

Kent County Council

Job Description: National Landscape Head of Planning and Place

Directorate:	Growth, Environment & Transport
Unit/Section:	Kent Downs National Landscape Team
Grade:	KSI
Responsible to:	Kent Downs National Landscape Director

Background:

The Kent Downs National Landscape is one of the most enchanting and beautiful landscapes in Britain; it is also one of the most under pressure. Covering around a quarter of the County of Kent, it is a rich mosaic of chalk hills, dry valleys, woodlands, ancient trackways, villages, castles and churches. Our role is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of this Protected Landscape.

The Kent Downs National Landscape partnership is in the process of finalising our statutory, strategic landscape Management Plan. The plan is strengthened, ambitious and acknowledges the significant challenges we face to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of this most special place. This is an exciting and challenging opportunity to make a real difference for the Kent Downs National Landscape. You will be part of the Kent Downs National Landscape Team, a supportive, highly skilled and highly motivated multidisciplinary team delivering our mission and vision and our projects and programmes.

The National Landscape Team delivers many ambitious schemes. Our delivery approach is achieved through advocacy, development of partnerships and delivery of an integrated suite of projects to enhance and protect the landscape and its heritage, improve access, raise capacity in partners and the local community, and increase community engagement.

Purpose of the Job:

Whilst not a job share, you will jointly lead the Planning and Place theme of the Kent Downs National Landscape Team primarily using land use planning and design guidance as a tool to deliver the mission, vision aims and principles of the Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals aligned with the Cross Channel Global Geopark ambition.

You will jointly lead on providing planning expertise to help shape and influence development impacting the Kent Downs National Landscape. This primarily involves influencing development plans and other strategic policies and responding to consultations on planning applications. Proposals are often complex and may be major and include Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and participation in Examinations in Public (EIPs) and Public Inquiries and presentation to Planning Committees is sometimes required. Producing and promoting new guidance documents and delivering training to local authorities and other stakeholders are also part of the role.

All members of the Kent Downs National Landscape + Cross Channel Geopark team are expected to work collaboratively, in an integrated way and where appropriate across the People, Place, Climate and Nature, Communications and Finance and Compliance themes.

Office arrangements:

Since Covid the Kent Downs National Landscape Team have been primarily home based, with regular team catch ups online. We meet together, usually monthly in the landscape as a whole team to plan our work, collaborate and update.

We have office space available co-located with the east Kent Public Rights of Way Team at an attractive rural office in Brabourne near Ashford. This is available on a desk share basis and to arrange in person meetings.

This is a joint role and it is expected that both Planning and Place Heads will arrange convenient ways of working together to achieve the best possible outcomes.

For mileage and other claims your office base will be in Brabourne.

Main duties and responsibilities:

Seeking to influence national and local policies through responding to consultations and working with partners which may affect the Kent Downs National Landscape, such as the National Planning Policy Framework, local authority development plans, including having contact as appropriate with senior managers, local authority Members and multiagency partners, influencing future policy strategy and operations, monitoring and seeking to influence legislative change supporting informed policy and decision-making.

Respond to development management consultations for the Kent Downs National Landscape which will include direct contact with KCC officers, members and managers, partner local authority Planning Officers and members, National Landscape partnership members and Natural England, anticipating and responding to sometimes politically sensitive planning matters and alerting the Director to high risk applications and proposals affecting the National Landscape. Where appropriate, liaising with and commissioning expert advice to establish a National Landscape position and representing the National Landscape or supporting partner local authorities where appropriate at Planning Inquiries or Examinations in Public.

Provide timely and authoritative planning advice and comments on development management, disseminating relevant information on policy and development management issues throughout the National Landscape team, Partnership Directorate, partner Local Planning Authorities and Natural England as appropriate, to ensure officers and Members are well-informed and to promote consistency of approach.

Undertake research of specific topics and projects in order to contribute to and in some cases lead on, the development of policy, strategy, guidance documents and position statements and to influence and ensure the development of an effective business case to justify proceeding with individual projects or overall policy.

Provide professional support and expertise to staff in the National Landscape team and partnership, identify and deliver training and development needs, supporting professional development and the provision of a high quality of service.

Support the development of the Planning and Place role of the National Landscape Unit to increase our influence in policy, design and sustainable development working with and through partnerships.

Review and implement a chargeable pre-planning advisory service to generate income for the Unit and support the planning function.

All members of the Kent Downs National Landscape + Cross Channel Geopark team are expected to work collaboratively, in an integrated way and where appropriate across the People, Place, Climate and Nature, Communications and Finance and Compliance themes.

