

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

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| **JOB TITLE** | **POST NUMBERS** |
| **Assistant Planning Officer, Development Management** | **H1011, H1030, H1031b, H1032 & H1033** |
| **DIRECTORATE** | **LOCATION** |
| Planning & Environmental Services | Hybrid working (Council Offices, Hailsham / homeworking) |
| **GRADE** | **OTHER ALLOWANCES** |
| WDC3 – WDC4 | Essential car user |
| **KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS** | **INTERNAL/EXTERNAL** |
| **Who will I be working with?** | **Internal:** Director of Place, Head of Planning & Environmental Services, Development Manager, Team Leader Development Management Team, other heads of service, other members of staff and councillors.  **External:** Officers of the County Council and adjoining councils, town and parish councils, officers of government departments, developers and their agents, members of the public and others associated with the development management function when acting for or on behalf of the District Council. |
| **How will I be interacting with others?** | On a daily basis through emails, phone calls, Teams or face-to-face interactions.  Attending meetings both internally and externally.  Sharing planning information and providing expert planning advice to influence and negotiate good planning outcomes. |
| **STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES/LEVEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY** | |
| **What am I accountable for?** | Together with the Head of Planning & Environmental Services and the Development Manager to exercise all the Council’s powers, duties, responsibilities, and functions to undertake planning powers under all relevant legislation, subject to exceptions as set out in the scheme of delegation.  This role has no delegated authority to issue decisions, notices, etc. but is required to assess matters and write reports that inform such decisions. The role is accountable insomuch as it should be demonstrated that due process has been followed and that you have acted professionally when reaching your recommendations. The decisions made / actions taken and any possible consequences rely on the postholders professional judgement.  This role is designated a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.  A current full driving licence is required and you should own your own transport.  Flexibility of working hours as required for occasional out of hours working. |
| **What are the consequences for me or the council?** | Poor professional judgement will result in negative social, environmental and economic outcomes throughout the district.  Risk of legal action if decisions taken have erred in law.  Poor performance can lead to increases in complaints and may result in designation by the Secretary of State.  All of these have financial loss and reputational damage implications for the Council. |
| **DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY** (INDEPENDENCE) | |
| **What actions can I take independently?**  Management and progress of case work.  Take decisions to ensure service delivery and to provide 5\* customer service having regard to the approach set out by the Head of Service and Development Manager.  **When do I need to involve others?**  The role has some level of autonomy as part of managing and progressing your own case work. However, matters will be escalated to the Team Leader, Development Manager or Head of Service depending on nature of issues being considered. | |
| **JOB PURPOSE** (COMPLEXITY) | |
| **Why does this job exist?**  The Development Management Team are responsible for the Council’s role as local planning authority, specifically that in relation to planning application, enforcement and related matters. This role is to progress case work relating to a range of development and application types contributing to an overall effective and efficient delivery of the Council’s development management function.  **How does it contribute to the Council overall?**  The role contributes to achieving good planning outcomes, which in turn ensures that the priorities of the Council’s Strategy are being delivered, including: supporting tackling climate change, protecting the countryside and biodiversity, moving to more active forms of travel and use of sustainable transport, promoting renewable energy, improving infrastructure, delivering affordable homes and supporting the local economy. | |

