

JOB PROFILE

Post Title: Natural Heritage Officer

Post Number: A00546

The Natural Heritage Officer is responsible, through the Team Leader – Development Plans and Heritage, for contributing to the delivery of a service providing robust policy relating to natural heritage matters (including terrestrial and marine biodiversity, landscape and earth heritage) in the public interest and in the interests of protecting the natural environment and assisting the Council in meeting its statutory duties and responsibilities under The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.

The postholder will be required to exercise the necessary balanced judgement and expertise to formulate natural heritage policy and present recommendations to the Council. This will require the interpretation of information from a wide range of sources in order to balance the obligations of compliance with national legislation and guidance, Council policy and public aspirations and concerns.

The main duties of the Natural Heritage Officer are to: -

- Act as lead officer in the preparation of the policy and advice regarding potential impacts on Shetland's natural heritage through the Development Management and Local Development Plan (LDP) process, including Habitats Regulations Appraisal, European Protected Species and other ecological advice.
- Promote awareness of the obligations of the Council to further the conservation of biodiversity under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and fulfil the requirements of the Wildlife & Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 in relation to reporting on the Biodiversity Duty.
- Monitor and contribute to the setting of budgets, as directed by the Team Leader.
- Co-ordinate the delivery of the natural heritage aspects of the Shetland Ranger Service, which is coordinated via Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Planning Service and the Shetland Amenity Trust, including periodically to review the natural heritage aspects of the Agreement to reflect changes in service requirements.
- Provide advice on the review and development of policy for the Local Development Plan (LDP), including legislative advice, supplementary guidance, and development of natural heritage monitoring regimes to monitor the impacts of the LDP on natural heritage.

- Lead on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Local Development Plan and other Planning Service Plans, Policies or Programmes.
- Collect, coordinate and analyse data and produce forecasts on the impacts of land use, transport, housing, economic development and other relevant impacts on the natural heritage for input to the LDP and its associated SEA Environmental Reports; and to provide a statistical service for the Service as a whole.
- Coordinate and undertake a five year monitoring cycle of key ecological indicators, drawing on the outputs of the SLA and other sources, as appropriate, including collating and analysing the monitoring information as a key component of the evidence base for the LDP and SEA and ongoing monitoring of the impact on the natural heritage of the LDP and specific natural heritage policies and projects within the remit of this post.
- Prepare written material and formulate policy for inclusion in the Local Development Plan and associated documents such as the Main Issues Report, Supplementary Guidance, and Advice Notes and associated SEA reports.
- Lead on liaison with other Departments and outside bodies, as appropriate, in preparing, consulting on and implementing the natural heritage aspects of the LDP. Arrange and actively facilitate forums, steering groups, road-shows and other public participation and consultation methods, as required.
- Prepare the Council's natural heritage case with written evidence in respect of objections to the LDP during the statutory Examination process and to also provide further oral evidence as required.
- Collaborate with Shetland Amenity Trust to ensure the outputs required by SLA assist in the monitoring and preparation of the natural heritage aspects of the LDP and associated documents, liaising closely in the process to set budgets, closely monitor value for money and to meet set performance and output deadlines.
- Extend and further develop the Development Plans and Heritage Team's computerised information systems, such as Geographical Information System (GIS) and Access databases and to ensure adequate information standards are kept to enable submission to national recorders, for audit purposes and for evidence/ justification during policy development.
- Provide advice to Development Management staff of the natural heritage policy implications of current planning applications, including preparation of official reports and on potential impacts on the natural heritage of Shetland, both on designated sites and in relation to all habitats and species of Shetland in respect of both planning related, and to other Council staff, in respect of other Council activities.

- Carry out surveys of areas for development, analysing the natural heritage information collected, decide on the form and content to include in development plans, undertake public participation and consultation, and formulate policies in respect of natural heritage, landscape, geology and soils.
- Contribute to seeking negotiated solutions to complex and contentious development or natural heritage issues to ensure compliance with national and Council policy. This requires cross-boundary working with senior officers from within the Council and the Council's partner agencies together with the wider community. This will require ability to weigh facts and opinions presented through consultations.
- Contribute to the creation and implementation of corporate or service plans and action at a strategic level in Shetland through, e.g., the Community Planning process, the Shetland Marine Spatial Plan, Geopark Shetland, the River Basin Management Plan the Local Housing Strategy, etc, ensuring natural heritage information is provided as appropriate and policy and obligations are properly considered and represented so as to ensure natural heritage obligations falling on the Council are acted on, identifying and addressing potential issues with (e.g.) designated sites or protected habitats and species; seeking to negotiate practical solutions via policy or procedural change.
- Co-ordinate and manage a Shetland-wide network of Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), including identification and detailed assessment of potential new LNCS; organising and servicing the working group that informs any decisions affecting the network; and developing and implementing monitoring regimes for LNCS
- Balance competing recommended changes in natural heritage policy affecting several Council functions e.g. housing, industrial development, transport and public utilities, and ensure consistency between various policy statements, including keeping abreast of relevant statutory requirements and regulations.
- Develop or initiate links with related programmes and industries that have the potential to advance natural heritage and local economic goals, such as those concerned with agriculture, fishing, tourism and other socio-economic activity
- Promote the awareness, maintenance and enhancement of the natural heritage in Shetland by providing information and advice, guidance and promotional or interpretative material to the staff, Members and partners of Shetland Islands Council;

