

Oxford City Council

Building a world class city for everyone

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Career Opportunity

Job Title	Tree Officer - Planning
Job reference	002474
Service Area / Directorate	Planning and Regulatory Services
Salary and Grade	G8: £45,859 per annum - (pro rata for part time)
Contract	Permanent
Hours per week	37
Location	Hybrid Oxford - Town Hall/Work from home

The role

Conserving and enhancing the landscape of Oxford is a key responsibility for Oxford City Council. Trees play an intrinsic role in the landscape of Oxford, providing a myriad of social, environmental, and economic benefits for all those who live or work in the city, or come as visitors.

The historic city has a wealth of trees, many in truly outstanding locations such as the college parks and gardens. We also have valuable tree collections from around the world such as in Headington Hill Park, University Parks and the Botanic Gardens. We have over 250 Tree Preservation Orders, and there are more 18 conservation areas and 13 listed parks and gardens, which include a wide range of species in diverse habitats.

Oxford has a higher-than-average city tree canopy cover at over 20%, but there are areas of the city that would benefit from more tree cover. Development pressure, climate change, and an ageing tree population in parts of the city, requires the City Council to apply the highest standards of arboricultural principles and practice in its response to proposed works to protected trees and development management, to maintain and enhance the quality of the local environment. In support of this Oxford City Council has pioneered a progressive planning policy approach to measuring the effects of proposed development on tree canopy cover over time.

In this context we are looking for someone with drive, enthusiasm and initiative who can deliver high quality arboricultural and landscape advice efficiently and effectively. Working in liaison with officers from a range of other disciplines, the successful candidate will be providing advice on planning applications, tree policy development, and dealing with applications/notifications for work to protected trees, and requests for new TPO's. They will also be providing other specialist advice as needed to Councillors, members of other organisations and members of the public.

Required is a professionally qualified arboriculturalist with good IT, oral and written communication skills, and a passionate urban-forestry ethos. You must have the ability to provide clear professional advice to a range of stake holders who may have complex or conflicting interests. Sound like you? Interested in working in a World Class city? If yes continue below to find out how you apply.

About us

Our ambitious leadership team and dedicated staff are working hard building a world class city for everyone. Oxford City Council has accelerated plans to build more affordable and council housing in the city. We provide services to help reduce inequality and improve the health and wellbeing of Oxford's residents and are taking a lead on reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity to become a net carbon neutral city of the future.

We are a supportive and collaborative bunch of people working towards shared goals, where new ideas and initiatives are valued. We strive to deliver service excellence, take accountability for our actions and communicate with honesty and respect. There has never been a more exciting time to join us! Help us to build successful places in which to live and work and build a fairer, greener city in which everyone can thrive.

Many of our roles offer flexible or hybrid working.

We offer generous holiday 28 days a year with an additional 4 days after 5 years' service.

We are committed to supporting career development opportunities and learning and development.

An above average pension offering.

Plus other great benefits including generous subsidised leisure centre (swim/gym) membership.

How to apply

More information is available on the role profile document. Please read this document to ensure that you meet our requirements. More information about working for the Council, our values and vision, is available on our web site.

Applications should be made via our online application system (no CVs please).

For further information and how to apply online, please visit www.oxford.gov.uk

If you are unable to access our website please call 01865 252848.

Note: For roles that require a DBS Certificate (Enhanced and or Barred List check), candidates are required to supply their complete work history. If you are making an application using a CV please ensure you explain any gaps in your work history.

You will be informed whether the first round of interviews will be online or in-person (role-dependent). Please note, for hybrid roles the successful applicant will be expected to work from home. You should ensure that you have reliable and secure wifi access; a suitable workspace and are prepared to undertake distance learning and training.

Closing Date: 27 May 2024

Late applications will not be processed

Interview Date(s): 10 June 2024 and 11 June 2024

For an informal discussion about the post please contact Andrew Murdoch on 01865 252228 or email amurdoch@oxford.gov.uk

We are an equal opportunity employer:

We are striving to become a more inclusive employer and to represent the communities that we support. We have policies in place to ensure that every applicant and employee can flourish and succeed. Currently we are underrepresented in some areas, and would particularly welcome applicants from ethnic and minority communities. All applicants will be given fair consideration for work and will not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic.



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Role Profiles

Role information

Job Title	Tree Officer
Position type	Permanent
Hours per week	37 Hours
Grade and Salary Range	G8: £45,859 per annum - (pro rata for part time)
Location	Hybrid Oxford - Town Hall/Work from home
Service Area / Directorate	Planning and Regulatory Services
Responsible to	Development Management Team Manager
Responsible for	N/A
Budget (£)	N/A
Assets	N/A
Driving licence	Not required
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	Not Exempt
Candidate Screening	Not required
Political Restriction	This post is not politically sensitive

Role purpose

- To provide efficient and effective technical and specialist advice on all arboricultural matters in relation to the Council's statutory planning function.
- To be responsible for managing and advising on applications and notices for works to trees subject of any Tree Preservation Orders or within a Conservation Area, and for the making of new Tree Preservation Orders as appropriate.
- To provide specialist advice to the planning service in relation to planning applications where tree related issues are material considerations.

Role responsibilities and main duties

In relation to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas:

- To deal with all aspects of making Tree Preservation Orders, including emergency Tree Preservation Orders in liaison with Legal and Democratic Services, including instructions, drafting of reports and commenting on any objections received in relation to proposed Tree Preservation Orders.
- Dealing with all applications for consent and notices of work to be carried out to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders or by their location in Conservation Areas.

