



RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Principal Planning Officer

Grade: PO3

Directorate: Places

Department: Planning

Responsible to: Development Manager

Purpose of the Job:

The Principal Planner will serve as both a senior case officer and team leader within the Development Management service, providing daily line management mentoring and professional support to planning officers and assistants. They will lead on complex and strategic planning applications, appeals and enforcement matters, ensuring all advice and decisions are robust, transparent and compliant with national legislation and Council policy. The role demands expert engagement with elected members, senior officers, developers, stakeholders and the public, contributing to a high-performing, customer-focused planning service that reflects the Council's values.

Working closely with the Development Manager, the postholder will ensure the effective delivery of statutory planning functions, meeting performance targets and promoting best practice, innovation and continuous improvement. They will contribute to wider Council strategies, including planning policy, infrastructure delivery and cross-service collaboration, and will represent the Council across Rutland, the Region and the LEP area to support sustainable growth and regeneration. Responsibilities also include preparing professional reports and recommendations for Planning Committee and Cabinet, negotiating and monitoring planning obligations such as Section 106 and CIL, and commissioning specialist consultants to support sound decision-making.

The Principal Planner will play a key role in advocating for high-quality development outcomes that balance heritage, sustainability and community needs. They will represent the Council at hearings, public inquiries and stakeholder forums, ensuring that all outputs are capable of withstanding scrutiny and aligned with corporate objectives.

Main Responsibilities:

1. To manage staff and allocate work to ensure the effective delivery of all non-administrative aspects of handling planning, listed building and advertisement applications from receipt through to the drafting of recommendations to Committee.



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2. To mentor members of the planning team to ensure effective team working. This to include coaching trainees and ensuring that their work programmes are designed to deliver their learning and development
3. To provide advice and deal with planning enquiries from elected Members, Parish and Town Councils, Neighbourhood Plan bodies, community groups, developer interests and the general public, including pre-application discussions.
4. To act as case officer for larger/more complex applications, to negotiate amendments as necessary, and to prepare and present reports to meetings of the appropriate Council Committee.
5. Prepare evidence and witness statements and appear as an expert witness for the Council at all types of planning appeals, examinations in public, public inquiries and court hearings as required.
6. To manage and support the Enforcement Officer in the delivery of a robust and effective planning enforcement service. This includes overseeing the monitoring and control of breaches of planning control, ensuring that all enforcement cases—from initial complaint, investigation and site visits through to resolution—are progressed in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy. The postholder will provide guidance and exercise delegated authority and professional judgement, particularly in relation to serious, complex or potentially controversial cases, ensuring consistency, transparency and timely outcomes.
7. To line manage the Conservation Officer in his/her duties so as to ensure the delivery of a satisfactory conservation service.
8. To deputise for the Development Manager as required, including responsibility for delegated decision making in his/her absence.
9. To prepare reports and attend meetings of the appropriate Council decision making body (Committee/Cabinet/Scrutiny Panel), and to represent the council at outside meetings as necessary.
10. To contribute to corporate initiatives and cross-service projects, providing planning input and applying contract management, monitoring and evaluation skills as required.
11. To assist the Development Manager to maintain effective systems for the performance monitoring of the service and to contribute towards service planning, performance management and service reviews as necessary.
12. To respond to consultation documents from Government, other planning authorities and relevant agencies, ensuring the Council's views are clearly represented.



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13. To oversee the negotiation and monitoring of planning obligations, including Section 106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), ensuring that contributions are secured and delivered in line with adopted policies and infrastructure requirements.
14. To undertake any other relevant duties of a similar nature and level for the effective operation of the service as may be required from time to time.
15. To lead on the processing of major planning applications relating to minerals and waste developments. This includes assisting with the enforcement and monitoring of minerals and waste sites to ensure compliance with planning conditions and obligations. The postholder may also act as case officer for individual applications within this area and will represent the Council at Quarry Liaison Groups, site monitoring visits, and stakeholder forums. They will exercise professional judgement in managing complex or sensitive cases, ensuring consistency, transparency, and effective engagement with operators, regulatory bodies, and local communities.

Standard clauses:

To act in accordance with the principles set out in the Employee Code of Conduct and the Council's Values, recognising the duty of all public sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law.

To manage delegated budgets and ensure effective financial planning and monitoring in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rules.

To lead and develop a motivated team and ensure they are developed in their role through effective use of 'My Conversation'/supervision and effective performance management as appropriate.

Take reasonable care for your health and safety and have regard to other persons who may be affected by the performance of your duties, in accordance with the provisions of Health and Safety legislation and Rutland County Council's and Departmental codes of practice and procedures. You will exercise proper care in handling, operating and safeguarding any equipment, vehicle or appliance provided, used or issued by the Council or provided or issued by a third party for individual or collective use in the performance of your duties.

