



## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title</b>	Principal Planning Officer – Development Manager		
<b>Directorate</b>	Community Place and Economy		
<b>Reporting to</b>	Service Manager – Development Management		
<b>Grade</b>	8		
<b>Evaluation ref:</b>	LGR0102	<b>Job Family ref:</b>	
<b>Role Purpose</b>			
<p>The Principal Planning Officer – Development Manager is responsible for managing a diverse and complex portfolio of planning casework to deliver strategic outcomes for Somerset Council. This role is pivotal in negotiating and securing high-quality development across Somerset, ensuring that all proposals align with national guidance, planning law, and the Council's adopted local plans and policies. The postholder will act as a key advisor and decision-maker, working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to achieve sustainable growth and the delivery of essential infrastructure.</p> <p>In addition to casework management, the Principal Planning Officer will provide professional leadership within the Development Management Service Team, supporting the Council's strategic priorities and financial objectives. The role involves guiding and mentoring junior colleagues, presenting at committees, and representing the Council at public meetings and planning inquiries. Through expert analysis, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement, the postholder will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to Somerset's communities and uphold the Council's vision and values.</p>			
<b>Accountabilities</b>			
<p><b>Decision-Making and Delegation:</b> Take responsibility for determining planning and related applications under the officer scheme of delegation, ensuring that decisions are robust, transparent, and in accordance with statutory requirements and Council policy.</p> <p><b>Strategic Direction and Financial Targets:</b> Provide clear direction as a member of the Development Management Service Team to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet financial targets, contributing to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the service.</p> <p><b>Committee Support and Representation:</b> Support senior colleagues at Area Planning and Strategic Planning Committees, presenting applications for decision and providing professional advice to elected members on strategic sites and associated matters, including briefings and training.</p>			



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**Technical Analysis and Professional Advice:** Use professional knowledge to analyse and evaluate complex technical information, offering expert advice to statutory consultees, Council departments, developers, members, and communities to ensure high-quality outputs that support the Council's objectives.

**Balancing Demands and Negotiation:** Balance the competing demands of Council services and development viability, negotiating complex S106 agreements to secure high-quality development and the delivery of necessary infrastructure in line with adopted planning policy.

**Support and Guidance to Officers:** Provide support and guidance to officers processing planning applications, monitoring compliance, and undertaking other planning functions to meet agreed timescales and targets, ensuring robust and defensible decisions.

**Public Engagement and Representation:** Act as lead officer at public meetings, Quality Review Panels, and as a witness at planning inquiries and examinations, responding to Ombudsman enquiries and complaints as required.

**Project Management and Appeals:** Project manage proposals from pre-application through to implementation, including the preparation of masterplans and design codes, drafting reports and recommendations, and representing the Council at appeals and public inquiries as an expert witness.

**Stakeholder and Community Engagement:** Work collaboratively with technical specialists, partner organisations, applicants, agents, and the local community to deliver strategic sites, ensuring regular dialogue and appropriate stewardship arrangements for community facilities and assets.

**Leadership and Mentoring:** Manage, develop, and mentor junior colleagues, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, inclusivity, and high performance within the Planning Service, and supporting the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and transformational change programmes.

### Line Management

All roles will be expected to be responsible for managing, developing, and mentoring Junior colleagues.

### Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Project Management qualification.		X
Knowledge of planning legislation and case law in respect of issues arising from pre-application enquiries, applications, appeals and planning enforcement.	X	



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Familiar with IT systems used for data input, report writing and presentations.	X	
<b>Experience</b>		
Significant experience of working at a Senior level in Development Management/Placemaking.	X	
Demonstrate the ability to manage a caseload or competing workloads to deliver strategic sites and maintain performance.	X	
Experience of providing advice across a range of planning issues in a development management/planning environment, including process and procedural.	X	
Experience of managing wide ranging caseloads.	X	
Experience of supervising junior staff.	X	
<b>Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications</b>		
Degree in Town Planning or related subject.	X	
Membership of (or be eligible to join) the RTPI.	X	
Project Management qualification.		X
<b>Skills</b>		
Negotiation skills.	X	
Ability to manage complex projects.	X	
Ability to develop and maintain relationships with elected Members.	X	
Advanced communication skills, including the ability to influence, negotiate and problem solve.	X	
<b>Working Conditions</b>		
<b>Dimensions of the role</b>		
The postholder will deal with major planning applications, strategic and inward investment sites and those of a more complex nature and/or lead a team of officers (between 5-8 officers for an area of Somerset).		



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Within the next 5 years Somerset will be working jointly to provide one local adopted plan for Somerset which will include allocation of major sites – the officer will feed into the policy requirements for the allocated sites to ensure delivery of the Council's objectives.

### Working Arrangements

Full-time – 37 hours with dynamic working arrangements and flexibility to meet the needs of the service.

### Corporate Accountabilities

- Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.
- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Planning Services teams.
- Lead Planning teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.
- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Create, monitor, and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Planning service teams.
- Ensure that Planning services place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customers, communities, and businesses.
- Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Planning service.
- Support Corporate and Directorate and service specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.



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- Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.

Date: