide range of people including local authorities, Parish Council's, agencies and other organisations (3 & 4*).

Scale 6: Demonstratable ability to motivate colleagues through positive and proactive leadership (3 & 4*).

Qualifications/Training

Essential:

RTPI accredited degree or diploma in Town and Country Planning (3 & 5*).

Evidence of continuous professional development (3 & 5*).

Scale 6: Corporate Membership or the Royal Town Planning Institute or a minimum of 5 years recent and relevant development management experience (3, 4 & 5*).

Other

Essential:

Full driving licence (3 & 5*).

Use of a car for business purposes (3 & 5*).

Ability to undertake site visits (3 & 4*).

Ability to attend evening meetings (3 & 4*).

Method of assessment*

1. Test prior to shortlist
2. Test after shortlist
3. Application form
4. Probing at interview
5. Documentary evidence

Job Description and Person Specification details:

Reviewed by: Development Services Manager

Latest Version Date: January 2024

Job Evaluation Ref: A1109