This job description indicates the main areas of activity of this post. From time to time, however, other tasks/duties may be required but these will fall within the general areas of responsibility and grade of the post. Any changes which are of a permanent nature will, following consultation with you, be included in the job description in specific terms and will be formally issued to you.

Behaviours and outcomes:



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Work collaboratively across the Council to ensure a joined up, consistent service that adds value to the Planning Service and the wider Council priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy. The Council's four priorities are:

- Tackling the climate emergency,
- A diverse and sustainable local economy,
- Provide good public services,
- Support the most vulnerable.

Be ambitious for Rutland and champion best practice across the Planning services to achieve the best outcomes.

To be a role model for the One Council ethos and values.

Respond to pressure and change – flexible and adaptable to sustain performance.

Build and manage relationships, share knowledge and skills to deliver shared goals.

Actively support new initiatives and try different ways of doing things.

Dimensions:

Day to day monitoring and supervision of budgets with authority to approve expenditure up to £10,000.

Line Management (Along with the other Principal Planning Officers) of the Senior Planning Officer and Planning Officers (x3), Apprentice Planning Officer (x2) Planning Enforcement Officer, Enforcement Technician, Conservation Officer and Tree Officer

Oversees planning officers and assistants, allocating caseloads and ensuring effective delivery of planning applications and related duties. Provides daily supervision and supports operational clarity.

Mentors team members, including trainees, to foster effective team working and support career progression. Designs work programmes that align with individual learning and development needs.

Manages and supports the Enforcement Officer in delivering a robust enforcement service, and assists the Conservation Officer to ensure effective conservation outcomes.



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JOB REQUIREMENTS

QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING/EDUCATION

Essential	Method of Assessment *
Planning Degree or equivalent	A/D
Completed a Master's programme Or equivalent relevant experience	A/D
Member of RTPPI (or eligible)	A/D

Desirable	Method of Assessment *
Knowledge of the Idox Uniform System	A/I

EXPERIENCE/KNOWLEDGE

Essential	Method of Assessment *
Experience of working in an office environment	A/I
Good knowledge of local government procedures and practices	A/I
Good understanding of current planning issues and legislation	A/I
Extensive knowledge of planning policy regulations and processes.	A/I
Knowledge of the Neighbourhood Planning process	A/I
Experience of negotiating and monitoring Section 106 agreements	A/I
Experience of public speaking/presentation on planning matters	A/I
Experience of working with Elected Members	A/I
Experience of giving planning evidence at hearings/inquiries	A/I



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SKILLS

Essential	Method of Assessment *
Demonstrates a positive attitude and approach to work.	A/I
Good organisational and analytical skills; methodical and high attention to detail.	A/I
Presentation skills	A/I
High level of skill in producing effective written documents – emails, letters, reports – clear and comprehensible writing style.	A/I
Numeracy skills – preparation, analysis of statistics.	A
Demonstrates evidence of providing a high level of professional advice to customers, colleagues and Elected Members.	A/I
Competently represents the Council at Committees, Tribunals, Appeals, Courts and /or hearings and Examination in Public.	A/I
Able to demonstrate ability to lead on specific projects and /or major development schemes.	A/I
High level negotiation skills.	A/I
Able to effectively manage and develop staff.	A/I
High levels of customer care	A/I
Tact & diplomacy	A/I
Ability to work under pressure	A/I
Ability to manage own workloads	A/I
Able to use a wide range of IT systems – Microsoft Office, emails, word, excel, databases	A/I

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Essential	Method of Assessment *
Able to recognise discrimination and be proactive in ensuring the Council's policy is put into practice.	A/I



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OTHER

Essential	Method of Assessment *
Flexible in working patterns to fulfil commitments of the role and team.	A/I
Willingness and ability to visit other sites as and when required.	A/I
Committed to team environment	A/I

* A = Application Form D = Documentary evidence I = Interview T = Test

STRUCTURE

NOTE: These requirements must be reviewed each time this post becomes vacant. The reviewing manager must sign below. If changed, please submit both the original job description and amended job description to the Human Resources Department.

DATE	CHANGE - YES/NO	PREPARED BY (Name & Position Title)
3 rd February 2016	Yes to put in new format	Gary Pullan DC Manager
6 th October 2016	No	Gary Pullan DC Manager
17 th November 2016	No	Gary Pullan DC Manager
3 rd April 2017	Yes – structure added	
7 th June 2021	Yes Structure and role updated	Justin Johnson Development Manager
24 th September 2021	Yes updated Structure and role	Justin Johnson Development Manager
7 th August 2025	Yes	Justin Johnson Development Manager