

WHERE  
CAREERS  
THRIVE

When potential  
is unlocked,  
talent *thrives*



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

Job description and person specification

## Graduate Planning Policy Officer

Planning Service, Place 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 support with producing and maintaining an up-to-date suite of policy documents to guide and set high standards for future development in the area, including developing, maintaining and reviewing local plans, neighbourhood plans and other planning policy documents.

## **Accountable to:**

Responsible to: Principal Planning Policy Officer

## **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 Planning Policy Team Leader, the Principal Planning Policy 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, feedback, FOI and EIR requests to ensure the Planning Service is consistently meeting corporate service standards.
6. 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'.
7. 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.
8. To provide support on all aspects of the preparation and review of Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents and other planning policy/guidance.
9. To research and advise the Council of its statutory obligations in relation to land-use planning policy and development planning issues, U.K. Government, strategic and Sub-regional Planning Policy, and the Development Plans of other authorities as required.
10. To liaise with and advise Development Management colleagues, other officers of the Council and other Local Authorities, statutory bodies, developers and the general public on the Council's land use policy and any development planning matters.

11. To undertake monitoring of development and projections of future development activity, including monitoring of actual and expected contributions to the Council's CIL programme and production of the five-year land supply report.
12. To initiate, organise and undertake research and surveys in relation to Local Plan Policy and oversee the maintenance of information databases.
13. To attend site visits, meetings with external organisations, Planning Policy Committee and working parties as and when required.
14. To support the Assistant Director and Head of Planning Policy and Specialist Services with the following where required; aspects of process improvement and systems review; with the delivery of aspects of the Planning Service's Communications and Engagement Strategy and with the co-ordination of relevant Fora, Member training, Parish and Town Council training and staff CPD programmes.
15. To take responsibility and encourage personal development and continuous improvement within the team alongside the Planning Policy Team Leaders to develop a thorough understanding of current issues, processes, legislation or systems.
16. To follow, at all times, all planning and other legislation such as Data Protection - GDPR, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Health & Safety at work.

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.                    | Essential             | A, T, I, P, D |
| Verbal communications skills, a good level of ability to express requests, instructions, support and understanding.                        | Essential             | A, T, I, P, D |
| Writing: displays a good level of ability; exhibits a clear & comprehensible writing style in line with Plain English principles.          | Essential             | A, T, I, P, D |
| Understands the purpose of specialist software and mapping software in relation to the processing of planning applications by the Council. | Desirable             | A, T, I, P, D |

|  |           |               |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| General IT skills: good basic keyboard/typing skills, use of Windows, word-processing and email. | Essential | A, T, I, P, D |
| Time/priority management: good level of proficiency.   | Essential | A, T, I, P, D |
| Ability to work under pressure, handle stress and to deadlines.                                  | Essential | A, T, I, P, D |
| Displays good attention to detail and accurate research skills.                                  | Essential | A, T, I, P, D |
| Able and willing to travel to other locations and partner sites.                                 | Essential | A, T, I, P, D |

| <b>Knowledge and Experience:</b>   | <b>Essential / Desirable</b> | <b>Measured by</b> |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| PC literate, including a good knowledge and understanding of Microsoft Office products such as Outlook, Word & Excel.      | Essential                    | A, T, I, P, D      |
| Developing knowledge of planning legislation and guidance.   | Desirable                    | A, T, I, P, D      |
| A developing understanding of the Local Plan system, including the role and content of national and local planning policy. | Desirable                    | A, T, I, P, D      |

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

## Day-to-day in the role:

|  |                             |                               |                      |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Hours:</b>                            | 37                          | <b>Primary work base:</b>     | The Forum, Towcester |
| <b>Job family band:</b>                  | Regulatory and Technical 05 | <b>Worker type:</b>           | Part-flexible        |
| <b>Salary range:</b>                     | £31,324 - £33,017           | <b>Budget responsibility:</b> | None                 |
| <b>People management responsibility:</b> | No                          |                               |                      |

## 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.

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

