



Somerset
Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Tree Officer		
Directorate	Climate & Place, Economy, Employment and Planning		
Reporting to	Service Manager Placemaking & Projects		
Grade	10		
Evaluation ref	LGR0137	Job Family ref	

Role purpose

To provide an arboriculture service to the Council by delivering the Council's statutory duties in respect of trees and hedgerows as per obligations under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The post supports the provision of resilient tree preservation and management across the wider Council being a key specialism within the planning service. Giving technical/professional advice to the Council on all aspects relating to tree preservation, woodland management, hedgerow regulations and high hedge complaints.

To support the delivery of the Council's Tree Strategy as an objective of Somerset Council's Climate Emergency Strategy with regards to the current Local Plan and other Local / National Policies.

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Responsibilities

- Consider and process applications for work to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). To write reports and make recommendations to ensure consistency and quality, compliance with statutory deadlines and timescales; including preparing for any appeals against a decision of the Council relating to works to trees subject of a TPO.
- Consider and process notifications for works to trees within conservation areas (CA), negotiate with applicants as required and prepare associated technical reports as necessary.
- To prepare new tree preservation orders and update old tree preservation orders as necessary, including surveys, preparation of reports, aspects of objections and the efficient maintenance of records.
- Consider and process notifications for removal of hedgerows in the open countryside and prepare associated technical reports as necessary.
- Support Planning Enforcement in respect of investigations of unauthorised tree works or hedgerow removals. Advise on the Council's response in respect of unauthorised works to trees under TPO or within a Conservation Area and where necessary to appear as the Council's technical expert at any inquiry, hearing or court case arising there from.
- When consulted advise on planning applications and discharge of conditions, which can include complex/contentious applications and projects, to achieve the Council's statutory and non-statutory planning functions.
- Prepare reports to present evidence as technical expert through written representation, at hearing and at planning inquiries.
- Prepare and present reports as necessary to committee meetings, officers and public groups.
- Provide arboriculture advice and expert service independently or as part of a multi-disciplinary team to the Council as a whole. Advise other departments on the employment of arboriculture consultants and contractors. Provide specialist arboriculture advice as necessary, as part of the preparation of planning policies (Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Deliver the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do, ensuring team members are also aware of their responsibilities and maintaining their understanding that Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.
 - through the Statutory Development Plan process) and development briefs to ensure that trees are considered, and a high quality of environment is achieved.

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Impact

- Providing a service to customers both internally e.g. within the Planning Team, the wider Council, Councillors, Stakeholders and externally e.g. the public, tree owners, tree professionals and parish, town councils, interest groups, wider community. Raising awareness of the need for professionalism and adherence to industry best practice and legislative requirements for tree care.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential at full competence	Essential at recruitment	Desirable at recruitment
Knowledge			
•			
• Town & Country Planning legislation in relation to trees together with Hedgerow Regulations and High Hedge legislation	✓		
• Knowledge of British Standard(s) BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction and BS3998:2010 – Recommendations for tree work	✓		
• Knowledge of relevant Health and Safety legislation	✓		
• Knowledge of canopy cover / mapping (IT) tools			✓
• Ability to accurately identify common species of trees and shrubs	✓		
Experience			
• Experience and competency in assessing the health and condition of trees	✓		
• Experience and ability of working as part of a multi-disciplinary team			✓
• Experience and working knowledge of the local government planning process, including planning enforcement procedures			✓

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of using word processing, spreadsheets, GIS/map-based systems and database packages as well as the internet 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of providing detailed advice across a range of arboriculture issues in a development management/planning environment, including process and procedural matters 	✓		
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 5 qualification:- HND, FdSc Arboriculture or equivalent relevant experience 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lantra award for Professional Tree Inspection 			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership of Arboriculture Association 			✓
Skills			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer focussed approach with a drive for continuous improvement 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good negotiation skills and the ability to contribute positively to the resolution of issues 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working to deadlines, prioritising, organising, and planning own workloads 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to communicate with a range of stakeholders clearly and proactively 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation and responding to change 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to use influence and persuasion to achieve objectives 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible approach to the working day 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares knowledge and expertise with others 	✓		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to research relevant topics to remain up to date with current industry best practice, including attaining professional / vocational qualifications 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required to work from different locations, dependant on operational requirements 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working in a similar role within a Local Authority 			✓

Working conditions

- Requirement of the role to to undertake site inspections
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Working arrangements

Date: 25.07.2024