

## Folkestone & Hythe District Council Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
<b>Job Title</b>	Principal Planning Officer
<b>Service Area / Team</b>	Development Management
<b>Reports to</b>	Development Management Team Leader
<b>Grade &amp; Annual Salary</b>	Grade H: £46,345- £51,815
<b>Politically Restricted Post</b>	Yes (Sensitive)
<b>DBS Requirement</b>	None

JOB PURPOSE
<p>To assist in providing a high quality, customer-focused planning service, by undertaking or managing / supporting other case officers in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Handling a range of planning applications, including more complex issues and the negotiation of more complex planning agreements from pre-application discussions to implementation, within agreed timescales;</li> <li>▪ Investigating alleged breaches of planning control, including more complex matters, pursuing the most appropriate and effective action to remedy these;</li> <li>▪ Handling all aspects of appeals;</li> <li>▪ Handling enquiries from customers;</li> <li>▪ Contributing to the review of processes and procedures for the delivery of this service and formulation and development of planning policy.</li> <li>▪ Undertaking planning and other related training as required.</li> </ul> <p>This post will have involvement with local people, politicians and a range of external organisations and may include some work outside of normal office hours.</p> <p>To provide professional advice, information and guidance on all planning and enforcement matters and to make delegated planning decisions in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation on behalf of the Chief Planning Officer.</p>

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
To provide expert advice and guidance as appropriate to the council, Councillors and Committees, customers, stakeholders and team members as required.
To determine planning applications and other applications on behalf of the Chief Planning Officer where delegated by the Council in accordance with case law and planning policy.

To undertake the following duties connected with the planning application process:

- To determine and advise whether proposals require planning permission and related permissions (in accordance with legislation).
- To ensure that proper consultations are carried out (in accordance with legislation).
- To undertake site visits in order to determine any constraints on development.
- To negotiate a range of amendments to applications from minor to complex with applicants and other professionals.
- To input decisions and data into document management system.
- To prepare professional reports and be responsible for the content within reports of team members on applications to be determined under delegated powers and by Committee.
- Attend Planning Committee and assist with leading/presenting applications, and for those of team members, in a highly professional and accessible manner.
- To deal with approvals and discharges of planning conditions and other planning related applications.
- Lead s106 negotiations on major applications in a timely and professional way to deliver excellent results.

To prepare for and give evidence as an expert witness at public inquiries, informal hearings and in court.

To prepare for, attend and provide expert advice on demand at Council and Committee meetings and advise members on planning or related matters.

To respond to queries and complaints in respect of planning matters relevant to the post holder's area.

To provide professional advice and information to prospective applicants, other officers of the council, and the general public.

To respond to enquiries and provide advice and guidance verbally and in writing to a variety of stakeholders using appropriate language and communication methods, depending on the audience, which could include councillors, parish councils, agents, applicants, user groups, internal staff, statutory consultees including the environment agency and Natural England as well as other government and non-government agencies.

To attend meeting or undertake site visits as required, including outside of normal office hours.

To maintain an awareness of legal and policy developments, relating to planning and development management in particular.

To actively suggest and take part in implementation of ongoing continuous improvements within the department, particularly in respect of new Government procedures.

To contribute to the formulation and development of planning policy, identifying process and procedure changes, advising the Chief Planning Officer on their implementation.

To be able to work flexibly as part of a multi-disciplinary team on a wide range of complex and sensitive planning and development tasks. These tasks may include: planning management, design, policy development, corporate projects, enforcement and development issues, to enable the unit to respond flexibly to the changing demands it faces.

To act as the case officer for several challenging and major applications raising complex local issues and requiring a high degree of professionalism and sensitivity in handling the public, politicians, applicants etc.

To work with internal and external partners to deliver excellent results and high quality development outcomes.

To maintain electronic and paper-based planning and enforcement records, ensuring they are kept relevant and up to date.

To actively support and deputise for managers within the Development Management function as appropriate to the role and work alongside and support all senior and principal planners to ensure delivery of the service objectives.

