

Job Description



1. Job Details

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|---|---|
| Job title: | Senior Planning Officer |
| Team: | Development Management (DM) |
| Directorate: | Strategy and Planning |
| Post number: | TBA |
| Hours per week: | 37 |
| Grade: | Band 8 |
| Base: | Lymington Town Hall |
| Accountable to: | Principal Planning Officer |
| Responsible for: | One or more Planning Officers and/or Assistants/Admin staff |
| Indirectly responsible for: | N / A |
| Budget Responsible Officer (BRO): | No |
| Car user: | Casual |
| Politically restricted: | No |
| Does this post involve working with children and/or vulnerable people? | No |
| Membership of professional body required: | Yes – Royal Town and Planning Institute (RTPI) |
| Key liaisons: | New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) staff, NPA members, town and parish councils, applicants/agents, local business owners, local community groups, the media and general public |

2. Role Summary

- 2.1 To handle some of the more complex and/or sensitive and/or larger planning applications, appeals and associated tasks facing the NPA and to supervise the work of any less experienced staff assisting this post.
- 2.2 To make and agree recommendations for delegated development management decisions, on behalf of the Executive Director (Strategy and Planning).
- 2.3 To deputise for the Principal Planning Officer when required.

3. Main Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1 To deal with the more complex and sensitive cases.
- 3.2 To present reports to Committee, brief the NPA Members, give evidence at Public Inquiries and represent the NPA at public/private meetings when required.

- 3.3 To work effectively with consultants and other local authority staff contracted to supply the NPA with specialist expertise.
- 3.4 To make an active contribution to the management and development of the DM team, the Directorate and the NPA as a whole.
- 3.5 To help the DM Team to operate in an efficient, effective and customer-friendly way that meets all relevant government, professional and other performance standards.

4. Problem solving

- 4.1 The postholder will be required to deputise for the Principal Planning Officer on occasions, so will require an understanding of corporate objectives and decision-making processes.
- 4.2 Original thinking will be required to deal with new or unusual planning applications, and to apply new concepts and ideas within the field of development management.
- 4.3 Commitment to the highest standards of customer care, and to the achievement of professional, timescale and financial targets. This will often require an appropriate prioritisation of work and the need to handle a large workload in an effective manner.
- 4.4 Adoption of new approaches to service delivery, including innovations to achieve better results.
- 4.5 Assist in resolving technical and specialist problems, as well as troubleshooting, to ensure the planning and support systems work effectively and meet required standards.
- 4.6 Collecting, managing and assessing large volumes of information involved in some major planning cases in order to evaluate different options, reach a conclusion, support a recommendation, and to defend the decision later if necessary.

5. Decision making

- 5.1 The post will be involved in decisions about the most effective way to manage the busy DM team. This will involve reconciling competing interests in accordance with the NPA's aim to develop continuously to achieve excellence.
- 5.2 Many decisions will affect the NPA and its work, so careful consideration of these impacts, beyond the realm of the DM team, is required. This will involve consideration of the most appropriate ways of communicating with the NPA Members, colleagues, applicants/agents, public and press. Guidance can be sought from the line manager or director as appropriate.
- 5.3 The post may involve monitoring the achievement of targets for the DM team, possibly for individual staff members. These targets must be met on time; as set out in the service plan.

6. Operational responsibility

- 6.1 Responsibility for the delivery of assigned aspects of the development management service within the quality standards, timescales and budget set out in the service plan, or as instructed by the Principal Planning Officer.
- 6.2 Responsibility for the management of any assigned service improvement projects. The projects may include training so that the staff are fully equipped to handle the required service improvements.

- 6.3 Deputising for the Principal Planning Officer on occasions.
- 6.4 Involvement in complex planning applications and associated tasks may involve teamwork with colleagues in the NPA, consultants and outside organisations. The post holder must work with other team members to help the team meet the programme and achieve required outputs.
- 6.5 Supervision of development management staff and working with consultants in the circumstances set out in section three of this job description.

7. Communication

- 7.1 Oral/presentation skills: both to represent the NPA effectively and to deal with customers/key stakeholders who may not be entirely familiar with the planning process.
- 7.2 Written skills: using plain English in reports and correspondence to set out a clear, concise and logical approach. This approach is needed particularly to assist decision-makers reach appropriate conclusions when dealing with finely balanced or complex issues.
- 7.3 Negotiation skills: with applicants/agents, objectors, NPA members, other agencies, and other staff (within and outside the DM team) are vital to achieve the most beneficial outcomes.
- 7.4 Personal and other contacts: with a wide range of staff (within and outside the DM team) and a diverse range of customers including NPA members, town and parish councils, local businessmen, local community groups, professional representatives, the media and general public.
- 7.5 Internal 50% External 50%

8. Working Conditions:

- 8.1 The post holder will work from an office base with some home working but will be required to undertake frequent site visits within the boundary of the National Park. Risks are assessed and mitigated against in accordance with NPA policies.
- 8.2 The position may involve contact with people with differing views to the NPA's policies, plans and objectives.

9. General

- 9.1 The post holder must at all times carry out his/her responsibilities with due regard to NPA policy and procedures.
- 9.2 All staff have a responsibility to participate in the NPA Appraisal Scheme and to contribute to their own development, and the development of any staff they appraise or are responsible for.

Job holder
signature: _____

Date _____

Manager

signature: _____

Date _____

Person Specification

Senior Planning Officer

| Criteria | Essential | Desirable | Assessed by |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Education / qualifications | | | |
| A recognised degree or post graduate qualification in planning | Y | | A |
| Membership of the RTPI | Y | | A |
| Experience | | | |
| At least three years relevant planning experience of which one should be dealing with some complex and/or problematic cases | Y | | A |
| Experience of working with consultants used for specialist advice and to meet workload peaks | | Y | A / I |
| Knowledge | | | |
| Detailed and thorough knowledge of national park purposes and duties, planning law, procedures and statutory requirements | Y | | A / I / T |
| Skills | | | |
| Excellent communication skill, both written and oral, demonstrating an understanding of audience needs | Y | | A / I |
| Good analytical and organisational skills with experience of managing own workload to meet deadlines | Y | | A / I |
| Ability to work unsupervised, combined with good team-working skills | Y | | A / I |
| Good IT skills and knowledge of current systems including Microsoft (Word, Excel, Outlook) | Y | | A / I |
| Good customer service skills to interact effectively and professionally with external and internal customers | Y | | A / I |
| Negotiation skills | | Y | A |
| Impact and attributes | | | |
| Full driving license and access to a vehicle | Y | | A / I |
| Ability to understand the need to treat sensitive information confidentially, especially in relation to Planning matters | Y | | A / I |
| Public and political awareness in sensitive situations | Y | | A / I |

Evidence assessed by key:

- A = Application form
- I = Interview
- T = Test / assessment / presentation