

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Conservation Officer		
Directorate	Climate and Place		
Reporting to	Team Leader, Development Management East		
Grade	10		
Evaluation ref:	SCG1307	Job ref:	Family RPG10
Role purpose			
<p>To support the Council's delivery of the development management service through the effective handling of planning and heritage casework, provide technical advice to customers and the Council in all aspects of the conservation of the historic environment, encompassing historic buildings and conservation areas, archaeology and the wider historic environment .</p>			
Responsibilities			
<p>To evaluate and make recommendations on applications relating to planning and historic buildings and/or affecting conservation areas, parks and gardens and other applications, provide specialist advice to professional colleagues, contribute to in-house education and training events, appeals, enforcement cases/complaints and other work as may be allocated.</p> <p>To provide planning and heritage advice to those visiting, writing to or telephoning the team efficiently and courteously on planning matters, historic building repair and maintenance. Provide advice in relation to enquiries from Members, various interest groups and individuals on planning and heritage proposals, whilst always having regard to the implications of advice given.</p> <p>To provide evidence for appeals and attend Hearings and Public Inquiries as the Council's professional witness.</p> <p>To review conservation areas and produce proposals for their designation and amendment, to include the production of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.</p> <p>To assist with the promotion and administration of the production of a register of locally listed buildings for Mendip District.</p> <p>To work with Mendip's communities on projects related to the conservation of the historic environment, for example, Village Design Statements, Parish Surveys etc.</p> <p>Under the guidance of the Team Leader – Development Management, assist and advise the Enforcement Officers in dealing with unauthorised breaches of planning and listed building control, and negotiate where appropriate mutually acceptable</p>			

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solutions. In other cases, and under the same guidance, assist in the drafting of enforcement and other notices.

To attend such Committees, Sub-Committees and other meetings as may be required, outside office hours, as necessary. Guide and advise the Planning Committee and respond to any questions arising from Members in order to ensure full awareness of the many varied aspects of the proposal.

Foster the development of a high level of customer care and good working relationships with Councillors and Parish Councils and other representative bodies.

To maintain awareness of developments in planning and heritage legislation, policies and other guidance and implement the Council's own policies, procedures and offer advice to partners and customers as to the suitability of retro fit and greener technologies that can be placed into both listed and non-listed solid wall structures.

To be familiar with the Council's information technology systems in the areas of application handling, message transfer, word processing, geographic information and assist in their development.

Impact

Approximately 2,200 applications for planning permission, Listed Building Consent or other approvals were registered and determined by the Planning Team in 2017/18 of which circa 500 of these are directly related to the historic environment. The post holder is expected to deal with approximately 200 major and minor applications (10%) each financial year (development proposals and subsequent amendments, variations and approval of details reserved by conditions). During the same period, 37 appeals were lodged against decisions issued by the Council. The number of appeals dealt with by the post holder will depend on the cases handled but could potentially be involved in 2 Inquiries, 4 Hearings and 6 written representations during a financial year.

Mendip district contains almost 3,000 listed buildings and 28 designated conservation areas. The Mendip Hills AONB contains more scheduled monuments than any other AONB in England. Priddy is 6th in the list of England's parishes with the greatest number of scheduled ancient monuments.

The Planning Committee meets every 4 weeks, and the post holder is likely to attend approximately half of these meetings during a financial year.

There are 18 full-time equivalent staff in the Development Management section (not including the Technical Support Team), split into two area teams comprising 9 officers (including this post) who are primarily responsible for the consideration of applications for planning permission, consent or approval in that area. Within this team are 2 FTE professional Conservation and Planning Conservation Officers.

The section has an enviable record of partnership working in relation to area-based grant schemes, the production of village design statements, the establishment of a

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list of locally listed buildings and working with town and parish councils to meet their heritage aspirations.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive knowledge of overall planning process, policy, legislation, guidance and regulation. • Knowledge and understanding of technical matters, policy and legislation relating to Planning and the wider historic environment, archaeology, listed buildings and conservation areas. • Awareness of the democratic process. 	X		
Experience			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of dealing with all aspects of planning applications and/or listed building consents in a local government planning environment. • Experience of interpreting and applying up to date planning policy and legislation. • Experience of discussing and explaining proposals with a wide variety of individuals and representative bodies e.g. Members, Parish Councils etc. • Experience of appeals process through written representations and/or informal hearings. • Experience in the use of IT programs, including Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Outlook. • Writing reports and making presentations to committees. • Use of Microsoft Office and internet explorer. 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of dealing with schemes to alter and repair buildings and be able to demonstrate involvement in dealing with issues of new design in historic areas. • Assessing the planning merits of alleged breaches of planning control and providing advice to planning enforcement colleagues. 		X	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and presenting Local Planning Authority evidence for written representations and informal hearing planning appeals. • Use of specialised planning software. 			
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant degree or experience. • Eligibility for Chartered Membership of the RTPI or IHBC . 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Membership of the RTPI. 		X	
Skills			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective oral and written communication skills. • Customer care, including an ability to deal with difficult or frustrated customers. • Ability to handle difficult negotiations Successfully. • Ability to influence and persuade others. • Ability to resolve problems creatively. • Report writing. • Presenting to committees. • Good IT skills. • Team working. • Working with initiative. • Effectively managing time and priority setting. 	X		
Working Conditions			
<p>A need to possess a driving licence or be able to demonstrate an ability to travel to sites throughout the district in an efficient manner.</p> <p>The post will require site visits before during and after building works. There is likely to be the need to climb scaffolds and to enter restricted spaces. Sites can be dusty and unventilated and outside site visits can often be conducted in adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>A need for personal awareness of safety and security when working alone on-site visits.</p>			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			
Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practice.			



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Deliver the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do, ensuring team members are also aware of their responsibilities and maintaining their understanding that Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: November 2024