

Job Description

Post title	Senior Ecologist
Job Evaluation	N12399
Grade	11
Service	Neighbourhoods & Climate Change
Service area	Environment - Environment & Design
Reporting to	Ecology Manager
Location	Your normal place of work will be Green Lane, Spennymoor, but you may be required to work at any Council workplace within County Durham
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	This post is not subject to a disclosure.
Flexitime	This post is eligible for flexitime
Politically restricted	This post is not designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the requirements of Section 1(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State

Description of role

To assist Environment and Design in delivering an integrated service across the disciplines of Ecology, Landscape, Heritage, Climate Change and Archaeology.

To support the Ecology Team in delivering specialist ecological services across the Council. Including advising on development management and spatial planning, wildlife legislation, project development and land management.

Promote the integration of biodiversity issues into the work of the authority in line with its statutory duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and the Environment Act (2021).

The post holder will also be required to assist in the direction of junior staff and contribute to the efficient running of the section.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Assist with the on-going development of the Ecological Emergency Action Plan and cooperate with other County Council staff and services in delivery of the action plan.
- Assist with the development, production, review and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in partnership with external and internal partners.

- Support and provide advice to Development Management, elected members and the public on planning. Including pre-applications enquiries, applications, discharge of conditions, monitoring, enforcement and appeals within required deadlines. Main duties include assessing impacts on biodiversity and advising on the acceptability of surveys, method statements, planning conditions, monitoring requirements and habitat management. Includes advice regarding European Protected Species, the Habitat Regulations and delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Negotiate with planners, applicants, agents, developers over planning applications and monitoring planning obligations.
- When required act as an expert witness at Public Inquiries.
- To provide specialist ecological advice to Council service areas, Elected Members, and external partners on behalf of the County Council as appropriate, including providing advice on wildlife legislation, undertaking Habitat Regulations Assessments and responding to requests for ecological advice on County Council land management and infrastructure projects.
- Assist in the preparation and promotion of biodiversity within the strategic development plan process, for example reviews of the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, allocations, policies and guidance.
- Cooperate with other County Council staff and services in managing County Council land and properties for biodiversity.
- Undertake habitat and species surveys, including condition assessments and preparation of statutory biodiversity metrics, to inform County Council land management and development projects.
- Organise surveys (protected species and habitats) and manage projects with internal and external partners and manage associated budgets.
- Assist in facilitating the Local Site Partnership through collation and collection of data and subsequent reporting to the Partnership.
- Maintain and develop datasets (often in GIS) and when required provide analysis of data to aid decision making.
- Prepare reports, undertake correspondence, give advice, and attend meetings, including where necessary organising and chairing meetings (internal and external) as necessary in accordance with the work of the Ecology Team.
- To respond appropriately to emergencies arising in relation to the work of the section as a whole.

The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by the Head of service.

Organisational Responsibilities

Values and behaviours

To demonstrate and be a role model for the council's values and behaviours to promote and encourage positive behaviours, enhancing the quality and integrity of the services we provide.

Smarter working, transformation, and design principles

To seek new and innovative ideas to work smarter, irrespective of job role, and to be creative, innovative and empowered. Understand the operational impact of transformational change and service design principles to support new ways of working and to meet customer needs.

Communication

To communicate effectively with our customers, managers, peers and partners and to work collaboratively to provide the best possible public service. Communication between teams, services and partner organisations is imperative in providing the best possible service to our public.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

To take responsibility for health, safety, and wellbeing in accordance with the council's Health and Safety policy and procedures.

Equality and diversity

To promote a society that gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live, free from discrimination and prejudice and ensure our commitment is put into practice. All employees are responsible for eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination in everything that they do.

Confidentiality

To work in a way that does not divulge personal and/or confidential information and follow the council's policies and procedures in relation to data protection and security of information.

Climate Change

To contribute to our corporate responsibility in relation to climate change by considering and limiting the carbon impact of activities during the course of your work, wherever possible.

Performance management

To promote a culture whereby performance management is ingrained and the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. Contribute to the council's Performance and Development Review processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase organisational performance.

Quality assurance (for applicable posts)

To set, monitor and evaluate standards at individual, team and service level so that the highest standards of service are delivered and maintained. Use data, where appropriate, to enhance the quality of service provision and support decision making processes.

Management and leadership (for applicable posts)

To provide vision and leadership to inspire and empower all employees so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the council's values and behaviours. Managers and leaders must engage in personal development to ensure they are equipped to lead transformational change; always searching for better ways to do things differently to meet organisational changes and service priorities.

Financial management (for applicable posts)

To manage a designated budget, ensuring that the service achieves value for money in all circumstances through the monitoring of expenditure and the early identification of any financial irregularity.

The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by your manager.

Person Specification

Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	• Degree in Ecology or other relevant subject • European Protected Species Licence	• Membership of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
Experience	• Substantial experience of habitat and species surveys, condition assessments and site evaluation, or equivalent proven experience working within the sector. • Experience in producing or assessing Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans • Experience in the application of the Statutory Metric (Biodiversity Net Gain) • Experience of the development management planning system • Experience of using and applying GIS (specifically ESRI's ArcGIS)	• Experience of strategic planning and developing policies and strategies • Experience of managing budgets • Experience in planning appeals /public inquiries • Experience of undertaking Habitat Regulations Assessments
Skills and Knowledge	• Working knowledge of national planning policy • Excellent knowledge of protected species and wider UK and International wildlife legislation • Good knowledge of species and habitat survey methodologies and guidance • Good knowledge of the statutory metrics and the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain • Ability to recognise key issues, identify problems and implement solutions. • Good interpersonal skills including the ability to communicate effectively, both orally, pictorially and in writing, with a wide range of people from different backgrounds. • Excellent communication, negotiation and advocacy skills at all levels (both written and verbal, formal and informal). • Ability to demonstrate customer orientated approach to service delivery.	• Knowledge of the conservation community and priorities in the North East • Awareness and knowledge of other disciplines such as Heritage, Landscape and tree protection which may have an impact on the provision of ecology advice.

	• Ability and willingness to take individual responsibility for work and to prioritise and project manage own workload and coordinate workload with other members of the team. • Good computer literacy skills, having working knowledge of office software including word processing, spreadsheets & presentation software.	
Personal Qualities	• Enthusiastic and self-motivated. • Willingness/ability to work on own initiative and/or as part of a team, maintaining high levels of integrity and discretion. • Good oral and written communication skills • An organised approach to work with a capability to work under pressure of deadlines and manage multiple workstreams • Ability to work as part of a team, but also take responsibility for individual tasks and projects • Ability to think strategically, analyse issues and identify innovative and practical solutions. • Self-confidence, reliability and self-reliance and the ability to work without close supervision. • Ability to meet the transport requirements of the post • Willingness to work outside normal office hours on occasions as some evening and weekend working will be required	• A personal commitment to and interest in nature recovery • Ability to develop ideas into viable projects