

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Principal Planning Officer – Development Management*

Directorate:	Growth Environment and Transport
Unit/Section:	Planning Applications Group
Grade:	KSJ
Responsible to:	Head of Planning Applications Group

Purpose of the Job:

Provide expert professional planning advice; determining and making recommendations for the most complex planning applications and submissions, including pre-application advice, appeals and post decision matters relating to all types of KCC's own community development and mineral and waste management developments.

Ensure compliance with statutory, regulatory and guidance requirements in order to manage financial and reputational risk in relation to all aspects of the Authority's development management functions.

Contribute to the delivery of sustainable development across the County and enable the development and control of mineral and waste management and community infrastructure in the County ensuring a balance between the needs of development and wider environmental concerns.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Process and determine planning applications and submissions, enquiries and appeals from pre-application to post decision for the most complex and politically sensitive planning submissions including mineral working, waste management and the Council's own major development in accordance with Business Plan objectives, policies, and procedures.
- Negotiate with applicants and/or their consultants, attend site and public meetings, direct consultation and other processes, undertake site assessment, prepare briefing notes/reports for Members and senior officers and make recommendations for Planning Applications and Regulation Committees. Make decisions, recommendations and apply judgement in accordance with planning policy and guidance to facilitate sustainable development. Make recommendations and decisions, influence and shape legal agreements, discharge of conditions and undertake monitoring and enforcement of planning control.
- Lead, prepare, present, and oversee appeal and public inquiry documentation including proofs of evidence, acting as instructing officer for legal, counsel and other expert witnesses and attend as a professional witness at Public Inquiries representing the County Council.
- Undertake the formal review of Mineral Workings under the Environment Act 1995 and any subsequent legislation as required, and review of planning permission under the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended).

- Oversee and provide day-to-day guidance of others involved in development management including allocation of work, monitoring progress, and providing case supervision to others, along with using delegated powers to review and sign off committee reports and planning decisions pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Acts. Meet service and performance standards as set out in the Divisional Business Plan.
- Line manage, provide supervision, and coach staff in order to share knowledge and develop expertise on the application of legislation, policy, guidance and decision making across a wide range of planning matters including mineral and waste and/or county matter development. Contribute to recruitment, training, and development of Planning staff to ensure high performance standards and contribute to the Divisional objectives for career progression, talent management and staff recruitment.
- Report, attend and present a range of items, including planning applications and matters relating to planning compliance to Planning Applications and Regulation Committees providing expert advice and represent the Planning Authority at public and Member meetings. Input to development and assist delivery of Member training programmes to assist elected members in understanding of planning matters and responsibilities.
- Review and develop procedures, processes, and systems for the effective and efficient discharging of the team's activities to meet changes to national legislation, guidance and planning practice and ensure the highest professional standards are maintained during implementation and adoption. Assist with the development, maintenance, implementation and monitoring of up to date development plan policies which impact upon County Council development or mineral, waste management. Assist in review and development of operational policies and procedures.
- Where appropriate, act as deputy for Head of Planning Applications as primary advisor to the Planning Application Committee and Regulation Committee and on national, regional, sub-regional and local planning matters. Assist the Group Head in support of regional/national work on County Council development matters and represent the Head of Planning Applications or other senior staff at meetings, presentations, site liaison and working groups, as required.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

Organisational Responsibilities

All corporate directors, directors and senior managers have an explicit responsibility to work as part of a team to deliver, collectively, the agenda of the County Council. These are fundamental elements of their role not an addition and are summarised as follows

Whole Council

- Seek to improve the lives of all residents in Kent and the economy of Kent
- Act as corporate parent to the Council's Looked After Children
- Take an active role in promoting and ensuring the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding are met
- Understand, communicate and contribute to the delivery of KCC's strategic aims
- Meet statutory obligations and promote and ensure compliance with policies and procedures and the Council's Code of Conduct (Kent Code)
- Advise elected Members and support the democratic process
- Promote the Council brand and enhance the overall reputation of the Council
- Understand and monitor the measures of performance, including customer insight, which define successful outcomes for KCC services
- Maintain and ensure a relentless focus on the customer
- Act to support the Council-wide need to deliver services within budget, thereby avoiding an overspend that could damage the financial viability of the Council
- Overcome professional and service silos to achieve the County Council's objectives

