

Role Description and Employee Specification

Job Title:	Senior Ecologist	Location:	Witney
Department:	Planning Policy	Service:	Governance and Regulatory Services
Reports to:	Principal Ecologist	Working Hours:	37 hours per week
Salary:	£37,236 - £40,674	Peer Group:	PGI-12
Business World Post Number:		Job Group:	Specialist Level 2
Contract Type:	Permanent	Direct Reports:	N/A

Overall purpose of the Post:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide specialist ecological input into development management, planning policy and across other council departments where necessary on ecology, biodiversity, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Habitats Regulations. To drive forward the biodiversity-focused land management and enhancement projects in the Council's Nature Recovery Plan, represent the Council in external collaborations and consultations, and secure project funding. To collaborate with the Climate team, other Council teams, the grounds maintenance contractor, and external partners on nature recovery initiatives. To provide technical expertise, advice and direction to internal and external customers when solving problems or managing risks. To apply a high level of expert knowledge within a technical area of expertise and manage sensitive, open ended and complex case and project-based work.
Key Tasks and Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as a lead technical advisor on ecology, BNG and nature recovery for planning and estates, and for other council departments as needed. Advise the Council of its legal and policy obligations for ecology, BNG and nature recovery under Environment Act 2021 and other relevant legislation. Provide robust and reliable ecological advice and support to Planning, Communities, Property and other council departments as required. Provide specialist ecological advice to Development Management, particularly on protected and priority species, priority habitats and BNG. This includes large-scale and multi-phased developments. Support the Principal Ecologist on the implementation and monitoring of internal BNG processes and systems. Provide specialist ecological input into planning appeal representations and attend appeal hearings or public inquiries as required. Encourage high-quality biodiversity design in new developments, including the protection and management of existing biodiversity, the creation of new habitats, the delivery of ecologically meaningful BNG outcomes and specific measures for the restoration and enhancement of priority species populations. Oversee, advise and support the work of the Nature Recovery Officer. Provide specialist ecological advice to the council's contracting company and external partners to manage the delivery of biodiversity-led land management principles and nature recovery projects on Council-owned land.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specialist advice for the implementation of projects identified within the Council's Nature Recovery Plan, contributing to the Council's commitment to respond to the climate and ecological emergency and plans for a green recovery. • Provide specialist advice for the review, delivery and monitoring of the implementation of the Council's Land Management Plans for biodiversity, in partnership with the Council's grounds maintenance contractor and the Nature Recovery Officer. • Provide specialist advice for the creation and implementation of new woodland management plans for the Council's public estates. • Act as a representative for the Council, deputising for the Principal Ecologist and supporting the Nature Recovery Officer as needed, particularly in collaborating with external groups and partnerships. • To work with internal officers and external partners on the preparation, development and delivery of landscape-scale projects. • Input into other relevant strategic ecological projects, for example the creation of a new farmer cluster and development and implementation of nature finance models. • Seek out, apply and secure funding for biodiversity projects. • Provide advice to council service areas to enable them to have regard to, and help deliver, the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). • Coordinate and support the delivery of nature recovery advice to relevant community and strategic projects in partnership with relevant stakeholders. • Liaise with other professional, technical and support officers to improve best practice and input into service improvements. • Prepare responses to government consultations where relevant. • Provide advice to colleagues, councillors and the general public on ecology and biodiversity matters, including nature recovery projects. • Improve understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity by the general public. • Carry out where necessary, ecological surveys and monitoring. • Mentor and train colleagues on ecological issues, BNG and nature recovery. • Use detailed, technical knowledge of ecology, biodiversity and nature recovery to objectively analyse situations and make decisions that meet the needs of all stakeholders with limited guidance and direction. • Work in a multi-disciplinary team on technical cases and projects to a highly efficient and effective standard. • Be responsible for small projects and input into large projects as required. • Maintain a detailed understanding of all relevant legislation, policy, procedure and guidelines and carry out informed reviews and assessments. • Deliver commitments and take ownership of own caseload, and reshaping of plans to deliver required outcomes. <p><i>The responsibilities outlined are not intended to totally encompass or define all tasks that may be required of the post-holder. The post-holder will be required to undertake duties commensurate to the grade of this position.</i></p>
Essential Requirements – Knowledge, Qualifications, Skills, Abilities and Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-graduate qualification in ecology, biodiversity or related subject. • Five years' experience in a relevant field. • Experience in the provision of ecological advice to customers in either the public or private sector within a planning context. • Excellent knowledge and experience of ecological fieldwork, species and habitat identification, survey methodologies and best practice. • Excellent knowledge and experience of reviewing Biodiversity Net Gain Assessments, including the biodiversity metric calculation tools and associated guidance. • Excellent knowledge and experience of relevant legislation, policies and strategies, specifically how these apply to the planning process and management of the natural environment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent knowledge of a variety of protected species licensing regimes, including great crested newt district licensing. • Good awareness and understanding of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and habitat management practices. • Good knowledge and understanding of administrative responsibilities of Natural England, Defra, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, as well as Local Planning Authorities. • Good and up to date knowledge and understanding of Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. • Experience of working flexibly as part of a team and collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders. • Experience of being involved in continuously improving services and developing products to meet customer needs. • Excellent written, numerical and verbal communication skills suitable for a range of audiences. • Aptitude for researching, analysing and presenting information and data in formats to inform key decisions or recommendations. • Good level of experience of collaborative and strategic partnership working, including negotiation and stakeholder engagement at various levels. • Ability to manage and drive forward projects, demonstrating an ability to work on own initiative to tight deadlines. • Ability to resolve complex issues and complaints by negotiation. • Ability to remain calm and confident when dealing with challenging customers and environments. • Ability to inspire and successfully motivate others towards shared objectives. • Ensure all relevant customer and company information is captured and recorded accurately. • Deliver commitments and take ownership of own caseload, reshaping of plans to deliver required outcomes. • Demonstrate commitment and resilience to succeed. • Ability to work independently under pressure and within tight deadlines. • Competent in using a range of technology and software packages, including Microsoft, Google and GIS.
Desirable Requirements Qualifications, Skills and Abilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant professional membership/qualification such as Associate or Full Membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) or eligibility to join or upgrade to these levels. • Excellent knowledge and experience of nature recovery, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the Statutory Biodiversity Duty. • Knowledge and understanding of Environmental Outcome Reports and other environmental regulatory regimes. • Experience of collaboration and partnership working at a political level with councillors, portfolio holders and/or local MPs. • Knowledge, understanding or experience of project management. • Knowledge, understanding or experience of climate change, natural capital, nature-based solutions and related subjects.
General Accountabilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post holder is responsible for maintaining a safe work environment and ensuring as far as reasonably practicable that safe working practices are adopted by employees within this work environment. • Work in compliance with the Codes of Conduct, Regulations and policies of the Council.
Special Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be expected to work reasonable additional hours in line with the needs of the service. • There may be a requirement to work at other locations to meet the needs of the business. • Full UK Driving Licence. • Ability to travel / access to a vehicle for work purposes. • Politically restricted postholders are restricted from canvassing on behalf of a political party or for a person who is, or seeks to be, a candidate for

	election to a local authority, the House of Commons, or the European Parliament.		
Date Reviewed:	14.05.2025	Reviewed By:	Melanie Dodd and Andrew Thomson
Checked by HRBP	Kathryn Dowell	Date of Issue:	May 2025