

WHERE
CAREERS
THRIVE

When potential
is unlocked,
talent *thrives*



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Job description and person specification

Graduate Planning Officer

Planning Service – Place, Economy and Environment Directorate

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our vision at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is: 'to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive'.

We truly stand by this and work hard every day to make this a reality, and at WNC it's about our people. People who thrive with ambition, bring new ideas, demand better ways of working, care about every detail, and who never shy away from a challenge.

Our culture is a gateway for new experiences. A place to forge new opportunities. To empower you in your career and unite you with like-minded people. When potential is unlocked, talent thrives.



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Purpose and impact:

To provide appropriate advice on all Development Management matters including the provision of appropriate pre-application advice and the effective and efficient processing of minor planning applications and 'other' applications for planning permission and all other related consents and determinations.

This role will include working across all Development Management Services:

- **Planning Enforcement:** Investigating alleged breaches of planning control, assessing harm, and taking appropriate action to resolve issues, including formal enforcement where necessary.
- **Development Strategy:** Contributing to strategic planning initiatives, including input into local plan preparation, site allocations, and infrastructure delivery to support sustainable growth.
- **Technical Support:** Collaborating with technical teams to ensure accurate data management, validation of applications, and effective use of digital systems to streamline service delivery.

Accountable to:

Principle Planning Officer. The role sits within Planning and Development, part of the Place, Economy and Environment Directorate in West Northamptonshire Council.

Responsibilities:

1. To make a proactive and positive contribution to the effective delivery of the Planning Service, this will include working flexibly and positively to achieve the objectives of the council.
2. To deliver excellent customer service in every interaction for all internal and external customers, including Councillors.
3. To attend, record and successfully complete all training provided as part of the career grade/apprenticeship scheme and;

With the support of the Development Management Team Leader, the Principal Planning Officers and appropriate on the job training, external training courses and mentoring, develop the necessary knowledge, experience and skills.

4. To respond in a timely and professional manner to requests for support from members of the public seeking to engage with the Planning Service. This will include providing support to the Customer Contact Centre and the Complaints and Customer Feedback teams where required.
5. To support timely responses to customer, MP and Councillor complaints and feedback to ensure the Planning Service is consistently meeting corporate service standards.
6. Investigating alleged breaches of planning control, assessing harm, and taking appropriate action to resolve issues, including formal enforcement where necessary.
7. To support the regular entry of data into DEF and our IT systems to ensure the Planning Service is consistently meeting, and exceeding, its statutory and corporate Performance Indicators and demonstrating best practice.
8. To implement the Council's place shaping agenda and its objective to be positive and proactive in terms of allowing the 'right schemes' in the 'right place' at the 'right time'.

9. To provide appropriate technical advice to the public, developers, agents, Members, other departments of the Council and other persons and bodies as appropriate in connection with development proposals and related matters in writing, by telephone or in person.
10. To proactively process and formulate timely recommendations on minor and other applications that are submitted to the Planning Authority including the preparation of reports.
11. To support the Major Projects Team where large-scale projects require additional technical resource and input.
12. To provide support to pre-application enquiries, Planning Performance Agreements, extensions of time, appeals, enforcement cases and any other processes carried out within the team / service and in accordance with agreed service standards.
13. To input into the formulation of planning policies and to provide support to the Planning Policy team where required.
14. To attend site visits, meetings with external organisations, Planning Committee and working parties as and when required.
15. To support the Assistant Director and Head of Development Management with aspects of process improvement and systems review where needed.
16. To support the Assistant Director and Head of Development Management with the delivery of aspects of the Planning Service's Communications and Engagement Strategy where required.
17. To support the Assistant Director and Head of Development Management with the co-ordination of the Agents and Developers Forum, Member training, Parish and Town Council training and staff CPD programmes as required.
18. To take responsibility and encourage personal development and continuous improvement within the team alongside the Development Management Team Leaders to develop a thorough understanding of current issues, processes, legislation or systems.
19. To follow, at all times, all planning and other legislation such as Data Protection - GDPR, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Health & Safety at work.
20. To undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.
21. To maximise personal productivity, minimise duplication and errors; and manage our information efficiently and securely to reduce risk, through effective use of Office 365 and our internal IT systems and applications.
22. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours.
23. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs and ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

Person specification:

The requirements for the role are outlined below and will be part of the selection process. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured by:

(**A**) Application Form, (**T**) Test, (**I**) Interview, (**P**) Presentation, (**D**) Documentation.