Integration of Services

- Focus resources where they have the biggest impact
- Deliver services that are flexible and adaptable
- Integrate services within KCC and work with partner agencies to ensure a seamless customer experience
- Fully and inclusively engage all staff in the delivery of services, demonstrating the Council's leadership values and competencies

Embedding Commissioning and Engaging Relevant Markets

- Establish an outcome focused organisation
- Meet the financial regulations and standing orders of KCC
- Challenge the status quo and engage with the market to constantly improve
- Ensure all services are delivered effectively and efficiently
- Proactively and continuously seek to improve service delivery
- Proactively manage risk to avoid inertia whilst not exposing the Council to needless and avoidable challenge or loss

Managing Change

- Understand and support the Authority's overall change agenda
- Deliver required outcomes of service specific change on time and to budget
- Understand the quality of staff, support their development, nurture those with talent
- Identify the skills for the future and the level of staff through robust workforce planning
- Identify and deal with underperformance
- Deliver to agreed budget and income targets

Kent County Council

Person Specification: *Principal Planning Officer – Development Management*

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	A relevant degree (or equivalent) in planning or a similar related environmental or legal discipline. Hold or be eligible for chartered Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
EXPERIENCE	Demonstrable experience in development management functions gained from dealing with a wide range of development proposals with an emphasis on the most complex major development proposals. Demonstrable experience may include minerals and/or waste management development and/or community development including in relation to highways and schools. Demonstrable experience in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), EIA development and Appropriate Assessment Development. Experience may include enforcement and monitoring activities. Experience may include acting as expert witness for planning inquiries and other public examinations and hearings. Demonstrable experience of building up and fostering internal and external relationships in organisations at senior officer and Member level. Experience of performance and line management, supervision and business planning processes and awareness of budget control. Experience in working in a Local Government environment (or similar related experience). Experience in working in a multi-disciplinary environment, and in fostering appropriate working relationships.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	Excellent written, oral and presentation communication skills including to a range of audiences and including report writing and presentations to Members and speaking in public. Ability to lead, supervise, mentor, coach and manage project work, caseloads and people and work collaboratively in multi-disciplinary schemes. Ability to plan, prioritise and organise a diverse workload.

	Creative approach to problem solving including a solution focused approach and strong analytical skills. Well-developed negotiation and inter-personal skills with proven ability to liaise and negotiate effectively with representatives of development industry, community and environmental interests and other local authorities and with elected Members and senior managers, businesses, and interest groups. Strong analytical and site appraisal skills. Ability to work both independently, collaboratively and constructively with internal and external partners and an aptitude for developing internal and external relationships in organisations at senior level. Self-confidence and political awareness within the role and in representing the County Council. Ability to provide expert witness evidence for planning appeals and in supporting legal challenges. The ability to travel across a wide geographical area in a timely and flexible manner at various times of the day, often to rural locations with limited public transport access, at short notice. Driving is intrinsic to much of the work and therefore a full UK Driving Licence is required – the Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments so whilst this job requires the jobholder to drive your application will still be considered if you are unable to drive due to a disability. The ability to visit and inspect sites where the physical environment may present challenges such as uneven ground surfaces in a range of weather conditions, including construction, quarry, landfill and waste sites. Fluent in spoken English to the extent necessary to perform the role effectively, so that a high quality service can be provided to the public. The post holder will be required to undertake our Kent Manager standard programme if not already held.
KNOWLEDGE	Thorough working understanding of current and emerging development planning legislation and policy in England, and the implications for the County Council's strategic objectives and working practices and demonstrate an aptitude for developing enhanced working practices to reflect changing legislation and guidance and interpreting policy and practice applying it to solve complex problems. Thorough knowledge of procedural/corporate and statutory frameworks relating to the planning function. Knowledge of minerals and/or waste development and/or community development proposals.

	Knowledge of processes and expectations with regard to managing staff and Management Guidelines and an ability to apply to everyday situations. Knowledge of customer service expectations.
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	Kent Values: • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make Our values enable us to build a culture that is: Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile Curious - constantly learning and evolving Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making (If this document is being used for recruitment purposes, examples of Behaviours which support the Kent Values will need to be demonstrated within the context of this post)