

Job Description

Service:	Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection
Job title:	Ecology Officer
Grade:	G
Hours of work:	37
Responsible to:	
Responsible for	
Direct reports:	0
Indirect reports:	0
Budget:	No direct budget responsibility, although may manage project-specific budgets and external consultancy commissions

Purpose of Post:

As part of the Council's corporate objectives, you will help create, protect and enhance the District's natural environment. You will provide specialist technical advice to Huntingdonshire District Council on ecology, biodiversity, nature conservation, protected species, Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and wider environmental legislation.

Working alongside the Council's Arboricultural Officer and Senior Landscape Officer within a specialist environmental team, the post holder will act as the Council's lead ecology specialist and provide strategic advice across Planning Services.

The post holder will ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations in relation to biodiversity and ecological protection, whilst supporting the delivery of wider environmental objectives through planning, policy development and partnership working. The role will influence major planning applications, corporate environmental initiatives and the delivery of nature recovery across Huntingdonshire.

Key Deliverables:

- Act as the Council's lead officer on ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation matters.
- Provide specialist technical advice to officers, Members, developers, agents, statutory consultees, community groups and members of the public.
- Assess ecological impacts arising from planning applications, planning appeals, enforcement cases and development proposals.
- Provide specialist advice on Environmental Impact Assessments, Habitats Regulations Assessments, protected species licensing requirements and Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Review and assess ecological surveys, mitigation strategies, management plans, biodiversity gain plans and monitoring proposals.
- Coordinate and deliver timely ecological consultation responses to Development Management and Planning Policy teams.
- Prepare and present professional evidence at planning appeals, public inquiries, hearings and examinations as required.
- Provide specialist support to the Planning Enforcement Team on unauthorised development affecting habitats, species and biodiversity.
- Lead on the development, implementation and review of ecological planning guidance, policy statements and technical advice notes.
- Ensure the Council meets its obligations under the Environment Act, Wildlife and Countryside Act, Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and related legislation.
- Lead the Council's ecological input into Biodiversity Net Gain implementation, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and other strategic environmental initiatives.
- Support the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy, Ecological Emergency commitments and wider environmental objectives.
- Provide strategic advice to senior officers and Members on ecological risks, opportunities and legislative change.
- Develop constructive working relationships with Natural England, Wildlife Trusts, neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders.
- Maintain and develop ecological datasets, GIS systems and environmental evidence bases.
- Represent the Council at partnership meetings, stakeholder groups, committees and public events.
- Mentor and support officers requiring ecological guidance as appropriate.
- Participate in effective employee relations and undertake continuous professional development opportunities.

This job description is intended only as a guide to the range of duties involved. The post holder will be expected to be flexible and adaptable in responding to changing priorities and organisational requirements.

	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of assessment
Knowledge and Qualifications		
Degree in Ecology, Biology, Environmental Science, Conservation or related discipline	Essential	Application form
Full membership or eligibility for membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) or equivalent professional body	Essential	Application form
Comprehensive knowledge of ecology, biodiversity conservation and environmental legislation	Essential	Application form / Interview
Detailed understanding of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and implementation	Essential	Application form / Interview
Detailed understanding of Habitat Regulations Assessment and protected species legislation	Essential	Application form / Interview
Knowledge of the Town and Country Planning system and environmental planning policy	Essential	Application form / Interview

Chartered Ecologist status or equivalent professional accreditation	Desirable	Application Form
Experience		
Significant experience providing professional ecological advice within a planning, local authority, consultancy or environmental setting	Essential	Application form / Interview
Experience of assessing major planning applications and development proposals	Essential	Application form / Interview
Experience of interpreting and applying environmental legislation and planning policy	Essential	Application form / Interview
Experience of evaluating Environmental Impact Assessments and ecological assessments	Essential	Application form / Interview
Experience of Biodiversity Net Gain implementation and delivery	Essential	Application form / Interview
Experience of developing environmental strategies, policies or initiatives	Essential	Application form / Interview
Experience of partnership working with statutory bodies, developers and environmental organisations	Essential	Application form / Interview



Experience of presenting technical evidence to Members, committees, appeals, hearings or inquiries	Desirable	Application form / Interview
Skills and Abilities		
Ability to act as the Council's lead specialist for ecology and biodiversity matters	Essential	Interview
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	Essential	Application form / Interview
Ability to present complex technical information clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	Essential	Interview
Ability to exercise professional judgement on complex planning and ecological issues	Essential	Interview
Strong negotiation and influencing skills	Essential	Interview
Ability to prepare and defend technical recommendations and decisions	Essential	Interview
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills	Essential	Interview

Ability to work independently whilst managing multiple priorities and deadlines	Essential	Interview
Competent use of Microsoft Office applications	Essential	Application Form
Commitment to continuous professional and personal development	Essential	Interview
Solution-focused and business-friendly approach	Essential	Interview
Experience using GIS systems and environmental datasets	Desirable	Application Form / Interview
Decision Making and Impact on Others What impact the decisions made by the post holder would have on others across the Council	The post holder will exercise significant professional judgement in providing specialist ecological advice and recommendations affecting planning decisions, environmental policy and corporate priorities. The role directly influences the determination of planning applications, planning appeals, policy development and environmental compliance across the Council. The post holder will provide specialist advice to senior officers, elected Members and project teams, ensuring decisions are legally compliant, evidence-based and aligned with the Council's environmental objectives. The role contributes to delivery of statutory requirements under environmental legislation and influences biodiversity outcomes across the district.	
Communication with Internal and External Customers	The role involves extensive communication with both internal and external stakeholders including Planning Officers, Enforcement Officers, Policy Officers,	



What customers the applicant would be in contact with in the job	Senior Managers, Members, Natural England, environmental consultants, developers, statutory agencies and community groups. Internal customer contact: 60% External customer contact: 40%
Personal Attributes and Other Requirements In this section please list any other qualities you are looking for from the applicant (E) Essential (D) Desirable	Ability to travel throughout the district to undertake site inspections, surveys and meetings (E) Full UK driving licence (E) Ability to work occasional evenings and weekends (E) Professional credibility and confidence when representing the Council externally (E) Strong commitment to teamwork and collaborative working (E) Flexible and adaptable approach to changing priorities (E) Commitment to delivering excellent customer service (E) Demonstrates integrity, accountability and professionalism (E)
HDC values 	The values outlined below reflect our collective positive attitude and how all staff are expected to work together as one team. Inspiring: We have genuine pride and passion for public service; doing the best we can for customers. Collaborative: We achieve much more by working together, and this allows us to provide the best service for customers. Accountable: We take personal responsibility for our work and our decisions, and we deliver on our commitments to customers. Respectful: We respect people's differences and are considerate to their needs. Enterprising: We use drive and energy to challenge the norm and adapt to changing circumstances. We are always ready for challenges and opportunities, and we embrace them.



Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- Ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults
- Demonstrates understanding of safeguarding issues
- Appreciates the significance of safeguarding and interprets this accurately for all individual children and young people/vulnerable adults whatever their life circumstances.
- Has a good understanding of the Safeguarding agenda
- Can demonstrate an ability to contribute towards a safe environment
- Is up-to-date with legislation and current events
- Can demonstrate how s/he has promoted 'best practice'
- Shows a personal commitment to safeguarding children