

Northumberland County Council
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Ecologist	Group – Service Place and Regeneration - Planning Service		Office Use
Band: 8	Workplace: County Hall, Morpeth		JE ref: 1963 HRMS ref:
Responsible to: Environment and Design Team Manager	Date: April 2025	Manager Level: Band 10	
Job Purpose: The provision of ecological advice to teams within the Planning Service to ensure that development management decisions and the development of planning policy comply with ecological legislation and policy. To provide ecological advice more widely to Council Services and Members to ensure that the Council fulfils its legal obligations to conserve and enhance biodiversity.			
Resources	Staff	None but significant influence on the work of external contractors and consultants	
	Finance	None directly, but advice given can result in significant expenditure or loss of potential income to the low millions of pounds	
	Physical	Shared responsibility for the administrative and physical resources of the Environment and Design Team.	
	Clients	The Planning Service, developers and their consultants, all parts of the Council involved in the management of land and property, developers, consultants and the general public	
Duties and key result areas: 1. Provide advice to Development Management officers and Planning Committees concerning the ecological implications of proposed developments to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and policy, and to further nature conservation in Northumberland. 2. Ensure compliance with Schedule7A of the Town and Country Planning Act through the assessment and monitoring of Biodiversity Net Gain schemes, securing amendments as required. 3. Instruct Legal Services concerning S.106 agreements and unilateral undertakings, and advise about queries and challenges to these raised by other signatories. 4. Provide advice concerning the conservation and enhancement of ecological resources through the strategic planning process for both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and policy and to further nature conservation in Northumberland. 5. Assess proposals for Habitat Banks in Northumberland, secure amendments required to ensure that schemes are realistic and deliverable, and work with Legal Services to negotiate legal agreements for these 6. Monitor BNG sites and Habitat Banks over their lifetimes, securing actions required to address any problems and working with Legal Services to address any breaches 7. Prepare proofs of evidence for planning appeals ,and represent the Council at Hearings and Public Inquires 8. Produce briefs for assessments, studies and mitigation works necessitated by planning conditions and approve specifications for ecological work submitted by developers. Liaise with Development Management officers and developers to ensure the successful execution of work required by planning conditions to ensure that the terms of ecological based conditions are met prior to discharge of conditions. 9. Undertake Habitats Regulations Assessments for proposed developments and planning policy documents. 10. Provide advice concerning the conservation and enhancement of ecological resources during the working life, restoration and aftercare of minerals sites to ensure compliance with legislation, planning conditions and obligations and to further nature conservation in Northumberland. 11. Work with all Council departments managing land and property to ensure compliance with the legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and produce plans and reports for Government as required under S.40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. 12. Provide advice concerning ecological matters to other parts of the Council as appropriate.			

13. Answer enquiries from members of the public and other organisations.
14. Provide specialist officer representation on internal and external working and steering groups.
15. Work with internal and external partners to deliver projects to protect and promote the natural assets of the County.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements

Physical requirements:	Predominantly sitting with frequent need to walk and bend and occasional requirement to lift moderate weights.
Transport requirements:	Travel to work sites throughout Northumberland and further afield on occasion.
Working patterns:	Normal office hours with occasional evening and week-end meetings. Flexi-hours scheme applies.
Working conditions:	Office and site based. Regular exposure to working outdoors in full range of weather conditions and in physically demanding terrain.

**Northumberland County Council
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Post Title: Ecologist	Group – Service: Place and Regeneration - Planning	Ref: 1963
Essential	Desirable	Assess by
Knowledge and Qualifications		
Detailed understanding of ecological legislation and policy. Detailed understanding of both strategic planning and development management elements of the town and country planning system. Detailed knowledge of all aspects of Biodiversity Net Gain Detailed knowledge of the Ecological Impact Assessment process and knowledge of ecological aspects of formal Environmental Impact Assessment Knowledge of techniques for the conservation, management and enhancement of habitats and species. Degree or equivalent level qualification in ecology or a related discipline. Eligible for full or associate membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.	Full membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management Field Identification Skills Certificate at level 3 or above	
Experience		
Experience of providing ecological advice within the strategic planning and development management systems. Experience of ecological survey and assessment.	Experience of Habitats Regulations Assessments. Experience of complex EIA casework. Experience of providing ecological advice to land managers.	
Skills and competencies		
Ability to assess the ecological implications of complex land use change. Ability to identify relevant legislative and policy implications of proposed developments Ability to assess the ecological significance of sites and the habitats and species occurring on them. Field identification of a range of habitats and species occurring in Northumberland. Excellent written and oral communication skills Competence in use of standard word processing, database and spreadsheet programs.	Ability to use Geographic Information Systems.	
Physical, mental and emotional demands		
Ability to negotiate successfully with senior representatives of developers and landowners in situations that have significant financial implications for them Ability to organise and undertake detailed iterative analysis of evolving documents. Ability to handle sensitive, confidential and confrontational situations in a tactful and professional manner Ability to organise and prioritise heavy workload comprising a mixture of casework and longer term project work. Ability to advocate positive ecological outcomes in situations of competing priorities. Ability to work without close direct supervision Ability to work outdoors in physically demanding terrain and inclement weather conditions.		

Ability to deal with members of the public who may be angry or upset		
Other		
Dependable, reliable and a good timekeeper. Displays and encourages high standards of honesty, integrity, openness and respect for others. Helps managers to create a positive work culture, in which diverse, individual contributions and perspectives are valued. Proactive and achievement orientated. Able to work with only general direct supervision. Able to meet the transport requirements of the post.	Wide ranging interest in nature conservation	