

Job Description

1 Job details

Job title:	Planning Officer
Team:	Planning
Directorate:	Strategy and Planning
Post number:	P02081
Hours per week:	37
Grade:	Band 4 - 7 (Career Grade) <i>Progression through the bands will be dependent on satisfactory performance also identified at the annual appraisal process. This is in addition to meeting the minimum criteria set out in the job description for each band.</i>
Base:	Lymington Town Hall
Accountable to:	Principal Planning Officer
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:	Desirable – RTPI membership
Key liaisons:	• New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) staff • Members of the public • Agents • Developers • Authority members

2 Role summary

- 2.1 To process planning applications up to and including a recommendation on how they should be decided.
- 2.2 To prepare cases for appeals, including giving expert evidence at Inquiries and Hearings.
- 2.3 To investigate suspected breaches of planning control, in particular those involving a failure to comply with planning permissions and planning conditions, and to make recommendations for appropriate action.
- 2.4 To give advice and guidance to the general public on matters relevant to the work of the team.

3 Main duties and responsibilities

- 3.1 Assess and give advice by letter, telephone, site or office meetings to the general public, their professional agents, developers, estate agents, solicitors etc, on proposals which may become the subject of formal planning applications, the need for planning permission, planning law, the interpretation of planning policies and other related matters.
- 3.2 To act as case officer for formal applications as directed by the Principal Planning Officer, including undertaking the following actions:
 - Assess planning applications and appeals against the NPA's planning policies and planning legislation.
 - Consult other authorities, organisations and departments.
 - Make site visits.
 - Resulting from the site inspection, give consideration to any further action which needs to be taken.
 - Undertake negotiations to overcome any shortcomings in the planning submission where appropriate.
 - Take into consideration and, where necessary, respond to any representations/observations submitted in respect of planning applications.
 - Formulate recommendations on proposals, including where necessary drafting reports for senior officers with appropriate summaries of relevant information, conditions and reasons to enable applications to be placed on the Planning Committee agenda or determined under the Executive Director Strategy and Planning delegated powers.
- 3.3 Consider cases where it is suspected there might be a breach of planning control, in particular where planning policies and conditions have not been complied with, carrying out site investigations, discussing with contravenors possible courses of action, making recommendations on the appropriateness of taking enforcement action and collaborating with the NPA's Enforcement team and the Solicitor.
- 3.4 Giving advice to other teams of the NPA on matters related to the work of the Planning Development team.
- 3.5 Ensure that senior officers are kept informed about matters which they are or could become involved in.
- 3.6 Assist others in the team with their casework.
- 3.7 Prepare appeal statements and represent the Authority as an expert witness for Planning Inquiries, Hearings or other Tribunals.

4 Problem solving

4.1 Band 4/5

- The workload comprises of the more routine aspects of development control, either dealing personally with straightforward issues, or preparing information for action by senior professional staff.
- Assist in resolving technical and specialist problems to ensure that the Planning Development and support systems work effectively and meet the required standards.

4.2 Band 6

- An ability to analyse a range of considerations and to exercise judgement and use initiative where these are in conflict, and where original solutions might be required. Generally the solutions found will be based on the post holder's technical knowledge or previous experience of planning matters.

- An ability to prioritise work appropriately often in the face of a high and frequently changing workload. There is a special need to maintain a professional standard and accuracy whilst meeting Divisional targets and charter standards. There is a high level of interruption within the workload which requires good time management.
- A commitment to a high standard of customer care using communication skills to represent the NPA effectively and to help customers understand the planning process and the decisions taken.
- A willingness to keep up to date with the ever-changing background of procedures and policies and to adjust to such changes.

4.3 Band 7

- The ability to give advice and guidance to elected members and other interested parties based on your own technical knowledge and without reference to a senior officer.
- The ability to be able to determine which option is the best having considered all the options available, and to present the findings in a suitable manner.
- The ability to deal with more complex issues based on your own knowledge of the subject area.

5 **Decision making**

5.1 Band 4/5

- The post will be involved in decisions about reconciling the competing interests that occur in Planning Development in accordance with the NPA's aim to develop continuously to achieve excellence.
- Some decisions and actions will affect the NPA and its work, so careful consideration of these impacts beyond the realm of the Planning Development team is required.
- The post will involve working towards the achievement of targets set out in the service plan for the Planning Development team.