From time to time, the Council may require the post holder to undertake duties outside those specified.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Natural Heritage Officer

Post No: A00456

This person specification describes the values and attributes of a suitable candidate for our role. Through the recruitment and selection process, we shall be looking for evidence that you understand, share and can demonstrate our values and possess the essential attributes.

Our Values

In Shetland Islands Council, **excellent service** is at the heart of everything we do. We provide **excellent service** by **taking personal responsibility** and **working well together**. We demonstrate this by;

1. Providing an excellent level of service, by making sure we understand, meet and manage our service users' needs.
2. Having a positive attitude and taking our responsibilities as employees of the council seriously. Working in an open and honest way, reflecting on our performance and looking for opportunities to improve and develop.
3. Demonstrating a positive attitude by being open-minded, fair, respectful, trustworthy and honest.

For more detailed information on the Council's values, please visit the Shetland Islands Council's website and search for 'Our Values'.

Additional post specific attributes are set out below;

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<u>Personal Features/Qualities</u>	Capacity for strategic and innovative thinking. Ability to work with minimum of supervision. Vision, energy and initiative. High level of personal motivation and self discipline. Capacity to work under internal and external pressure to meet strict deadlines.	

Ability to exercise informed judgement.

Ability to develop professional working relationships with politicians and officials from Government, local government and non-government organisations

Commitment to working with a wide range of partners to deliver biodiversity benefits.

Ability to travel extensively within Shetland.

Relevant
Experience

A minimum of three years' relevant post-qualification experience of providing technical advice, policy implementation, multi-agency working and project management.

Experience of sourcing project funding from a variety of sources.

Experience in achieving negotiated solutions to complex situations involving sensitive issues.

Experience of partnership working and working with communities and community groups.

Experience of working with or within local authorities, statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations or one or more industry sectors relevant to biodiversity conservation in a fragile economy

Experience of consultation and negotiation with external organisations, e.g. Government, local government and non-government agencies, grant-giving bodies, trusts and commercial business

Experience of project management within a biodiversity or environmental field.

Experience of developing strategic natural heritage policy and action plans and programmes for local authorities for both terrestrial and the marine environment

Experience of staff supervision.

Experience of managing administrative and project budgets.

Education

Recognised relevant BSc. degree or equivalent, such as Biodiversity Management, Conservation Biology, Environmental Management, Environmental Protection and Management, Environmental Sustainability, Ecology and Resource Management or other appropriate discipline

Additional training in an area relevant to the post, e.g. practical biodiversity research or management programme/project; strategic or project environmental assessment or community consultation and engagement.

Evidence of additional training in some aspect of marine biodiversity.

Other Qualifications

Full membership of a relevant professional body.

An additional qualification in an area relevant to the post.

Skills, Abilities and Knowledge

Excellent oral and written communication skills.

Well developed interpersonal and presentational skills, particularly related to negotiation and mediation.

Understanding of Geology and Geomorphology in Shetland

Well developed mediation skills to deal with situations that can often be confrontational.

Knowledge of the main issues affecting, and opportunities for, biodiversity in Shetland.

Ability to interpret and apply latest developments in natural heritage and environmental legislation and case law, particularly as they relate to the statutory Planning process.

Understanding of the political environment within which the post operates and the corporate

responsibilities associated with the post.

Comprehensive working knowledge of nature conservation, biodiversity and environmental legislation and procedure.

Knowledge and understanding of the principles and practical application of sustainable development and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Knowledge of land management and agricultural legislation and policy.

Knowledge of UK and European marine policy and legislation and coastal and maritime biodiversity conservation issues.

Experience in the use and application of computerised information management systems.

Ability to manage and supervise professional, technical and administrative staff.

Full driving licence and/or the ability to travel throughout Shetland at short notice and where public transport is limited

Allowances: Distant Islands Allowance
Evaluated Grade: K
Date of Evaluation: 06/04/2016
PVG Membership: -
Disclosure Check: -
Date of Last Amendment: 06/04/2016