Please note all Kent Downs National Landscape roles are employed subject to funding availability.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

Kent County Council

Person Specification: National Landscape Head of Planning and Place

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	Degree or equivalent qualification in town planning, environmental, landscape or other relevant subject, or considerable related experience at an appropriate level. Member of RTPI or possess a recognised town and country planning qualification and be eligible for MRTPI status.
EXPERIENCE	A significant level of experience and achievement in the principle functions identified for this role. • Commenting on and successfully influencing strategic planning policies and development plans, for instance, Local Plans. • Providing and promoting design guidance and training support, for instance, with Local Authorities. • Successfully influencing development management issues (planning applications) of significant scale, importance and precedence. • Providing authoritative planning advice/comments on planning applications. • Providing authoritative and helpful planning advice on a range of economic, social and environmental issues and support to colleagues, partnership members and regional/national colleagues. • Experience of preparing and giving evidence to Development Plan public examinations and/or planning appeals public inquiries and informal hearings.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	• Self-starter/high motivation, highly professional approach, outgoing and diplomatic. • Ability to provide and be responsible for timely, authoritative and influential judgment in sometimes complex and stressful environments and to work to influence decision makers at a senior level. • Ability to work effectively with minimal supervision.

	• Excellent verbal and written skills and attention to detail, willing to work in an integrated and professional way beyond immediate delivery responsibilities. • Production of and responsibility for high quality influential work to agreed and sometimes challenging deadlines. • Ability/ confidence to work with and engage partners and team at all levels often in difficult and complex circumstances. • Providing leadership where this is required and appropriate. • Ability to organise and co-ordinate different areas of work and prioritise work. • Excellent networking, influencing and partnership skills. • Computer literacy, particularly in Word and other MS tools • Able to travel across the county and region and sometimes in remote areas and at various times of the day. • Personal resilience in a sometimes stressful environment. • Commitment to and promotion of diversity and high environmental performance in all aspects of working
KNOWLEDGE	• Detailed knowledge and interest of planning and design issues especially in a rural or protected landscape context. • Thorough, high professional level understanding of land use planning in England and a very good understanding of protected landscapes legislation practice and design issues. • Knowledge and experience in the application of Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. • Knowledge and experience of partnership working. • Commitment to and promotion of diversity in all aspects of working
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	Kent Values: • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make

	Our values enable us to build a culture that is: Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile Curious - constantly learning and evolving Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making
KENT DOWNS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE TEAM BEHAVIOURS AND VALUES	The Kent Downs National Landscape Team will: The approach of the National Landscape Team is to: • Build knowledge and partnerships to inform and realise the ambitions of the Management Plan. • Deliver great value to partners, providing authoritative advocacy, advice and support, catalysing activity amongst existing organisations and leading where appropriate. • Carry out a timely, inclusive and authoritative review of the National Landscape Management Plan on behalf of Local Authorities. • Lead on the delivery of the National Landscape • Management Plan and generate partnerships and collaboration in support. • Build capacity, motivation and professionalism and retain expertise and high quality, highly motivated staff. • Actively seek finance, partnerships and other resources to support the delivery of the Management Plan. In doing this the Team retains the highest standards of business management and relates positively and openly with partner organisations, individuals, businesses and civil society.
THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPES ASSOCIATION BEHAVIOURS AND VALUES	Our principles guide our behaviours and represents our personality: • Bring people together: We're not landowners. The only way to achieve our goal is with the support of strong, inclusive partnerships. So, we bring people and organisations together — supporting collaboration that not only protects and regenerates our landscapes but opens them up for all to truly enjoy.

- **Embrace the journey:** We're not perfect, but we are open with our approach to change. Talking about what we're doing towards nature recovery and restoration. And being transparent about our journey to becoming a more inclusive, equitable and diverse organisation – inside and out. Keeping a positive outlook by celebrating the work we've done so far.
- **Keep moving forwards:** Our landscapes are under threat from climate change and biodiversity loss. To keep moving forwards we need to protect and regenerate them. We help our community to understand the history of our landscapes to help shape them for the future. Evolving as nature does by always maintaining a forward-looking approach – working with agility, optimism and staying open to new ideas.
- **Listen and amplify:** Listen to the needs of the landscapes and our community. Amplifying different perspectives with policy makers and bringing new ideas and stories to the fore.
- **Our internal mantra**
"Landscapes shape people, people shape landscapes."

When people experience the landscapes, they are affected by it. It brings communities together and shapes our nation as a whole.

And the more people build a connection with the landscape, the more invested they become in shaping its future. It drives the passionate work of our partnerships, landowners and those who live and work in our landscapes. And invites teams of volunteers to protect it, restore it and make them the best they can be.

Our values

We are National Landscapes. Beautiful and thriving places all people feel they can be a part of:

- **Be inclusive**
 - We ARE inclusive, proactive and a force for good.
 - We are NOT assumptive, tokenistic or all talk
- **Be united**
 - We ARE confident, informed and convening
 - We are NOT small, dictators or cold
- **Be bright**
 - We ARE bright, adaptable with a sunny disposition
 - We are NOT stagnant, dull or comparative
- **Be sensorial**
 - We ARE sensorial, warm and full of feeling
 - We are NOT flat, lifeless or unimaginative
- **Be inquisitive**
 - We ARE curious, imaginative and ready with a question
 - We are NOT intrusive, stuck in the past or my-way-or-the-highway