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| **ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| **What are the most important things I will be doing?**   1. To process and prepare reports on planning applications, listed building applications, applications for certificates of lawful use or development, certificates for alternative development. 2. To give advice on planning matters, both verbally and in letter form, to the general public, applicants and their agents. 3. To prepare and present planning reports for Planning Committee, as required. 4. To provide a telephone duty officer service for members of the public. 5. To carry out negotiations and consultations with developers, applicants and agents to support the efficient processing of planning matters in a spirit of co-operation, to achieve the best positive outcomes and deliver 5\* customer service. 6. To arrange and attend, as necessary, site inspections and meetings in connection with planning and other applications, enforcement matters, related appeals and consultations. 7. To help ensure that planning and other applications, agreements and enforcement comply with the requirements of planning and associated legislation and the adopted local policies and contribute to the review of such policies as and when necessary. 8. To assist with the provision of appropriate advice to applicants, agents, developers and others on development management and enforcement matters and to process enquiries and applications swiftly and in a spirit of co-operation, achieving the best positive result possible in the circumstances. 9. To liaise with officers of other service sections within the District Council and the County Council’s Directorate of Transport and Environment (on both planning and highway matters) in respect of County policy implications arising out of applications and County matters and other authorities and agencies in respect of consultations and requirements. 10. To assist with the preparation of Council’s proofs of evidence and appeal statements for written representations, informal hearings and public inquiries. |
| **What other activities will I be responsible for?**   1. To undertake such other duties as the Head of Planning & Environmental Services, may from time to time require. 2. Where required, to assist with enforcement investigations in the relevant team area. |
| **Will I be managing others?**  No |
| **Who do I report into?**  Development Management Team Leader |

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| **PROGRESSION & DEVELOPMENT** |
| **What are the development opportunities for me?**  The Council will provide opportunities for training. This will include training for a planning qualification (if not already obtained), continual professional development to maintain expert planning knowledge and competency and training to gain personal skills aiding professional development and improving career progression possibilities. |
| **How will I know I am being successful in this role?**  Success will be achieved by throughput of case work, through sound and consistent decision taking, delivering new homes and employment for the district, ensuring protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment, achieving positive customer feedback, having good working relationships with elected members and town and parish councils, and good performance in relation to relevant Council set KPIs and performance standards set by government.  Those successes will be managed and reviewed via the Council’s performance management procedures. This includes an initial probation period (20 weeks) whereby after you would move over to our annual appraisal process, which includes a 6-month review. The appraisal lists any team or individual targets which are assessed to monitor progress and identify successes or areas of concern before they cause a problem.  In addition, there are regular check-ins with the Team Leader to discuss expectations and performance and to identify any further support or guidance that is required. |
| **What is the required learning for me in this role?**  Mandatory / compulsory training, including but not limited to: corporate induction requirements, cyber security, equalities and diversity, health and safety, data protection and freedom of information.  Continual professional development requirements to maintain professional status and competency. |

This is an outline job description designed to summarise the key responsibilities of the role and is not intended to cover every task that may be required. It may be subject to change to meet the evolving needs of the organisation.

