

Job Outline



Post: Project Development Officer - Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS)
Location: Flexible
Hours: 35 hours per week - flexible
Duration: 1-year Fixed Term (Secondment considered)
Service: Economy & Infrastructure
Grade: HC 8 : £41,423 - £44,899 p.a.
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Job Purpose

The post-holder will prepare a high-quality National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Project Development application that lays the foundations for a major partnership project to realise the full potential of the Flow Country World Heritage Site through investment in sustainable tourism, community engagement, skills development and innovative peatland restoration.

Background

The Flow Country was inscribed as a World Heritage Site (WHS) in July 2024, in recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of its blanket bog ecosystem. It is the world's first and currently only peatland WHS and as such plays a critical role in the advancement of the understanding and appreciation of peatland habitats, for nature and people. Further information can be found at: <https://theflowcountry.org.uk>.

The Site is managed by the WHS Co-ordinator and Flow Country Partnership Manager, guided by the Flow Country Partnership (FCP) and WHS Steering Group. A contract was undertaken by Rob Robinson Heritage Consulting earlier this year to work up a suite of projects for submission to NLHF. This new one-year post will build on the findings of this work, resulting in the submission of a funding bid for a project to enhance heritage, strengthen local prosperity, increase understanding and enjoyment of the Flow Country, and establish a resilient long-term model for conserving and managing this globally important landscape.

This is a unique opportunity for an experienced individual who has worked to develop projects or initiatives and associated funding applications. If the funding bid is successful, there may be opportunities to continue the post to develop and ultimately help deliver the project. The employer will be The Highland Council on behalf of the Flow Country Partnership.

1. Job Description – Key Duties and Responsibilities

The Project Development Officer's core responsibility is to draft and submit the NLHF development stage application and supporting documents, ensuring that the project elements are clearly defined and meet the requirements of the funding partners.

Day-to-day duties are listed below.

- Draft and submit the NLHF application and supporting documents.
- Clarify the scope, objectives and parameters for each of the three core pillars of peat, people and planet.
- Co-ordinate and monitor progress towards the submission, working with partners and consultants in line with an agreed action plan, and reporting on progress to the FCP Funding Working Group and WHS Steering Group as required.
- Seek and secure match funding from partners and other relevant funding schemes.
- Draft a budget for the development and delivery phases of the resulting project and contribute to the financial planning and management of the pre-development phase.
- Undertake baseline surveys, gather information and data, and collate evidence to support the funding application(s).
- Draft job descriptions and consultancy briefs.
- Organise and let contracts.
- Engage with local communities and other stakeholders to seek views and feedback on the developing project and related funding bid.
- Work with team members and stakeholders to build and maintain excellent working relationships.

Other Duties

In undertaking these tasks, the post holder will be required to:

- Work in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, financial procedures, contract procedures, programme & project management approach and policies & procedures.
 - Take responsibility for your personal development and participate in training.
 - To undertake other duties, commensurate with this position.
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Further Information

The post-holder will be based in The Highland Council, working as part of a team of colleagues, partners and consultants to work up and deliver the project and associated funding bid on behalf of the Flow Country Partnership. This work will be guided by the findings of the Rob Robinson report, and a summary of the next steps is provided at the end of this document.

Employee Benefits

The Highland Council is committed to their employees and offers an excellent benefit package that can include:

- Flexible working patterns including both full-time and part-time opportunities.
- Competitive salary with an incremental scale and annual pay review.
- Wide range of learning and development opportunities with an annual review to discuss career opportunities and progression.
- 28 days paid holidays plus 7 Public paid holidays (pro rata for part-time staff), rising to 33 days paid holiday (pro rata for part-time staff) after 5 years continuous service at the commencement of the next leave year.
- Pension Scheme, including employer's contribution of 19.5%
- A genuine commitment to the health and wellbeing of our employees with access to the new Employee Assistance Programme.
- Family Friendly staff policies including Parental Leave.
- Cycle to Work scheme.

If you are interested in working for Highland Council / FCP and being part of a team providing a first-class service please view the job description, person specification and further information and then apply online.



2. Person Specification

ESSENTIAL

The minimum acceptable levels for safe and effective job performance.

- Significant experience of working in project and programme environments, ideally but not exclusively in a natural/built heritage environment.
- Proven track record of developing successful projects including experience of preparing funding applications and securing match funding from partners.
- Evidence of higher education.
- Effective communication and numeracy skills.
- Ability to write and communicate in a variety of formats.
- Computer literate and familiar with a range of computer packages.
- Management of resources including budget and consultants.
- Ability to gather, handle and analyse data in both monitoring and evaluative contexts.
- Budget management and ability to work in accordance with Council's Standing Orders, financial procedures and office practices.
- Excellent partnership working, with understanding of the importance of forming and maintaining strategic links with other projects, programmes and partners.
- A strong team player with an ability to relate appropriately to a wide range of people.
- Experience of community and stakeholder engagement.
- Self-motivated with drive and enthusiasm to deliver targets.
- Ability to work flexibly to meet deadlines.
- Ability to work on own initiative and under pressure.

Desirable

- Knowledge of National Lottery and other funding organisations & processes.
- Experience of procurement and budgeting.
- Some knowledge of Highland habitats and ecosystems, especially peatlands.
- Some knowledge of Highland land management practices, tourism initiatives and communities.
- Evidence of a continuing commitment to personal development.
- Willing to be flexible about travel for work and training purposes.



3. Health and Safety

Health & Safety is an integral part of any role within the Highland Council. As such we would expect that all employees:

1. Become familiar with Violent Incident and Accident reporting procedures and comply with them.
2. Undertake a continual program of Risk Assessment in relation to their role within Highland Council.
3. Have an understanding of the importance of Health and Safety in the workplace and familiarise themselves with the Highland Council's Health & Safety Procedures.

