Tree Officer - Planning & Growth

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This role will be required to work at both councils’ premises at either West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds, and the Forest Heath District Council Offices, Mildenhall. You may reasonably be required to work at any other of the councils’ premises as required in order to meet the needs of the service.

Purpose of Job

To support the delivery of a good quality Planning Service across the two authorities.

The post sits within the Council’s planning team working with the planning officers and other specialist officers such as the Arboriculture officer (Parks) and the Ecology & Landscape officer (Planning).

Tree Officer Responsibilities

To protect trees and hedgerows including from physical development and provide tree/landscape advice to the Planning Service.

To advise and liaise with applicants, agents (including arboriculturists), tree surgeons and developers regarding such proposals.

To implement efficient and effective processes and procedures to ensure continuous improvements to the delivery of this work.

To maintain, review and update the Council’s Tree Preservation Order records and assist in the service of new Tree Preservation orders.

This may vary over time, dependent on the work load fluctuations and the Council’s priorities. Any such changes will be subject to discussion with the relevant Service Manager and/or Head of Service in consultation with the postholder.

Key Responsibilities and Activities

Deal with applications for consent to undertake works to preserved trees and trees in conservation areas.

Provide expert tree & hedgerow advice in relation to planning and development applications and draft appropriate conditions where necessary.

Provide advice to applicants and their agents on arboricultural reports, tree works and trees in relation to planning applications.
Assist in a robust defence of the Council’s planning, development and TPO decisions and actions at hearings, public inquiries and in court and other enforcement proceedings.

To analyse arboricultural reports submitted with planning applications and where necessary prepare briefs for work to be undertaken by applicants in relation to development proposals.

Communicate arboricultural advice effectively (both verbally and in writing) to a wide range of organisations and individuals including Members, Parish Councils, other local authorities and service areas, applicants, developers, agents, arboriculturists, tree surgeons and members of the public.

Review existing TPO’s and make recommendations for new orders as necessary.

Monitor, in conjunction with Planning Enforcement Officers, conditional requirements of planning and development consents in relation to landscaping, tree and hedgerow protection, works to trees and replacement planting.

Respond quickly and effectively, in conjunction with Planning Enforcement Officers, to unauthorised hedgerow removals, works to trees in Conservation Areas and trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Gather appropriate evidence as necessary to enable prosecution to proceed.

Maintain an up to date knowledge of arboricultural theory and practice and legislation and best practice in relation to trees and development.

Undertake any other duties required by the Service Manager commensurate with the grade.

July 2016