### **Processing Pre-application Enquires and Planning Applications**

Demonstrate a strong design awareness and the ability to negotiate successfully to materially improve development schemes.

Be responsible for mentoring/advising case officers in all aspects of assessing and processing applications.

Take responsibility for the processing of all types of allocated applications which will include a range of more complex applications.

Attend hearings, public inquiries and/or court proceedings to give evidence on behalf of the Council as an expert witness, seeking advice from senior officers as appropriate.

Liaise with members, applicants, agents, developers, consultees, objectors, etc., to discuss and negotiate on proposals and planning agreements, including visits to sites and correspondence.

Advise applicants/agents on the likelihood of the grant of planning and related permissions through pre-submission negotiations.

Maintain accurate records of relevant events in the "life" of an application.

Draft and prepare Committee reports.

Present applications to Committee.

Undertake day to day work on all aspects of Development Management, subject to abilities and experience.

Exercise the authority delegated to the post to determine applications.

### **Appeals and Enforcement**

Either assist with, or prepare, the Council's response to planning and enforcement appeals as required.

Attend appeal hearings, public inquiries and/or court proceedings to give evidence on behalf of the Council as an expert witness, seeking advice from senior officers as appropriate.

To monitor development for compliance with planning permissions.

Depending on caseloads, take responsibility for a number of more complex cases, having regard to all material considerations.

Either prepare reports and/or liaise with appropriate Planning Officers to initiate enforcement action against breaches of planning control.

Liaise with and advise Planning Officers, Members, other council departments and external agencies (e.g. the Police) to ensure that breaches of planning control and related non-compliance with other legislation is dealt with in the most effective and comprehensive manner possible.

### **CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required.
- Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training in order to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district.
- To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
- To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do.
- To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
- To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
- To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time.

## Folkestone & Hythe District Council Person Specification

### Post Title: Principal Planning Officer

<b>Important Information for Applicants:</b>				
The criteria listed in this person specification are the requirements for the post. Where the method of assessment is stated to be the application form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, you may not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.				
Factors	Criteria	Means of Assessment		
		Application	Interview	Test
Qualifications	<b>Essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant degree or equivalent, or comparable experience</li> <li>Professional qualification in Planning, or comparable experience</li> <li>Chartered Membership of the RTPI, or be eligible for such membership.</li> </ul>	✓		
	<b>Desirable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A management qualification.</li> </ul>	✓		
Experience and Knowledge	<b>Essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of 5 years practical experience of planning work in either Development Management or Planning Policy (or both combined) in the private or public sector.</li> <li>Recent and relevant experience in dealing with a wide range of planning and related applications, including major applications.</li> <li>Recent and relevant experience of appearing at public inquiries and/or informal hearings.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	
	<b>Desirable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management experience.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	

<b>Skills and Abilities</b>	<b>Essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The written and oral communication skills (including public speaking) required to effectively liaise with stakeholders, customers and colleagues at every level and through a range of mediums.</li> <li>• Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to convey and receive information accurately and appropriately.</li> <li>• Ability to write clear, logical reports and statements.</li> <li>• Ability to work as part of a team and on own initiative.</li> <li>• Ability to plan, organise and prioritise workload and competing demands effectively in order to meet deadlines and targets and maintain high standards at all times.</li> <li>• Flexible, adaptable and receptive to new initiatives and change.</li> <li>• Excellent customer service skills and the ability to offer customers an effective, efficient and consistent service.</li> <li>• Ability to negotiate and discuss complex issues relating to planning law effectively with colleagues in the public and private sector.</li> <li>• Ability to deal effectively with controversial or confrontational situations.</li> <li>• Ability to travel around the district in an effective and efficient manner.</li> <li>• Competency with daily use of IT and a range of IT applications.</li> </ul>	✓  ✓  ✓ ✓ ✓  ✓ ✓  ✓  ✓ ✓ ✓	✓  ✓  ✓ ✓ ✓  ✓ ✓  ✓  ✓ ✓ ✓	
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