Kent County Council
Job Description: *Rural Officer*

Directorate:	**Growth, Environment and Transport**
Unit/Section:	**Environment**
Grade:	**KSH**
Responsible to:	**Natural Environment and Coast Manager**

Purpose of the Job:

To drive and influence sustainable and balanced land use that ensures the security of food and resource production alongside other land use needs.

To develop and coordinate the Kent Farming and Food Network, and other collaborative action, that supports and facilitates healthy, sustainable and resilient farming, rural businesses and rural communities in Kent.

Main duties and responsibilities:

1. Drive forward and influence planning, policy and programme decisions that support sustainable rural land use that balances food and resources production with other land needs for nature recovery, energy production, infrastructure and development. Promote climate resilience in the future Kent rural landscape and the services and businesses that rely on it through this planning, policy and programme work.

2. Develop and coordinate the Kent Farming and Food Network, and input to established partnerships and initiatives, to deliver against the following priorities for rural Kent:
    - Market development – for rural businesses and producers to access supply chains and find new routes to market.
    - Employment and skills – rural employment and skills programming, rural and land-based employment and diversity in the rural workforce.
    - Innovation and diversification –technology and techniques to improve the productivity and sustainability of food and resource production; new business and tourism/recreation offers in rural areas; digital connectivity.
    - Health and wellbeing – social, health and wellbeing challenges of rural communities and accessibility in rural areas.
    - Rural crime – waste crime and fly tipping, livestock worrying, trespass and antisocial behavior.

3. Support and facilitate collaborative action that drives a sustainable agricultural and rural economy, that not only meets the economic and social needs of the county, but also seeks opportunities to deliver environmental best practice. Including but not limited to collaborative action which:
    - increases the number of farms employing nature-friendly farming practices, sensitive land management and delivering targeted action for nature recovery
    - enables farmland and rural businesses to respond to climate change-induced pressures and maximizes the use of nature-based solutions to address these.
    - prevents pollution and supports improvements in soil and water health.

- reduces water demand and addresses water security risks for farming and other business needs.
- increases the extent of nature-based solutions and ecosystem services delivered across the rural landscape.

4. Identify and evaluate new financial facilities, grants and mechanisms that can be used to support a sustainable future for Kent's producers, rural businesses and rural communities.

5. Develop and maintain a robust rural evidence base to provide information that will support funding bids, inform decision-making and develop policy and plans.

6. Represent Kent's rural interests in national conversations and policy/programme development within agreed KCC positions.

7. Act as a point of expertise and advise and support senior officers and Cabinet Members in respect of rural matters.

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: *Rural Officer*

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 in a relevant field.
EXPERIENCE	• Experience of developing solution-led projects and action in the rural and/or agricultural sector. • Experience of rural land-use planning. • Experience of developing supply chains and promoting local products/businesses to markets. • Experience of creating employment opportunities/pipelines and linking skills markets to these. • Strong track record of partnership development and collaborative working. • Experience of working within a political establishment and working with elected members.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	• Strong influencing and persuasive skills. • Excellent communication and collaboration skills. • Innovative and problem solving. • Ability to identify and develop new commercial and economic opportunities. • Drive to secure funding to deliver change.
KNOWLEDGE	• Strong and experienced-based knowledge of rural based business and/or food production. • Strong understanding of the economic, societal and environmental challenges facing rural businesses and communities. • Strong understanding of the legislation and policy relating to land use planning, agriculture and food production. • Extensive and experience-based knowledge of the key partners and stakeholders in the agricultural and rural sector. • Excellent knowledge of available funding, grants and investment routes – in particular those open to farmers, land managers and rural-based businesses.
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