

# KENT GRADUATE PROGRAMME

## YOUR APPLICATION PACK

TO AN  
EXCITING  
FUTURE

**RECRUITING LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
PROFESSIONALS OF THE FUTURE**

Apply online:  
[kent.gov.uk/jobs/starting-your-career/  
kent-graduate-programme](https://kent.gov.uk/jobs/starting-your-career/kent-graduate-programme)

Closing date: **11th August 2023**

**Your Natural Environment and  
Coast Stream application pack  
includes:**

Introduction to  
Kent County Council

Job description

Recruitment selection criteria

Vacancy timetable

Working for Kent County Council



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July 2023

## APPLICANT INFORMATION PACK

Dear Candidate

### Application for the post of Graduate Biodiversity Officer, Natural Environment and Coast Team

Thank you for your interest in this challenging but rewarding role. The successful candidate will be offered a position, ensuring the right skills, experience and knowledge mix exist in the team.

**IMPORTANT NOTE** to candidates **BEFORE** making an application:

- You must provide all relevant information in the online application itself; a CV is not required for this position and will not be reviewed as part of the selection process.
- You must list a full employment history and explain all gaps in employment.
- Please list your qualifications, listing the highest first: provide the level of qualification; name of subject; the grade and year of achievement. For example, BSc (Hons) Forensic Science (2:1); HND Bio-medical Science (distinction) (2017); GCSE (O-level) English Literature (C) (2017)
- When making your application, refer to the **person specification** contained in this application pack and use the 'reason for application' to demonstrate how your past experience, knowledge or skills and achievements will transfer to the position you are applying for (please provide examples). You may also want to use this section to describe why the role appeals to you and how this role fits with your long-term career aspirations. Your application form (and CV if you uploaded one) will be used by the Graduate Team to decide whether to shortlist you for the next stage of the selection process.

## Eligibility Criteria for Apprenticeships

### What are the requirements to apply?

To apply for the Kent Graduate Programme, you will need the following qualifications:

- a 2:2 undergraduate Degree or equivalent
- GCSE's in English and Mathematics at Grade A-C (or Grade 4 and above) or equivalent.

For some of our graduate programmes you may require a specialist Degree, but this will be stated clearly in the Person Specification for the role you are applying for.

There is no upper age limit when applying to any stream of the Kent Graduate Programme.

### Apprenticeship Funding

Our Graduate Programme consists of an embedded apprenticeship qualification. To be eligible for apprenticeship funding, you'll need to have resided in the UK, the British Overseas Territories, or Crown Dependencies (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) continuously for at least three years prior to the start of the apprenticeship programme.

This is to ensure Kent County Council is compliant with the [apprenticeship funding rules](#). These are the rules employers must follow to get funding for apprenticeship training in England.

**Unfortunately, if you do not meet the above residency requirement, we will be unable to progress your application for the Graduate Programme.**

### Do you accept applications from non-UK citizens?

Our Graduate Programme consists of an embedded apprenticeship qualification so to be eligible for apprenticeship funding as a non-UK national you will need to:

- Have been resident in the UK and Islands for at least the previous three- year period on the first day of the apprenticeship.
- Your residence in the UK and Islands has not during any part of that period been wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education.

- You have permission granted by the UK government to live in the UK and such permission is not for education purposes only; or you have obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS.

This is to ensure Kent County Council is compliant with the [apprenticeship funding rules](#). These are the rules employers must follow to get funding for apprenticeship training and assessing apprentices in England.

Further details on Right to Work in the UK can be found on the UK [Visas and Immigration](#) page.

If you have any queries regarding your eligibility for the programme, please contact the Kent Graduate Programme Team at [kgp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kgp@kent.gov.uk).

## **International Degrees**

If you have a Degree from another country, you must be able to provide evidence that your Degree is equivalent to our 2:2 entry requirements.

You are responsible for providing documentation and meeting any associated costs; we will normally ask to see evidence of your 2:2 Degree (or equivalent) during our pre-appointment checks.

The [UK National Information Centre](#) for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC) provides information about the comparability of different international qualifications.

## **First Sift Recruitment Exercise/Shortlisting**

Following the closing date, applicants will be invited to participate in a first sift activity. Please make a note of the dates of the first sift recruitment activity in your diary.

Application forms and the first sift exercise will be reviewed by the graduate team and a scoring matrix will be used to identify those candidates that demonstrate through the online application form and first sift exercise how they meet the selection criteria for the role.

## The Interview

Candidates that are successful following the first sift recruitment exercise will be informed as soon as possible and invited for interview by telephone and in writing. Please make a diary note of the interview date(s).

The successful candidates will be advised in writing as soon as possible after the last interview. You may ask for feedback **after** the decision has been made.

