



INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Planning Officer

Based at Hexham, Northumberland

£26,470 - £29,909 per annum

Full time (37 hours per week)

Permanent

CONTENTS

Overview of the National Park

Job Description & Person Specification

Benefits

Application Form Guidance Notes

CLOSING DATE: 28th January 2019
Interviews will be held on: 6th February 2019



Overview of Northumberland National Park

Please visit our website for a comprehensive overview of Northumberland National Park and a detailed introduction to the work of the National Park Authority.

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Our Vision

Northumberland National Park Authority aims to put the community and the local economy at the heart of all its work, so our challenge today is to integrate socio-economic well-being into our traditional National Park purposes of protecting and conserving the environment.

Our vision is that in 2020 Northumberland National Park Authority will be proactive, innovative and forward looking, working towards a National Park with thriving communities and a sustainable local economy grounded in its special qualities. This will include a richness of cultural heritage and biodiversity, a true sense of tranquillity and a distinct character associated with a living, working landscape, in which everyone has an opportunity to understand, enjoy and contribute to those special qualities.

Northumberland National Park

Parliament determined that the most beautiful, spectacular and dramatic areas of England and Wales should be given the status of National Park. It decreed that conservation of biodiversity, heritage and tranquillity, and the public's understanding and enjoyment of these special qualities, should be the concern of a single purpose local authority, and that is what the National Parks are today.

Northumberland National Park is sparsely populated and some parts are remote and wild. Just 2,000 people live in the 405 square miles of the National Park itself, but the villages of the dales and the vibrant gateway market towns that surround it have thriving communities. The area is unique in its sense of space and the breadth of its historical legacy.

The Southern area of the Park comprises the high windswept moors and mires which border Cumbria, down through the Wark and Kielder Forests and the rivers Rede and North Tyne to the Hadrian's Wall, a World Heritage Site. The Northern area borders Scotland and includes the Cheviot Hills, where wide horizons, big skies and a glimpse of wilderness convey the essence of National Parks and why they are important to the people who live and work in Britain.

The Sill

Our project ambition is nothing less than to transform how people of all ages and all backgrounds experience our great landscape. The building is the result of an innovative partnership between Northumberland National Park and YHA England and Wales.

The Sill is the most significant initiative to be undertaken in rural Northumberland in a lifetime and the largest undertaking by any National Park. Since its inception, the project has captured the hearts and minds of staff, residents and partners. See www.thesill.org.uk for more details.

The Staff

The National Park Authority comprises a team of some 80 staff at full complement, headed by the Chief Executive. Staff work within one of seven Departments. The Heads of Department, along with the Directors and the Chief Executive, comprise the Leadership Team. The Authority's headquarters building is situated in Hexham, 22 miles west of Newcastle, in a pleasant Victorian house which has been sensitively extended with mature landscaped grounds. Staff are also based at The Sill in the Hadrian's Wall area and the small

market town of Rothbury. Staff have a large amount of delegated responsibility and the opportunity to shape the delivery of their particular service. A project management culture supports cross team working. We aim to provide an open and supportive working environment and are committed to a culture of work-life balance, and an ongoing programme of continuous improvement.

Our Aim

Building on the existing positive Culture and Values of the Authority we aim to achieve consistency in good practice across the Authority and eradicate negative behaviours to help Northumberland National Park Authority achieve its full potential.

The Building Blocks

- Members and the Chief Executive will lead on delivering our Culture and Values;
- The Leadership Team will facilitate its implementation and review progress across the organisation;
- All individuals will exhibit the Culture and Values and we will challenge and support each other in doing so;
- Members and Managers will act as effective guardians of our Culture and Values.

Our Values

- Respect and Equality
- Collaborative and supportive working
- Trust and empowerment
- Communicating and Acting
- Strong, clear and inspiring leadership
- Developing and supporting people
- Customer focus
- Outward looking and enterprising

Our Culture

- Is open to and embraces change
- Supportive community
- Actively supports personal and organisational learning and development;
- Values innovation and achievement over systems;
- Recognises and celebrates individual and team achievements;
- Learns from what we do within a “no blame” culture, with performance management and review contributing positively to our learning;
- Has open and honest communications where information is freely shared, feedback given and actions explained;
- Where non-adherence to our Culture and Values is challenged and inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated.

