

Job Description

Principal Natural Environment Officer (Ecology)

Service:	Planning and Environment	Team:	Environment & Climate
Location:	County Hall, Preston		
Salary range:	£44,711- £49,764	Grade:	10
Reports to:	Head of Service: Environment & Climate	Staff responsible for:	6

Job Purpose

Lancashire County Council is recruiting a permanent full-time Principal Natural Environment Officer, with a technical specialism in ecology, to manage a team of professionals delivering the County Council's natural environment monitoring, evidence / data collection and interpretation functions. An experienced professional is required to oversee this specialist service area and provide the technical lead/oversight for several activities.

You will manage and oversee the work of three Senior Ecologists and a Technical Support Officer who operate the Biological Heritage Site (BHS) non-statutory wildlife site system for greater Lancashire which is managed in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

The BHS team is responsible for maintaining all aspects of the system including establishing robust mechanisms for system administration, updates, revision of selection guidelines, site reviews, reporting, and landowner liaison. You will take a lead in developing and updating these systems. The team also delivers a rolling programme of surveys of approximately 1,200 sites and provides feedback and management advice to owners and managers. This can enable them to take advantage of funding that may be available through agri-environment schemes, Biodiversity Net Gain, or other funding programmes.

You will also have responsibility for the Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN). LERN is Lancashire's hub for data and information services relating to landscape and the natural environment and forms part of the national data network (NBN). LERN collects, collates, analyses, manages and disseminates information on the species, habitats and protected sites in Lancashire, and works closely with the voluntary natural history recording community to maintain and enhance data holdings. You will manage two officers that deliver LERN.

The LERN service is provided by a variety of mechanisms: free of charge to support non-commercial conservation and education work; via service level agreements with a range of partners; and through a charged data search service for commercial customers. LERN also supports other functions including the Biological Heritage Site system, nature recovery and planning, as well as the Council's statutory biodiversity duty. An understanding of record centres will be important as you will oversee budgets, service level agreements and actively work to promote LERN and identify opportunities to support, maintain and grow the services LERN provides.

LERN and the BHS team have been integral in the development of Lancashire's emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for which the County Council is the Responsible Authority. Both teams will continue to support delivery of the LNRS, particularly in relation to monitoring, data and evidence. Biological Heritage Sites are included within the areas of particular importance for biodiversity, identified within Lancashire's LNRS. Future monitoring and positive management of

these sites will be integral to meeting Nature Recovery objectives. LERN will be integral to monitoring LNRS delivery.

As the Principal Natural Environment Officer, you will have day-to-day responsibility for developing the team and driving their collaborative work strands to support multiple functions of the authority.

You will provide direction and technical advice to the team and deal with complex issues escalated by team members. You will also provide specialist support and advice to senior managers, colleagues and customers, supporting several other Council duties and functions, including nature recovery, biodiversity duty, planning, policy and other evidence-based decision making.

You will form strong working relationships with colleagues and partners from a range of organisations. You will need to be flexible and opportunistic in the role to be able to secure better outcomes for nature, whilst being responsive to the needs of the team and our local partners.

The post will be based in County Hall, Preston. However, Lancashire County Council operates a flexible working policy where the requirements of the role permit it.

Accountabilities/Responsibilities

Accountabilities and responsibilities include:

- Strategic lead of a team of professionals that deliver and manage a full range of complex assignments and activities relating to natural environment monitoring, data, evidence and its interpretation/application, including oversight, management and development of:
 - The Lancashire Environment Record Network.
 - The Lancashire Biological Heritage Site system.
- Provide day-to-day management, supervision and support for the team, including setting objectives, prioritising, allocating and coordinating work, managing performance of the team, ensuring projects are effectively delivered and addressing complex issues escalated by the team.
- Plan and deliver a variety of environmental field assessment and data projects.
- Establish technical standards and procedures for the team, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, policy, recognised best practice and quality standards as well as County Council objectives.
- Oversee the development of integrated systems and processes for the collection, collation, analysis, interpretation, management, monitoring and dissemination of natural environment data, and evidence.
- Natural environment monitoring, data collection, interpretation and application to support high profile functions such as statutory biodiversity reporting requirements, biodiversity duty actions, Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities, development of strategic plans/policies, land management, land-use change and other decision making.
- Support the environmental data and evidence requirements of the County Council to meet corporate priorities.
- Forecasting, forward planning and responding to changes to ensure that functions and objectives of the service are met.
- Overall responsibility for managing team budgets, key performance indicators and service level agreements.