5.2 Band 6

- Appropriate advice has to be given to senior officers, Members and a wide range of customers.
- Individual decisions are made which are not subject to immediate scrutiny and others will act on the advice given.
- Such advice will influence decisions taken by its recipients which will have an impact on the quality of the environment and its perception by individuals and would also have financial implications.
- Inappropriate advice could have a damaging effect and compromise the NPA's aim to develop continuously as an organisation of excellence.
- Advice given may impact on other areas of planning i.e. Conservation or Policy.

5.3 Band 7

- At this level the post holder will be required to demonstrate their ability to exercise judgement when dealing with some of the more complex issues.
- The ability to present well reasoned reports to a senior officer, showing all the options considered and the reasons for the proposed decision.
- The ability to work with minimal supervision and only referring to senior officers when necessary.
- Ability to give advice to other teams and to external agencies, e.g. the Head of Environment and Rural Economy, the Hampshire County Council Highway Authority, on planning matters.

6 Operational responsibility

6.1 Band 4/5/6

- Responsibility for delivery of assigned aspects of the Planning Development service within the quality standards, timescales and budget as set out in the service plan, or as instructed by the Principal Planning Officer.
- Processing planning applications and related appeals (written reps/informal hearings).
- Representing the NPA on occasions.
- Safe operation of office equipment.

6.2 Band 7

- Ability to deputise for the Senior Planning Officer.
- Processing the more complex and contentious planning applications and related appeals (written reps/informal hearings/public inquiries)

7 Communication

7.1 Band 4/5

- Oral/presentation skills: both to represent the NPA effectively and to deal with customers who may not be entirely familiar with the planning process.
- 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 to reach appropriate conclusions when dealing with finely balanced or complex issues.

7.2 Band 6/7

- Negotiation skills: with applicants/agents, objectors, NPA members, other agencies and other staff (within and outside the Planning Development team) are vital to achieve the most beneficial outcomes.

8 Working conditions

8.1 The post holder will work from an office base but will be required to undertake frequent site visits within the boundary of the National Park.

8.2 The position may involve personal 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 their responsibilities with due regard to NPA policy and procedures.

9.2 All staff have a responsibility to participate in the NPA's Appraisal Scheme and to contribute to their own development.

10 Job description agreement

10.1 The above Job Description is not intended to be exhaustive, the duties and responsibilities may therefore vary over time according to the changing needs of the service.

**Job holder's
signature:** _____

Date _____

**Manager's
signature:** _____

Date _____

Person Specification

Planning Officer

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Assessed by
Qualifications / Experience			
Band 4 NVQ level 3 plus demonstrable planning experience	Y		A / I
Band 5 A recognised planning degree or post graduate qualification with demonstrable experience	Y		A / I
Band 6 A recognised planning degree or post graduate qualification plus demonstrable post qualification experience	Y		A / I
Band 7 A recognised planning degree or post graduate qualification in planning, plus significant post qualification experience	Y		A / I
Band 7 Membership of the RTPI		Y	A
Experience			
Band 4 – 7 Demonstrate previous experience of working as an effective team member	Y		A / I
Knowledge			
Band 4 - 7 Good IT skills and knowledge of current systems including Microsoft (Word, Excel, Outlook) with the ability to adapt to new systems	Y		A / I
Band 6 – 7 Detailed knowledge of planning law, procedures and statutory requirements	Y		A / I
Skills			
Band 4 – 7 Good communication and inter-personal skills	Y		I
Band 4 – 7 Good organisational skills with experience of managing own workload to meet deadlines	Y		A / I
Band 6 - 7 Proven ability to deal with all customers in a professional manner demonstrating excellent customer care skills.	Y		A / I
Impact and attributes			
Band 4 – 7 A valid driving license and access to a vehicle	Y		A
Ability to understand the need to treat sensitive information confidentially, especially in relation to Planning matters	Y		A / I
Political awareness		Y	A

Evidence assessed by key:

A = Application form

I = Interview

T = Testing / assessment / presentation