The National Park Authority: Its Purposes, Powers and Duties

Northumberland National Park Authority is an independent body, part of the local government of Northumberland. The Authority currently has eighteen members who are appointed to represent local and national interests. Six are elected Councillors appointed to the National Park Authority by Northumberland County Council. The Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs appoints twelve (eleven appointments at

present). Of these twelve: six are Parish Council members; three from the North of the Park and three from the South of the Park.

Our powers and duties are laid down by Parliament and the National Park Authority has two statutory purposes:

- (i) *conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and*
- (ii) *promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.*

It is also the duty of the National Park Authority:

“in pursuing in relation to the National Park the purposes specified, that it shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so, and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic and social development within the area of the National Park.”



Northumberland National Park Authority

Job Description

Post: Planning Officer

Directorate: Park Management

Responsible to: Head of Development Management

Responsible for: Day to day supervision of Planning Technical Officer

Grade: Band 5 (£26,470 to £29,909 per annum)

Job purpose

To play an integral role in providing a positive and proactive Development Management service in a way that respects the character of the National Park.

Key Result Areas

Statutory and regulatory work

- To process and make recommendations on planning applications and other planning matters dealt with by the Planning team;
- To prepare and present reports and other documentation in respect of planning applications to the Development Management Committee and to prepare reports in respect of delegated applications;
- To monitor development, evaluate suspected breaches of planning control and make recommendations for appropriate action;
- To prepare the Authority's case on appeals and represent the Authority at hearings, public inquiries and in court as appropriate;
- To ensure that the development management service provides an efficient and professional service, with an emphasis on meeting performance and customer satisfaction targets;
- To input into the preparation of National Park Authority policies and strategies;

Support and Advocacy

- Provide advice to the Planning Technical Officer in respect of statutory requirements;
- Provide development management advice and support to other teams within the Authority;
- Proactively support the promotion of equality and inclusion in all areas of work.

Partnership working and liaison

- Provide pre application advice and process planning and related applications and appeals, ensuring that all relevant information and fees are submitted in accordance with statutory requirements;
- To advise applicants/agents of any alterations and/or request of any alterations and/or request further information required for the acceptance of planning applications;

- Assist local communities, professionals and Members of the Authority with development management enquiries by written correspondence, telephone, e-mail and meetings;
- Participate in community consultation events in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement;
- Deliver all activities with a focus on empowering communities and enterprising local businesses and social enterprise;
- As part of a team, support a culture which fosters innovation, creativity, open communication and collaboration throughout the Authority

Policy Development & Implementation

- Input to the preparation, monitoring and review of the documents within the Northumberland National Park Local Development Framework;
- Input to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans;
- Input to consultation responses on emerging national policy, plans and policies prepared by neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies in England and Scotland;
- Help to ensure that the online planning information is kept up to date.

Other Duties

Any other duties consistent with the nature, level and grade of the post as may be assigned by the Head of Development Management or Director of Park Management.

Northumberland National Park Authority
Person Specification

Essential:

Knowledge

- Degree in Town and Country Planning or equivalent qualification
- Membership or working towards membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute
- Up to date knowledge of current and emerging planning policy, guidance and legislation and the ability to identify future potential effect and implications;
- Understanding of public sector values and procedures and their applicability to National Park Authorities;
- Working knowledge of the planning system;
- Knowledge and understanding of current issues affecting National Parks in the UK;

Skills

- Good interpersonal skills, in particular listening skills to be employed during community consultation events, and an ability to discuss and negotiate effectively with applicants, developers and members of local communities
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including presentation skills;
- Ability to read and interpret plans;
- Good IT awareness and skills including experience of Microsoft Office software, database management, and the Internet;
- Effective project management skills;

Experience

- Experience of working in development management within a local authority. To include:
 - Considering applications of all types and making recommendations to senior manager and members
 - Presenting recommendations for decision by committee
 - Taking part in public consultation events such as Parish Council meetings, public meetings or planning surgeries
 - Helping to ensure an efficient planning service through identifying and following appropriate processes
 - Experience of achieving and maintaining appropriate performance levels
 - Experience of handling planning appeals
 - Experience of monitoring planning compliance and identifying appropriate actions
 - Experience of providing pre-application advice to potential applicants

Personal Qualities

- A proven ability to work under pressure, prioritise work and meet tight deadlines on own initiative;
- An organised approach to work;
- Ability to build relationships with a wide range of people;
- Proactive, innovative, flexible, adaptable and positive in approach;
- Commitment to continuous personal and professional development;
- Ability to work in a team environment;
- Ability to travel to sites in order to meet the requirements of the post;
- Willing to work a flexible pattern including occasional evenings and weekends;
- A commitment to delivering positive and proactive planning services;
- Confident to work alone in lone working situations.