# Introduction to Kent County Council

Visit our website at [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

We are the UK's largest local authority, with a workforce in excess of 30,000 people, including maintained schools, serving a population of 1.6 million. We have various offices in central locations and a large number of service establishments throughout Kent; our corporate office is based in Maidstone.

More than two thirds of our workforce provide services directly to the public – such as domiciliary Care Workers, Classroom Assistants, Social Workers, Teachers, and Occupational Therapists etc.

Our annual budget covers a huge range of services. This translates into a host of interesting roles and career paths awaiting those who want to work in a leading- edge public sector organisation.

## Aims and Objectives

Our focus is to work as one council to design and deliver a cohesive, modern public service offer for all Kent's residents, businesses and communities. This will bring together change projects consistently across the council and create organisational design opportunities to transform the way we work, including our people, assets, technology, structures and service delivery.

Success in delivering this aspiration will be determined using the following criteria:

- Working beyond the limit of organisational and service boundaries
- Thinking beyond the limit of our statutory powers
- Building capacity to provide sector and system leadership
- Delivering at both strategic and local scale
- Supporting economic security
- Delivering a cohesive service offer
- Flexibly uses its assets as part of public service design and delivery

[Framing Kent's Future](#) is our top-level council strategy for 2022 to 2026. It sets out the priorities that we will focus on over the next four years to tackle the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that the county is facing. Through delivering these priorities, our aim is to improve life in Kent and build a solid foundation for the county's future success.

# Political Arrangements

The County Council has 81 councillors and elections take place every four years.

The political composition of the County Council is as follows:

Conservative	61 members
Labour (including Labour and Co-operative party)	7 members
Liberal Democrat	5 members
Green Party	5 Members
Independent Groups	2 members

The Leader of Kent County Council is Roger Gough.

There is a Cabinet of Executive Members which meets regularly to debate policy issues and make key decisions. The cabinet comprises of:

Roger Gough	Leader of Kent County Council
Peter Oakford	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services
Clair Bell	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
Susan Carey	Cabinet Member for Environment
Sue Chandler	Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services
Mike Hill OBE	Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Rory Love	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
David Brazier	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Shellina Prendergast	Cabinet Member for Communications and People
Derek Murphy	Cabinet Member for Economic Development



# Structure of KCC

The structure of the organisation is as shown [here](#)

The Senior Officer team consists of six Corporate Directors. For more information on the Corporate Management Team please follow this [link](#)

The directorates are as follows:

## **Growth, Environment and Transport**

The Directorate comprises a range of key frontline, strategic, policy and commercial functions, and plays a major role in making Kent a better place to live, work and visit. The services provided, and the future the directorate helps to shape, affects every household in Kent. This includes strategic responsibility for the future of the county in terms of planning, economic development, transport policy, and major transport improvement schemes, waste disposal and recycling services. In addition, GET manages country parks; libraries; and delivers enforcement services including trading standards, community safety and emergency planning.

### Responsible for services that include:

Highways, Transportation & Waste, Regulatory Services, Economic Development, Community Safety & Emergency Planning, Libraries, Registration & Archives, Sport & Country Parks, Arts including Kent Film Office, Development Planning, Planning Applications, North Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Flood Risk & Environment, Sustainability & Climate Change and Heritage Conservation

## **Adult Social Care and Health**

The Directorate commissions and provides a range of services to improve outcomes for older and vulnerable adults, including those with mental health issues or disabilities, and their families. The Directorate supports vulnerable adults to live independently by promoting their wellbeing and supporting their independence. Services for adult mental health and learning disability already work in integrated teams with NHS colleagues and as a key partner in the Kent and Medway STP we are developing multi-disciplinary teams within communities to support local care.

### Responsible for services that include:

Adults Central Referral Unit, Adult Community Teams, Safeguarding and quality, Kent Enablement at Home, Sensory and Autistic Spectrum Conditions Service, Integrated/Registered Care Centres, Day Centres, Community Learning Disability Teams, In-House Provision and Mental Health Services.

## **Children, Young People and Education**

This Directorate combines and integrates the statutory responsibilities of Specialist Children's Services together with Education services and the targeted and universal services for children and young people within Early Help and Preventative Services. There is a strong focus on alignment of resources to help ensure achievement of one of the key County Council strategic outcomes: 'Every child and young person in Kent gets the best start in life'. To improve outcomes for children and young people, services within the Directorate are working together with relevant partners to deliver the vision set out in the Children and Young People's Services Integration Programme.

### Responsible for services that include:

Children's Social Care, Adoption & Fostering, Standards & School Improvement, Skills & Employability, Early Years and Childcare, Provision Planning, Fair Access, Educational Psychology, SEN Assessment & Placement, Youth Justice, Outdoor Education Centres, Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, Inclusion & Attendance, Early Intervention and Community Learning & Skills and Disabled Children and Young People Teams.