- In liaison with administrative staff, maintain and updating the Councils records and statutory register in relation to trees in accordance with statutory requirements.
- In appropriate cases, provide advice on replacement trees, their species and positions and ensuring that replacement trees are provided.
- To prepare the Council's case in relation to appeals against the Council's refusal to approve works to protected trees, and deal with such appeals by written representations and by hearing or public inquiry, acting as the Council's expert witness on arboricultural matters.
- In liaison with the Enforcement Team and Legal Services, help prepare the Council's case in relation to legal action brought against unauthorised work to protected trees, acting as the Council's expert witness on arboricultural matters.

In relation to development proposals and planning applications: -

- To support arboricultural related matters on all planning applications as part of the Councils statutory function. This includes commenting on the arboricultural implications of proposed development, and tree related elements of landscape design in relation to Local Plan Policies.
- This involve negotiating with applicants and their agents at all stages of planning and development including Pre-application engagement and requires close liaison and co-operation with the colleagues in the Development Management Team, Heritage, and Specialist Services teams.
- To work in liaison with enforcement officers to ensure that landscaping schemes proposed by developers and/or required by conditions of planning permission are carried out satisfactorily.
- To advise and negotiate as appropriate with applicants and professional advisers to ensure the protection and retention of trees prior to and during construction work in undertaken.
- Advising Development Management Officers about appropriate conditions required to protect and retain existing trees. Secure planting schemes as part of the new developments, together with the support of Lead Tree officer agree conditions and/or legal agreements to secure appropriate replacement management and maintenance of trees and landscaping schemes.
- To identify where amenity trees are likely to be at risk as a result of development proposals and advise the Head of Planning Services when to make tree preservation orders to ensure the long-term protection of such trees following support from the Lead Tree Officer.
- In liaison with the Development Management Officer, help prepare the Council's case when required in relation to appeals against the Council's refusal to grant planning permission where the reasons for refusal include tree issues. To appear at hearing or public inquiry as necessary acting as the Council's expert witness on arboricultural matters.
- Give technical advice to the Enforcement Team in relation to the enforcement of tree matters.
- To support Site Inspections as required in order to perform the above duties.

To deal with all aspects of the Hedgerows Regulations including responding to hedgerow removal notices, issuing hedgerow retention notices, preparing the councils case in respect of any appeal and giving evidence in respect of prosecutions.

Liaise with utility companies in relation to the impact of their work on amenity trees and provide constructive advice on how to minimise damage to trees during the planning, installation and maintenance of utility services.

In relation to the Local Plan and other corporate projects

- To provide advice on the landscape, arboricultural and green infrastructure policies to be included in Statutory Local Plans and supplementary guidance.

General Matters

- Attending planning committee and other public meetings as required in relation to matters relating to trees / landscape

The duties and responsibilities set out in this role profile are indicative of the role. They are however, subject to change and you will be required from time to time to undertake other duties commensurate with your grade.

Our commitment to Safeguarding

Oxford City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and requires all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.

Who we are looking for

Candidates will be shortlisted on the basis of demonstrating that they fulfil the following criteria that is listed to be 'Assessed at: Application' on their application form and should include clear examples of how they meet these criteria.

Each of the criteria below will be measured through, the application form, interview, test/exercise or documentation (eg a qualification document).

Essential Criteria	Assessment stage
Completion of at least a Bachelor degree (Hons) or equivalent Level 6 Arboricultural Qualification in arboriculture, forestry, landscape architecture or related subject	Application; document
At least 3 years practical experience of working as a Tree Officer, in either the public or private sector dealing with a range of proposals of varied complexity at all stages in the process regarding statutory tree work, along with providing advice to Development Management at pre-application, application, and post application stage.	Application; interview
Knowledge and experience of current legislation, policies, and strategies relating to arboricultural matters	Interview
Good organisational skills and experience of managing own workload with minimum supervision and ability to cope with high workloads and pressure.	Interview
Experience of undertaking site visits and VTA tree inspections.	Application; interview
Ability and experience to exercise judgement, make balanced assessments and put forward rational, evidence-based recommendations in support of policies and legislation.	Interview

Experience of direct dealing with customers and providing a high quality customer service. Good customer care and negotiating skills. Ability and willingness to deal effectively and efficiently with the whole range of planning service customers in particular.	Application; interview
Strong oral and written communication skills to include writing reports. Demonstrating the ability to proactively build and maintain strong working relationships at all levels with internal and external stakeholders	Interview
Excellent analytical and decision making skills to analyse complex issues and identify and implement effective solutions.	Interview
Computer literate with understanding of windows office tools, use of email, electronic calendar, spreadsheets and databases, such as Uniform and presentation packages such as PowerPoint.	Application; interview

Desirable Criteria

Assessment stage

Ability to work as part of a team, including co-operating with other departments or outside bodies to provide advice on development management issues.	Application; interview
Professional Member of Arboricultural Association, Landscape Institute, or Institute of Chartered Foresters	Application; interview
Public and committee presentation of arboricultural and landscape issues	Application; interview
Experience presenting the Councils case as an expert witness at all types of planning appeal	Application; interview

Notes to candidates

In addition to the above criteria, Oxford City Council has developed and embedded a suite of values and behaviours. Full details of these can be found on our web page, under Working for Us. Please familiarise yourself with these values and behaviours. If you are invited for interview you will be asked questions based on them.