Desirable:

- A commitment to and enthusiasm for Northumberland National Park
- Experience of planning in the context of protected landscapes / environments
- Knowledge and understanding of National Park purposes and their significance to planning
- Experience in planning policy formulation
- A secondary qualification or experience in a planning related field (design, conservation, landscape etc)
- Ability to monitor and manage budgets;
- Experience of using GIS

Northumberland National Park Authority

Benefits

Pension

As an employee of Northumberland National Park Authority you will be entitled to participate in the 2014 local government pension scheme.

Training Opportunities

The Authority is committed to the personal and professional development of its staff through appraisals and personal development plans. There is an Organisational Development Strategy in place. There are opportunities to take sabbatical leave and a comprehensive induction programme is provided for all new staff. In some cases, professional membership fees are paid on behalf of the employee.

Flexible working

We offer a wide range of work life balance policies and flexi time. The Authority is signed up to a child care voucher scheme enabling employees to receive tax benefits on child care costs.

Wellbeing

The Authority is committed to the health and wellbeing of its staff and has invested significantly in a mental health awareness programme, which has included training for all staff and Managers. This has resulted in the CIPD North East Award for excellence. We have signed up to the time to change pledge to reduce stigma, appointed wellbeing advocates and provide counselling to any employee who needs it. We also have recently launched a 'Health at Work' strategy to provide comprehensive wellbeing initiatives to staff including a health cash plan and walking meetings.

Application Form Guidance Notes

IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE NOTES BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM.

PLEASE NOTE: sending a curriculum vitae (CV) is **not** normally an acceptable substitute for the application form. However, if a disability precludes you from completing the standard application form, please contact HR who will be able to provide an alternative means of applying.

EXAMINE THE INFORMATION PACK

This contains information about the National Park, a job description, a person specification, staff benefits and these guidance notes. This information pack is intended to help you to decide whether or not to apply, and how to make your application as effective as possible.

COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

If you have insufficient space, please expand the boxes. Ensure that you have provided sufficient evidence that you have the skills, knowledge and experience listed in the person specification.

SECTION 1

Personal Information

Please ensure all sections are completed. This information will be detached from the rest of your application for shortlisting purposes. It is vital that this information is correct as this will be used for payroll and contact purposes.

References

References will **not** normally be sought prior to interview unless specifically requested. One reference should be the current or last employer. If you **do not** wish for us to contact a current employer prior to interview, please mark appropriately on the application form. It is important to note that all offers of employment are subject to receipt of satisfactory references.

Declaration

It is essential that you read and sign the declaration. Providing any false or misleading information in support of our application, or canvassing of Authority Members for an appointment may disqualify you or if appointed may result in your dismissal.

Monitoring Information

Northumberland National Park Authority believes that our workforce should reflect the community. We require monitoring information to check the effectiveness of our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)

If this post is subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act an X will be marked in the grey post title box at the top of each page.

Canvassing

Please note that we will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any Member or Officer for any appointment with the Authority.

SECTION 2

Education and Training

Please give details of any qualifications gained, any professional qualifications or membership of professional bodies or job related training that is relevant to your application.

SECTION 3

Employment Details

Please state any key tasks or responsibilities that are relevant in your application. Previous posts should be listed with the most recent first and all relevant work experience should be stated. Any gaps in employment should be accounted for.

SECTION 4

Evidence of Suitability for Post

Before writing this section, please read the job description and person specification. Please use this space to describe how your experience, knowledge, education and training meets all the requirements of the post as outlined in the person specification. **It is vital that you look at the person specification closely. When shortlisting takes place, your application form will be compared against each of the criteria listed on the person specification. You should provide evidence that you meet all the essential criteria.**

The deadline for receipt of application is stated on the front of this information pack. People emailing from accounts such as Yahoo/Hotmail should note that emails are sometimes delayed so should be sent in good time.

Applications by e-mail are acceptable if sent directly to jobs@nnpa.org.uk and should be titled **Planning Officer - or posted applications should be returned to:**

(Confidential)

HR Officer

Planning Officer Application Return

Northumberland National Park Authority

Eastburn, South Park

Hexham NE46 1BS

Please note interviewees will be asked to provide written proof of relevant qualifications and eligibility to work in the UK.

If you have not been contacted two weeks after the closing date, please assume that you have not been shortlisted for the post.