## **Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department**

### **Chief Executive's Department (David Cockburn, Chief Executive Officer for KCC)**

#### Responsible for services that include:

- Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance
- Finance
- Governance and Law
- Strategic Commissioning

### **Deputy Chief Executive's Department (Amanda Beer, Deputy Chief Executive)**

#### Responsible for services that include:

- Infrastructure
- Technology
- HR/OD
- Marketing and Resident Experience
- Health and Safety
- Business and Client Relationships
- Strategic Reset Programme

# Job Description

<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Graduate Biodiversity Officer</b>
<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Growth, Environment &amp; Transport</b>
<b>Unit/Section:</b>	<b>Natural Environment &amp; Coast</b>
<b>Grade:</b>	<b>KR8</b>
<b>Responsible to:</b>	<b>Senior Biodiversity Officer</b>

## **Purpose of the Job:**

Kent County Council provides professional and independent advice to the majority of the county's planning authorities via the Ecological Advice Service. The service advises on the ecological implications of development, strategic planning and other proposals and ensures the planning authority meets wildlife legislation, policy requirements and duties and effectively protects, manages and enhances the biodiversity of Kent.

The Graduate Biodiversity Officer role provides support to the Ecological Advice Service team, whilst developing their own skills and abilities in this field of work so that they may be in the position to assume a Biodiversity Officer position in the future.

With the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain late in 2023, this graduate position provides an exciting opportunity for a graduate to be involved in the roll out of this new policy within the development management process and develop relevant skills and experience.

The post will also support other project work undertaken by the Natural Environment and Coast team and therefore provides an opportunity to develop skills and experience across a breadth of strategic work.

## **Main duties and responsibilities:**

1. Ensure the Biodiversity Officers have all the necessary information required to assess the ecological impacts of planning applications by validating information submitted. This includes downloading reports, checking the correct reports and complete information has been providing and digitising the sites on GIS.
2. Ensure complete records of services provided by the team are maintained by managing the planning applications database and providing monthly and quarterly reports, so that the service manager and clients can see where advice has been provided and manage use of the service accordingly.
3. Support the provision of ecological advice by reviewing simple applications and conditions and advising whether they meet legislative and policy requirements and duties.
4. Support the continuous improvement of the team by maintaining and updating standardised templates and reviewing outcomes of the advice service.
5. Ensure the advice offered by the team is based on the most up to date policies by managing the local plan policies database.
6. Ensure queries to, and contact with, the team is dealt with efficiently and correctly by managing the shared mailbox and directing enquiries to the appropriate team member.
7. Provide support and capacity, under the direction of the Team Manager, to the strategic projects of the team, including Plan Bee (KCC's Pollinator Action Plan), Plan Tree (KCC's Tree Establishment Strategy), Making Space for Nature (developing the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy) and the Kent Nature Partnership.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what his/her 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: Graduate Biodiversity 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.

**As part of this Graduate Programme there is a requirement to undertake an Associate Project Manager Level 4 Apprenticeship therefore, we are unable to accept applications from those with an equivalent/higher level qualification in this area.**

	CRITERIA
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 2:2 degree or equivalent in any natural environment discipline.</li><li>▪ GCSE Grade A-C (4-9 or equivalent) in English Language.</li><li>▪ GCSE Grade A-C (4-9 or equivalent) in Mathematics.</li><li>▪ Willingness to gain accreditation for the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)</li></ul>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Proven interest in the environment.</li><li>▪ Practical experience of an environmental field through, for example, further education and/or volunteering.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience of working as part of a team and demonstrable ability to develop effective working relationships.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to find and source relevant information, understand and analyse data and can demonstrate an attention to detail.</li> <li>▪ Good verbal and written skills, demonstrating an ability to effectively communicate with a wide range of partners and customers.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrable ability to use GIS and good knowledge and experience of MS Excel databases.</li> <li>▪ Organised with ability to independently work to task and process, demonstrating a strong work effort by delivering work to time and quality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>KNOWLEDGE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An understanding of ecological issues and the pressures facing biodiversity.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of environmental legislation and related policy.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of habitat and protected species survey requirements and the tools and techniques used for assessing development impact.</li> <li>▪ An understanding of the ecology of Kent.</li> </ul>

**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.

# The Natural Environment & Coast Graduate Programme – An Overview

## What's Involved

The Natural Environment and Coast Stream offers a fantastic opportunity to start your local government ecologist career. There has not been a more exciting time to be working in local government, with the 2021 Environment Act placing local government right at the heart of action to recover nature. The graduate role will provide the opportunity to be involved in work across the whole breadth of the Act's nature provisions.