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills experience and qualifications required for this job.

Skills and abilities:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Displays a positive, 'can do', proactive and supportive attitude in a team environment with a keen enthusiasm to learn	E	A, I
Verbal communications skills, a good level of ability to express requests, instructions, support and understanding	E	A, I
Writing: displays a good level of ability; exhibits a clear & comprehensible writing style in line with Plain English principles	E	A, I, D
Understands the purpose of specialist software and mapping software in relation to the processing of planning applications by the Council	D	A, I
General IT skills: good basic keyboard/typing skills, use of Windows, word-processing and email	E	A, I, D
Time/priority management: good level of proficiency	E	A, I
Ability to work under pressure, handle stress and to deadlines	E	A, I
Displays good attention to detail and accurate research skills	E	
This is applicable to all roles in WNC that are required to use IT equipment: Demonstrate effective use of Office 365 (incl. Teams, OneDrive, etc.) or willingness to undertake training during the probation period.		A, I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
PC literate, including a good knowledge and understanding of Microsoft Office products such as Outlook, Word & Excel	E	A, I, D
Knowledge of the purpose of Development Management	E	A, I, D
Developing knowledge and understanding of Planning legislation, policy guidance and circulars, practice and case law and the ability to apply that knowledge in negotiating and delivering planning applications within agreed timeframes in order to deliver a responsive, high quality Development Management Service.	D	A, I, D

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Able to demonstrate an understanding of development management legislation.	D	A, I
An ability to communicate clearly and negotiate confidently.		

Education, training and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
3 A-levels (or equivalent) at Grade C or above	E	A, I, D
Relevant undergraduate degree	D	A, I, D

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance and verification of certificates.

Additional pre-employment checks specific to this role include: Basic Disclosure

Day-to-day in the role:

Hours:	37	Primary work base:	The Forum, Towcester
		Worker type:	Part-flexible
Budget responsibility:	None		
People management responsibility:	None.		

Working conditions & how we work:

This role has been identified as a part-flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to worker from other work locations and when not working from an office you will be working remotely for up to 3 days a week (including from home).

Our organisational values and behaviours

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things and we want all colleagues to THRIVE, both personally and professionally. Our values and our behaviours framework underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

T	Trust	We are honest, fair, transparent and accountable. We can be trusted to do what we say we will.
H	High Performing	we get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.
R	Respect	we respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional and supportive environment.
I	Innovate	we encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.
V	Value	We continually strive for best practice and ways of improving existing procedures, practices and systems and thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness
E	Empower	we believe in people, will listen, learn and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.

“Valuing colleagues as individuals and encompassing our different perspectives to deliver our collective ambitions. One West inclusive culture”

When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

Choose a career that offers you a true sense of achievement, fills you with pride and challenges you in a positive way, everyday.

The benefits of a career at WNC include:

- **People** are at the centre of everything we do. Without our people, we wouldn't be able to deliver services to the people in our community.
- **Ambition** runs through everything we do at West Northants Council, we nurture and develop our people's ambition and willingness to succeed, to continually improve the service we provide to the community.
- **Care** is at the heart of West Northants Council, we care in so many ways; seen and unseen, helping our colleagues and community to thrive.
- **Flexibility** is key, we know work-life balance is critical to wellbeing, so we work hard to make sure our benefits package promotes and improves wellbeing; from annual leave, sick pay, family leave and flexible working, financial security offered by a local government pension scheme and life assurance, and discount schemes which make a difference to your day-to-day life, through to employee helplines offering free legal, health, financial and wellbeing advice and support.

We want you to have balance and be happy.