- Continuous improvement of service performance and efficiency, including proactively questioning current practice, supporting colleagues and senior managers with long-term service planning, development of new services and innovative working practices.
- Meet the training and development needs of team members and contribute to training and development of other colleagues to meet County Council objectives.
- Build and support internal and external partnerships/networks to shape and improve multi-agency service delivery.
- Collect, act upon and respond to stakeholder feedback.

Other

- **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in the way we deliver services to the community and in our employment arrangements. We expect all employees to understand and promote this policy in their work.

- **Health and safety**

All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others when carrying out their duties and must help us to apply our general statement of health and safety policy.

- **Customer Focused**

We put our customers' needs and expectations at the heart of all that we do. We expect our employees to have a full understanding of those needs and expectations so that we can provide high quality, appropriate services at all times.

Our Values

We expect all our employees to demonstrate and promote our values:

- **Supportive**

We are supportive of our customers and colleagues, recognising their contributions and making the best of their strengths to enable our communities to flourish.

- **Innovative**

We deliver the best services we possibly can, always looking for creative ways to do things better, putting the customer at the heart of our thinking, and being ambitious and focused on how we can deliver the best services now and in the future.

- **Respectful**

We treat colleagues, customers and partners with respect, listening to their views, empathising and valuing their diverse needs and perspectives, to be fair, open and honest in all that we do.

- **Collaborative**

We listen to, engage with, learn from and work with colleagues, partners and customers to help achieve the best outcomes for everyone.

Person Specification Principal Natural Environment Officer (Ecology)

All the following requirements are essential unless otherwise indicated by *

Your ability to meet the job requirements will initially be assessed by the information provided on your application but further assessment will be undertaken at interview and, in some cases, by using other types of assessment(s).

Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree qualified (or equivalent) in relevant subject plus 5 years' experience in a similar role. OR Formal professional qualification within specialism. OR Substantial vocational experience at a demonstrably professional level.
Experience
<p>A minimum of 5 years' experience in a relevant area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing conservation management advice (such as support for agri-environment schemes or Biodiversity Net Gain). interpreting natural environment data and evidence to support delivery of a complex operation/function/service. working independently with relevant specialised systems, equipment and IT software including Geographical Information Systems (preferably ArcMap/ArcGIS Pro or QGIS) and database applications. spatial planning and/or producing strategic plans and policy documents (or similar). identifying and applying relevant biodiversity legislation, policies, and processes to deliver evidence-based advice and solutions. working in or supporting multiple operational areas. managing and developing a team and leading / coaching / mentoring to develop others. managing budgets of some complexity and risk. operating or managing service level agreements. * providing effective support for a service or operation undergoing change. strategic partnership working and building relationships with stakeholders to inform decision making.

Essential knowledge, skills & abilities

- Up-to-date and thorough knowledge and understanding of the legislation, regulations, policies and best practice standards and systems relating to the management of environmental data and the protection and conservation of biodiversity.
- Sound knowledge of ecological principals and their application, including challenges and opportunities affecting biodiversity and land management.
- Sound knowledge of ecological survey standards and habitat classification systems.
- Knowledge of conservation land management practices, issues and funding mechanisms (such as agri-environment schemes and/or biodiversity net gain).*
- Demonstrable knowledge of statutory and non-statutory wildlife site systems.
- Demonstrable understanding of natural environment data/evidence collection, analysis, interpretation and monitoring.
- Understanding of ecological record centres and opportunities to obtain and use data in the natural environment sector.
- Excellent data management and analysis skills, including an understanding of GIS applications (preferably ArcMap, ArcGIS Pro or QGIS).
- A sound understanding of the importance of data protection issues including the responsible handling, management and verification of both environmental and personal data.
- Ability to apply specialist professional judgement to resolve complex problems and manage conflicting issues.
- Ability to plan and organise a range of complex activities and priorities.
- Ability to manage, train and mentor other professional staff.
- Good written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to build and maintain relationships with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and senior managers.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office applications (e.g. Word, Excel, Outlook, Access, PowerPoint).
- Understanding of biodiversity duties, roles and responsibilities in a local government context.*
- Knowledge of the development planning system. *
- Full driving licence and access to a vehicle with appropriate insurance

In addition to the skills, knowledge and experience described above, you may be required to undertake a lower graded role as appropriate.

Other essential requirements

- Commitment to equality and diversity.
- Commitment to health and safety.
- Display the LCC values and behaviours at all times and actively promote them in others.