

Job Description

Job Title: Planning Ecologist (joint role with LB Redbridge)	Directorate: Inclusive Economy and Housing	
Service Area: Planning Policy, Planning and Development Service	Post Number: 10026015	Job Evaluation: 6947, date of the evaluation 21/07/2023
Grade: PO6	Date last updated: July 2023	

Overall Purpose of Job

Working within busy Planning Policy Teams, this post will play a significant role in providing Redbridge and Newham Planning Departments with biodiversity expertise and in supporting the protection and promotion of biodiversity within the development of planning policy and determining of planning applications.

Key responsibilities will include:

- Leading on the development and implementation of BNG data management systems and procedures, including a register of on-site and off-site BNG schemes, for BNG monitoring and reporting and to target further habitat creation and enhancement.
- Undertaking fieldwork, surveys and reporting of biodiversity sites for the purposes of offsetting BNG, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) and other ecological monitoring.
- Providing Pre-application and application advice on developments from a landscape, ecological and nature conservation perspective. Working with developers to maximise onsite provision of BNG.
- Providing expert input into the development of relevant policies and strategies

Job Context

The postholder will be shared between the London Borough of Newham and the London Borough of Redbridge, on a 50:50 basis.

The role will report to the Planning Policy, Urban Design and Infrastructure Manager in Redbridge and the Planning Policy Manager in Newham.

The postholder would have no line management responsibilities but will be expected to supervise staff and contractors as required on specific projects and tasks. The postholder will

be required to manage the collection and distribution of the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces budget, circa £500K per year for each borough, as well as managing income, spend and monitoring of biodiversity offsetting credits for each borough.

The postholder may be required to work some evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays in order to meet service requirements.

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the postholder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the postholder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time. The postholder will be given a portfolio of projects which may be within some or all of the planning functions.

- 1. To provide timely and relevant ecological advice and its interpretation, including preparing expert advice to Council officers, Committees, Members, Public Inquiries, Examinations in Public and public meetings as required. This will include to:**
 - Provide Pre-application advice on landscape, ecological and nature conservation aspects of proposals including in relation to Urban Greening Factor, Biodiversity Net Gain and any potential impact on Epping Forest.
 - Provide Planning application advice on landscape, ecological and nature conservation aspects of proposals, including in relation to Urban Greening Factor, Biodiversity Net Gain and any potential impact on Epping Forest.
 - Support the drafting and discharging of relevant conditions.

- 2. To work closely with various teams within the Council, comply with Council processes and liaise with external stakeholders. This will include to:**
 - Work closely with relevant Council teams and contractors, including but not limited to those responsible for Parks, Nature Conservation, Planning Policy, Planning Enforcement, Development Management, Estates, Highways, Legal, Regeneration, Business Intelligence Teams and Corporate Polict to ensure that appropriate account is taken of biodiversity issues in strategy and policy drafting and day to day operations.
 - Report to the appropriate Corporate Boards/ Members/ Service areas on the delivery of BNG, SANGs, other nature conservation plans, and planning obligations in the borough. Reporting to CCAP/biodiversity working groups/boards/meetings.
 - Lead on appropriate consultation & engagement with communities, local environmental stakeholder groups.
 - Manage response to requests for technical information relating to biodiversity.
 - Work with external stakeholders including the GLA, GiGL, Natural England, neighbouring Local Authorities and other statutory and non-statutory consultees.

- 3. Develop and monitor policy and programmes to enhance nature conservation in the borough. This will include to:**
 - Lead on developing policy and programmes to enhance nature conservation in the borough.

- Ensure and support timely review and updating of surveys of Sites of Importance of Nature Conservation
- In Redbridge:
 - Work with consultants and Council officers on updating existing (such as the pending Natural Greenspace Improvement Strategy) and developing new strategies/reviews/plans.
- In Newham:
 - Work with consultants and Council officers on updating and delivering the Green and Water Infrastructure Study, including the development of subsequent subservient strategies and plans.

4. To support the planning service to meet its Biodiversity Net Gain commitments.

This will include to:

- Lead on establishing clear policy and delivery mechanisms, with the support of the wider planning service, to implement Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Develop guidance to support the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain in a manner which supports delivery of the Councils' wider objectives.
- Work with internal and external partners to develop an approach to offsite Biodiversity Net Gain which supports delivery of the Councils' wider objectives.
- Support the Planning Service to secure appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain requirements on new developments.
- Support the Planning Service to monitor compliance with planning conditions and legal agreements in relation to BNG, including working with planning enforcement officers, where required.
- Undertake the boroughs' statutory monitoring return for Biodiversity Net Gain requirements to central government.
- Ensure Natural England's Biodiversity Net Gain Register for offsite provision in each Borough is up to date.

5. To support the planning service to meet its commitments to protect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. This will include:

- Support work on the partnership processes to protect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.
- In Redbridge:
 - Lead the co-ordination of the delivery of Suitable Alternative Greenspaces (SANGs) projects within the Council as outlined in the pending Natural Greenspace Improvement Strategy.
 - Conduct baseline surveys for SANGs sites and project interventions as outlined in the pending Natural Greenspace Improvement Strategy.
 - Monitor the success of SANGs interventions onsite and reporting to the planning service.
 - Project manage cost reviews and updates to the Natural Greenspace Improvement Strategy as required.
- In Newham:
 - Support the development of a Suitable Alternative Greenspaces (SANGs) strategy.
 - Support the delivery and monitoring of a Suitable Alternative Greenspaces (SANGs) strategy.
 - Project manage cost reviews and updates to the Suitable Alternative Greenspaces (SANGs) strategy as required.