Kent County Council provides professional and independent advice to the majority of the county's planning authorities via the Ecological Advice Service. The service advises on the ecological implications of development, strategic planning and other proposals and ensures the planning authority meets wildlife legislation, policy requirements and duties and effectively protects, manages and enhances the biodiversity of Kent.

As a Graduate Biodiversity Officer, you will provide support to the Ecological Advice Service team, whilst developing your own skills and abilities in this field of work in order to meet the requirements of a Biodiversity Officer role in the future.

With the introduction of the Act's mandatory biodiversity net gain late in 2023, this graduate position provides the opportunity to be involved in the roll out of this new policy within the development management process and ensure that we meaningfully protect, manage and enhance our rich and diverse biodiversity.

There will also be the opportunity to support work on the landmark Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy and deliver discrete projects for the county council's pollinator action plan, Plan Bee, and our ambitious tree establishment strategy for the county, Plan Tree.

The Natural Environment and Coast team is expanding to deliver for Kent's biodiversity – we need a dynamic graduate with a passion for recovering nature, the commitment to enhance the



team's work and the drive to make the most of this opportunity to develop their career within this sector.

### **Length of stream**

2 years

### **Salary**

You will receive a starting salary of £28,598 which will increase as you progress.

### **Location**

We are currently operating hybrid working giving the flexibility for individuals to work from home or in one of our reconfigured office buildings. We will support you to work in a hybrid way, with the necessary induction, management and equipment.

### **Training and Development**

The job will provide you with invaluable on-the-job experience of working within the public sector and offers extensive training and development opportunities you won't find elsewhere.

While on the programme, you will be provided with the right support to help you achieve the Associate Project Manager Level 4 apprenticeship.

You will also be supported in applying for qualifying membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. And during your two year stream, will have the chance to continue your professional development in order to apply for enhanced membership status in the future.

We will commit to your professional development and will support you in your training as you develop your skills and knowledge.

## Entry Requirements

- 2:2 degree or equivalent in any Natural Environment discipline.
- GCSE in Mathematics - grade A to C or equivalent (new grades 4-9)
- GCSE in English language - grade A to C or equivalent (new grades 4-9)

# Working for Kent County Council

## **Salary and Notice**

This post is offered as a permanent contract.

The appointment will be subject to 1 months' notice.

KCC pays salaries to bank accounts on the 25th of the month unless this falls on a weekend or public holiday.

## **Terms and Conditions**

The appointment is subject to the terms and conditions contained within the Kent Scheme of Conditions of Service.

27 days annual leave is provided excluding Bank Holidays. You will also receive paid time off for public holidays plus a concessionary day at Christmas.

## **Pensions**

The post holder will have the choice of contributing to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Further details will be available for the successful applicant.

## **Whole Time Employment**

The person appointed will be required to devote their whole-time service to the work of Kent County Council and should not engage in any other business without the express consent of the County Council.

## **Health and Safety Policy**

The County Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer, and will take positive action to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and other persons who may be affected by its operations, by providing safe working conditions and a healthy and safe working environment.

## **Sickness Provision**

Our sickness benefit scheme exceeds statutory requirements. Actual paid absence depends on how long you have worked for KCC and the circumstances of your absence. For example, after 6 years' service your benefit would be 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay.

## **Training and Development**

KCC is committed to supporting staff to reach their full potential through annual appraisal and personal development plans, enhanced by a range of career development opportunities.

Managers from KR9 to KR20 will be required to undertake our Kent Manager standard programme within the first year of employment.

## **Green Travel**

Our Green Travel Plan is exploring alternative modes of transport to improve travel choice and reduce congestion and pollution. This includes:

- Car sharing and emergency taxi home.
- Discounted fares, free tickets, trip planning and improved travel information.
- Pool car and bikes

## **Other benefits**

KCC offers a range of family friendly policies including:

- A generous maternity scheme
- Emergency leave
- Parental leave
- Special leave
- Help Fund – all employees have the opportunity both to pay into the fund and to apply for help from it when experiencing financial hardship
- An in-house confidential counselling service and Occupational Health Service
- Kent Rewards - discounts at over 1,200 retailers ranging from reduced rates at Health Clubs to house and car insurance to holidays

## **Living in Kent**

With great schools, vibrant cities, golden beaches and stunning countryside Kent has lots to offer you. Find out more about [locations in Kent](#).

# Vacancy Timetable

**Closing Date for Receipt of Applications:** This post will close at midnight on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

**Candidates will be invited to complete a first sift activity:** Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**Final Stage Interviews:** Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend interview on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> or Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**Start Date:** Successful applicants will join KCC on w/c 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 (This is subject to change)

## How to Respond

To apply please visit [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) to complete an online application form.