4. Further Information

The following table is taken from the project development work undertaken by Rob Robinson Heritage Consulting in 2026. It outlines the scope of a future project and outlines the tasks that will be required to be undertaken to develop the NLHF funding bid. It is anticipated that the post-holder will work with colleagues, partners and consultants to deliver these tasks, with a view to submitting a Lottery application in May 2027.

General project development
1. Project support and development – to produce the Development Stage NLHF application and supporting documents including delivery stage funding plan and development stage evidence of support, job descriptions, consultancy briefs (e.g. Area Action, Activity and Evaluation Plans) and condition surveys as well as securing development stage match funding (i.e. potentially including additional supporting funding applications). 2. Undertake a basic baseline awareness survey to inform project development and to demonstrate the current connection with / appreciation of the WHS / Flow Country landscape (e.g. through online, in-house surveys).
Specific project element development
<i>Planet</i>
Shining a global light – draft the Global Outreach Officer job description. Provide further clarity and initial scoping for how the outreach programme may work and identify potential budgets through liaising with best practice examples, culminating in a clear project definition and achievable brief.
Engaging new communities – clearly define this element, provide parameters, demonstrate need and identify focus: • Further data trawl to demonstrate current low level awareness of the Flow Country and WHS status (supplement with in-house, online surveys noted above)



- Review and consider links with the other local plans, such as the area-based plan for Sutherland, setting out community aspirations and priorities
- Initial discussions with communities to identify key community groups, establish contacts and gauge levels of interest / relevant needs
- Liaise with relevant bodies (e.g. the Green Health Partnership, Community Planning Partnerships) to work up projects targeting new audiences
- Liaise with the art community to identify potential for involvement and opportunities
- Research and consider transport barriers for activities and assess if existing provision provides adequate solutions for anticipated future activities
- Develop the job description for a dedicated FC Community Engagement Officer
- Develop the brief for an activity / engagement plan

WHS volunteers – provide further clarity and initial scoping for how the volunteer programme may work and identify potential budgets:

- Liaise with best practice examples of other volunteer programmes (e.g. CNPA volunteer rangers / wardens programme) to help determine opportunities and challenges and identify a recommended route forward
- Explore potential for a ranger apprenticeship programme (both assessing existing need and potential provision) linking with THC adult learning services and Lochview local training centre

Peatland ambassadors – provide further clarity and initial scoping for how the Ambassador programme may work and identify potential budgets through liaising with best practice examples, culminating in a clear project definition and achievable brief.

People

WHS welcome – clarify the branding and interpretive objectives and parameters (what is required and where); undertake an in-house FCP audit of existing interpretation and infrastructure, identifying condition, content, potential update needs and gaps; production of briefs for visitor management mapping study, branding and interpretation plan; and further consideration of brand commercialisation opportunities (note that this is likely one brief for a multi-disciplinary team). As with all People theme projects a key element and consideration will be to ensure that the end results are outstanding and that they include innovative approaches where possible.

People's peatlands – clarify objectives and parameters for this element, likely requiring early high-level scoping of community led gateway town and trainline interpretation to highlight challenges and opportunities (and consider how these elements fit within the interpretation plan brief above). To involve a review of case studies / examples to guide development (include WHUK wider project input).

Slowing the flow – this requires three separate scoping reports to determine concept feasibility – undertaken by the Project Development Officer supported by appropriate staff within the FCP partner organisations.



• Access / viewpoint scoping study to identify potential sites that could be upgraded or developed for an all-ability trail / viewpoint (this study must also demonstrate the need for additional viewpoints) • Long distance walking route scoping study to investigate the route, potential costs and challenges • Scoping study on road-based cycle trail to investigate the route, potential costs and challenges
Embedded in education – identify existing provision, gaps and educational needs to build detail for this project element: • Discuss with RHET Highland / Peatland ACTION / FCP to ascertain detail and costs for their ongoing secondary school project and identify lessons, gaps and needs going forwards • Mapping of schools to ensure relevant contacts are in place • Initial consultation with primary / secondary schools regarding current provision, material and needs • Liaise with UHI/ERI to identify their requirements regarding school education, linking to the HE/ FE pathway and employment
Peat
Peatland restoration – work with FCP restoration staff to identify priority areas, outline scale of restoration within NLHF bid, costs and potential funding plans for peatland restoration. This should include liaison with and learning lessons from Cairngorms 2030 and ensure that peatland restoration is additional beyond current workplans.
Peatland skills – liaise with Peatland ACTION and UHI to identify any training gaps in career and academic pathways and review if this project element could deliver any further actions resulting from the current UHI study (also applicable to Embedded in education project).
Restoration capacity – produce job descriptions for all new development phase jobs plus: • Clarify the extent of the NS/SF conifer regen? mapping project to enable a clear approach to the development phase • Clarify all potential funding routes already in train and decision points for peatland restoration officers to align with proposed new posts in the NLHF application and revise as necessary • Liaise with UHI on remit, focus and outputs of conifer regen PhD student and ensure project builds on work • Liaise with HIE regarding financial assistance with carbon sales officer post and revise NLHF bid if required / or ensure alignment



- Assess time requirement to analyse feeding wader data gathered in 2025 and liaise with RSPB Conservation Adviser over wader project outputs and requirements in order to add further detail

Right trees, right places – continue liaison with the Riverwoods project and with the Flow Country Advisory Group, Flow Country Rivers Trust, SF and FLS regarding early project development. Also scope potential participant organisations for community tree nurseries and further define tree nursery scope and costs.

Cross-cutting

Collaborative research – draft the Collaborative Research Co-ordinator job description and liaise with UHI to identify initial opportunities across the project.