- 6. To keep up to date with relevant legislation, initiatives, plans and guidance. This will include to:**
- Work with the local environmental records centre (GiGL) for the purposes of monitoring and reporting.
 - Attend appropriate training, forums, stakeholder events on biodiversity & nature conservation.
 - To keep up to date with and have an expert knowledge of relevant legislation, initiatives, plans and guidance etc. with regard to their ecological implications and advise others on these as appropriate.
 - Provide training to the Planning Service and other departments on ecology/ biodiversity/ nature conservation.
- 7. To maximise the Councils' ability to deliver and fund biodiversity projects. This will include to:**
- Keep informed of possible sources of funding for biodiversity related projects
 - Lead and support (as appropriate) the development of proposals and application for external funding and to secure biodiversity funding for projects
- 8. Manage any relevant budgets and oversee relevant procurement activity, including the management of any consultants. This will include to:**
- Manage and monitor the SANGs contributions budget.
 - Ensure that all financial transactions are undertaken in accordance with Financial Regulations and procedures.
 - Effectively manage, monitor and report on budgets, resources and project deadlines related to the work of this post.

All Levels

1. To ensure flexibility, a positive attitude and ability to adapt to changes due to service needs.
2. To meet all performance targets set nationally and locally.
3. To deal with people at all levels internal and external confidently, sensitively and diplomatically, building and sustaining effective relationships with all stakeholders.
4. To utilise IT as an aid to normal planning duties, after suitable training. To keep up to date on new software with potential to assist service delivery and efficiency.
5. To ensure that all work in own area of responsibility is in line with the service's business needs, the quality needs and expectations of internal and external customers, Council policies, regulations and procedures, current best practice in public service management, and legal requirements.
6. To work closely with line management to identify personal development needs in relation to job role and ensure own continuing professional development to meet those needs.

7. To continuously evaluate work in own area of responsibility, to identify, as appropriate, potential areas for improvement and consult on these improvements with line management in the service.
8. The postholder should expect to carry out any other reasonable duties within the overall Planning and Development Service function, commensurate with the level of the post.
9. To comply with mandatory Council policies and codes of conduct including policies concerning data protection and health and safety.
10. To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by the Council's policies, procedures and local risk assessments to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability, and legal compliance of information and systems.
11. To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, maintaining an awareness of the equality and diversity protocol/policy and working to create and maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where all people are treated with dignity and their identity and culture are valued and respected.
12. To understand the Council's duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults as they apply to the role within the Council.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

Person Specification

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Service Area: Planning Policy, Planning and Development Service	Post Number: TBC	Job Evaluation:
Grade: TBC	Date last updated: July 2023	

Important information for applicants

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the 'Method of Assessment' is stated to be the 'Application Documentation', your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

Criteria	Method Of Assessment
Qualifications: Degree level or post graduate level with formal qualification in relevant subject such as ecology, environmental management or environmental planning. In exceptional circumstances, where there is evidence of significant experience of working in a similar role a formal qualification may not be required but you will need to demonstrate a willingness to acquire a relevant qualification. Chartered or full membership of an appropriate professional institution, e.g. CIEEM, or is eligible and/or is working towards membership.	Application Documentation

<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecology and biodiversity management and best practice within ecology and biodiversity management. • The Environment Act 2021, Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2017, and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. • The local planning authority's responsibilities and functions. Planning legislation and related guidance. • Local government, the communities it serves, and the services it provides. 	<p>Application Documentation and Interview / Test</p>
<p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in a similar role in ecological consultancy or a Local Authority • Undertaking research and monitoring work, with attention to detail. • Using IT at an advanced level, including ability to use a range of computer software, including GIS, to collate, interrogate, analyse, monitor, and report data. • Contributing to cross- Council initiatives and multi-disciplinary and inter-agency projects. • Providing high quality technical advice to senior managers, Councillors and/or other stakeholders. • Overseeing and managing projects and programmes to improve biodiversity. 	<p>Application Documentation and Interview / Test</p>
<p>Skills and Abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a high customer work focus. • Able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, and influence others. • Ability to use effective means of communication in order to resolve problems and conflicts and negotiate. • Good report writing skills and the ability to prepare briefing notes, policies, procedures, research reports, in clear and concise English. 	<p>Application Documentation and Interview / Test</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good presentation skills to a wide-ranging audience including Council departments, Councillors and the public. • Ability to work collaboratively with a range of internal services, external agencies, and community organisations in a facilitating, enabling and advisory capacity. • Understanding of purpose of role and where it fits into the work of the team and service area and other service areas as appropriate. • Understanding of the overall functions and wider aims of the Council • Attending relevant internal team and other cross-team meetings • Understanding of equality issues, respecting and valuing individuals' diversity and the variety of their contributions. • Committed to the achievement of equal opportunities • Ability to manage time and prioritise work and respond flexibly to frequently changing needs and priorities. • Ability to work under pressure. • Able to use own initiative and work with minimum supervision. • Able to initiate and progress work-plans. • Ability to deal simultaneously with a range of tasks, organising and prioritising effectively and coping with a heavy workload meeting deadlines. • Ability to problem solve with the ability to recognise controversial and sensitive issues. • Supportive of achieving continuous improvement and embracing change to deliver cost effective, quality services. • Committed to own learning and development. 	
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