

Job description

Senior Urban Design Officer

Band 6

West Suffolk Council is a progressive and forward-looking authority, and we positively encourage agile working, with work being an activity we do, not a place we go. Work styles are led by operational and organisational need and are jointly agreed between manager and employee.

As the post requires site visits and in-person meetings the postholder should live within reasonable commuting distance of the council's main office, and be able to travel around the local area, which are West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds, and Mildenhall Hub, Mildenhall. You may reasonably be required to work at any other of the council's or stakeholder's premises as may be necessary to meet the needs of the service.

Job purpose

This role is an exciting opportunity to contribute to the delivery of a high performing and effective planning service for West Suffolk Council, supporting our ambitions for good quality and sustainable growth.

The post sits within the council's multi-skilled strategic planning team, reporting to the Principal Building Conservation Officer. The main responsibility of this post is to provide specialist design advice, including the preparation of policies and the implementation of projects and plans relating to all aspects of urban design in the built environment.

The post holder will be expected to have an appropriate qualification in urban design, architecture or related discipline, together with experience of working in an urban design role and will assist the strategic planning and planning development teams in the day-to-day management, co-ordination and delivery of development.

The post holder will take a lead role in providing a bespoke specialist input into the council's planning application process, optimising the quality of design for new developments across the area in accordance with planning policy, guidance and best practice. The post will lead on the preparation of design policies in any future Local Plan, design guidance, design codes and characterisation studies.

The post will work collaboratively with partners to lobby, evidence and deliver appropriate and creative design solutions for the benefit of our built environment.

This role may vary over time, dependent on the workload fluctuations and the council's priorities. Any such changes will be subject to discussion with the post holder, the Strategic Planning Service Manager and Head of Planning.

Key responsibilities and activities

- To provide specialist advice on design-related matters throughout the development management process.

- To inform and assist in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of Local Plans, policies, briefs, guidance, design codes and any other land use planning documents in relation to design matters.
- To lead on design matters including the drafting of concept plans, design briefs, advice notes, and other relevant planning policy documents as required.
- To provide professional urban design advice on major development schemes and infrastructure and negotiate the delivery of high-quality places. The advice should be timely, reasonable, clear, robust and realistic.
- To advise, develop and deliver appropriate design/place strategies, initiatives, and assessment methodologies that lead to the creation of distinctive and high-quality places.
- To coordinate, participate and provide feedback on development proposals to be put forward to the appropriate design review panel.
- To liaise with other local authorities and national organisations, prepare and present reports, briefs and recommendations on key design issues to staff, councillors and leadership team as appropriate.
- To assist the Strategic Planning Service Manager in developing commercial strategies to generate income.
- To advocate, influence and upskill various stakeholders and partners, internally and externally, on good urban design and the creation of high-quality places.
- To assist the Principal Building Conservation Officer in supporting and supervising design activities and managing the work of any consultants as required.
- To participate as part of a multi-disciplinary team to secure the development of a high-quality built environment across the district with a specific focus on growth areas.
- To advise developers, private individuals, Council Members and prospective applicants on planning matters whether in person, by phone, email or replying to correspondence, to ensure that stakeholders and Members continue to have high confidence in West Suffolk Council as a Local Planning Authority.