**Job title**: Planning Assistant

 Generic job description: ES587 c-d (level 1); Dorset Grade 7

**Directorate/Service/Team**: Place Directorate / Economic Growth & Infrastructure / Planning / Spatial Planning / Strategic Planning, Community Planning, or Infrastructure & Delivery Planning team

**Organisation structure**

**Reporting to**: Strategic Planning Manager, Community Planning Manager or Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager

**Responsibility for**: The postholder will be supporting the team providing the planning policy service for Dorset Council. The team’s work primarily involves the preparation of local plans, through all stages including research and evidence base work, public engagement and consultation, writing policies and reports, presenting to committees, defending plans at formal public examinations, and monitoring their effectiveness. It also includes supporting the preparation of neighbourhood development plans by local communities, and the collection and spending of financial contributions from developers for the funding of local infrastructure.

The team includes professional planners, landscape architects, urban designers and other specialists. There are also close links with the work of the Development Management & Enforcement service, and the postholder may also provide support to other teams within the service.

The post has no supervisory or management responsibilities.

**Context of work**

The preparation of local plans is a statutory function and having an up-to-date local plan is important as it allows the council to give full weight to its local planning policies. Local plans set out where development is proposed in the area, and policies against which decisions on planning applications are made. They normally cover a 15-year time horizon but need to be reviewed every five years. They include policies and proposals for a range of economic, social and environmental matters. As such, they are key to implementing the strategies and aims of many other council services, and those of other organisations.

The council also has a duty to support the preparation of neighbourhood plans by local communities. There is a significant number of neighbourhood plans within the council area, both completed and in preparation.

Financial contributions towards necessary infrastructure provision are collected from developers through legal agreements and through the Community Infrastructure Levy, a standard charge for contributions towards infrastructure provision.

The postholder will assist with all these areas of work, including the collection and monitoring of financial contributions, monitoring housing and employment development, website editing, preparation of maps, arranging consultation events, data inputting, and responding to customer queries. The postholder will also assist with some general administration, which may include supporting other teams within the service.

The Dorset Council area has an outstanding natural and historic environment, with national and international designations including internationally protected heathland habitats, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the ‘Jurassic Coast’ World Heritage Site. Within this challenging context we need also to plan for the future of the local economy, and for meeting significant housing demand. There will be the opportunity to be involved in a range of interesting and challenging planning issues and to gain a greater understanding of the planning system.

**Other information**

 The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post.

The post requires the ability to use a range of IT software, spreadsheets and databases, and mapping software, and familiarity dealing with numerical data. The postholder will need to be able to follow precise instructions, pay attention to detail, and ensure that information is accurately recorded and monitored.

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| **Context statement prepared by:** |
| Manager | Hilary Jordan | Date | 16 December 2019 |