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| **Additional Role Requirements** | |
| Standards of Conduct | You will be required to comply with the Council’s Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions, and at all times deal honestly with the Council, Members, Colleagues and all those who have dealings with the Council, including customers and suppliers.  You must behave with integrity, act lawfully and demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values.  To positively demonstrate the Wealden values yourself and to continue to build the culture of the Wealden values through the appointment, management, appraisal and development of staff (as well as third party providers). |
| Health & Safety/Risk Management | Wealden District Council’s Health & Safety Policy and other safety procedures and guidelines are deemed part of this job description. Employees must look after their own health, safety and welfare and be mindful of other persons who may be affected by their acts. Employees must co‑operate and comply with management instructions regarding H&S issues and report all accidents, incidents and problems to their supervisor, manager or other senior members of staff, in line with the H&S policies.  You will need to be compliant with the Council’s risk management policies and procedures. These describe the Council’s commitment to risk management, the recognition that our aim is to protect colleagues and visitors from harm, and stress that all colleagues have a responsibility to minimise risk. |
| Governance Standards | Comply with the relevant governance standards applicable to the Council as communicated to the post-holder from time to time. |
| Data Protection | To comply with Council Policies and the Data Protection Act in all respects, with particular relevance to the protection and use of staff and customer information. |
| Confidentiality | Council colleagues are required to ensure that information about customers and staff is safeguarded to maintain confidentiality and is kept securely in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA18). The Council’s Data Security and Protection policy ICT policies provide guidance on how this can be achieved. |
| Communication | To encourage innovation and positive challenge through effective involvement, motivation and communication with Officers, Members, Partners and other Stakeholders, actively promoting the Council’s reputation and image as an employer of choice. |
| Digital/  Records Management | To direct the identification, development and implementation of digital and other systems and procedures which are aligned to the Council’s Drive to Digital Strategy and are shaped to reflect our customers’ and stakeholders’ needs.  To maintain Council customer and staff records (both paper and electronic) in accordance with Council policies. |
| Freedom of  Information | To provide advice and assistance to all persons who propose to make, or have made requests for information, and to ensure all requests for information are managed appropriately in accordance with Council Freedom of Information procedures. |
| Security | To comply with Council policies to ensure there is a safe and secure environment that protects Members, staff and visitors and their property, and the physical assets and the information of the organisation. |
| Other duties | Participate in such non-routine duties as elections and Emergency Planning as directed by the Chief Executive to include, where appropriate, the setup of a Rest Centre. |
| Freedom to Speak Up  (Whistleblowing) | You have responsibility for customer and staff welfare and should raise any concerns relating to a breach of Council policies and procedures with your manager or refer to HR for alternative options. |
| Environmental Impact | You will ensure compliance with the Council’s environmental management policies and procedures. These describe the Council’s commitment to climate change and carbon management, the recognition that our aim is to protect the environment and the use of natural resources that all staff have a responsibility towards. |
| Performance review | This Job Description will be used as a basis for individual performance review between you and your line manager.  The Job Description covers only the key result areas and, as such, does not intend to provide a comprehensive list of objectives. Specific objectives will be reviewed each April and may develop to meet the changing needs of the service. You will need to take due account, in the way they achieve the key result areas, of Council policies and procedures. |
| Equality and Diversity | To take responsibility and comply with the Council’s Equal Opportunities policy (which makes a commitment to promote equal opportunities and equality of all protected characteristics in Wealden), Officers’ Code of Conduct, Data Protection and other relevant policies, procedures and legislation, to ensure these are embedded and applied throughout the service in both service provision and employment issues. |

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| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** |

| **CRITERIA** | **ATTRIBUTES** | **ESSENTIAL** | **DESIRABLE** | **ASSESSED BY**  **Application Form / Interview / Practical Assessment** |
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| **Knowledge & Experience** | Some experience in the field of planning and experience in the application of that knowledge within a planning policy / development management context | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview / Practical Assessment |
| Experience dealing with customers and/or members of the public | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Knowledge of the relevant law, government policy and guidance and practice relating to planning and listed buildings | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview / Practical Assessment |
| Knowledge of local government |  | ✓ | Application Form / Interview |
|  | Knowledge of performance indicators |  | ✓ | Application Form / Interview |
| **Skills** | Must be able to function independently and manage own workload and goals as well as work as part of a team. | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| To carry out negotiations in a positive, constructive and professional manner to deliver positive planning outcomes. Ability to support and articulate these solutions in meetings with others including outside bodies (e.g. town and parish councils). | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Can deliver 5\* customer service | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Good communication skills - ability to be articulate and concise | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Has appropriate ICT skills including experience in using Microsoft Office products | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Demonstrates initiative and is solutions focused to help manage and complete tasks in an efficient and timely manner and to meet targets | ü |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Strategic and lateral thinker who is pro-active, innovative, self-motivated and works well under pressure | ü |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Enthusiastic and ability to work in a team (team player) and assist others in achieving team objectives | ü |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Friendly personality, enjoys meeting the public and dealing with enquiries | ü |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Acts professionally and ethically at all times in accordance with the RTPI code of conduct | ü |  | Application Form / Interview |
| Occupational requirement to have a command of spoken English sufficient for effective performance. | ✓ |  | Application Form / Interview |
| **Qualifications/**  **Education** | Educated to undergraduate degree level or higher in planning or related discipline or, if without a degree qualification, can demonstrate full membership or eligibility for full membership of the RTPI | ✓ |  | Application Form |
| Full RTPI membership or eligibility for membership |  | ✓ | Application Form |

