CONTEXT STATEMENT

Job title: Technical Officer - Countryside Access
Directorate: Communities
Location: Area Operations Hub – Oxford
Reports to: Principal Officer - Countryside Access

Introduction
Oxfordshire has a wonderful balance between beautiful Cotswold countryside and quaint villages and towns against the urban dynamic of the world renowned City of Oxford and surrounding market towns. It is a thriving county with one of the fastest growing economies in the country with a rapidly growing science sector and the base for many national and internationally recognised companies and organisations. As a result of this growth, the county has seen significant investment in both large and small infrastructure schemes in the last few years which has required changes to the way the Council works and engages with its residents and businesses.

Communities
The Communities Directorate consists of approximately 800 staff supporting the County’s Highway, Waste, Property, Environment, Strategic Planning and Safety functions with many more people engaged in service delivery through our key supply chain or partner organisations.

The newly formed Communities Directorate plays a key role in delivering the council’s vision to have
- Thriving Communities – where every community thrives and everyone can play an active part;
- Thriving People – Where everyone leads safe, healthy lives while people with the greatest need are cared for;
- Thriving Economy – Which creates jobs and homes for the future.

To do this we are seeking staff who will “do the best they can for residents” by;
- working together in a supportive and honest way
- striving to find the best solutions
- being open to change and doing things differently.

Infrastructure Delivery Directorate
The services we deliver to residents and businesses of Oxfordshire include:
- Highways maintenance (including winter maintenance)
- Highway records
- Highway improvements and construction
- Tree inspection and maintenance
- Flood risk management
- Road space management (including traffic control centre)
- Waste management
- Parking services
- Countryside Access Management including two National Trails.
Area Operations

The Area Operations service consists of three teams – North, South and Hub. This service and associated teams are responsible for the delivery of all local highway maintenance activity from grass cutting, to pothole filling, to gully emptying, as well as road safety, incident response, management of countryside access, tree management and delivery of minor improvement schemes.

The teams are the first point of contact for the community regarding local highway issues and concerns, as well as enabling and supporting communities with their own initiatives and direct delivery.

Technical Officer (Countryside Access)

The post will report directly to the Principal Countryside Access Officer who will offer line management and guidance on technical, legal, and public rights of way specific matters whilst ensuring a county-wide consistency of approach in partnership with the Principal Officers Quality Assurance (North and South). The post-holder will work closely with four area-based Officers (Countryside Access) and the Technical Officer (Countryside Tasks). It will also work in close partnership with the Technical Officer (Countryside Access Strategy and Development), based within the Planning and Place Directorate.

This context statement is designed to be considered in conjunction with the generic job description for the Technical Officer role. Its purpose is to highlight the key work areas specifically related to Countryside Access and Public Rights of Way not contained within the generic JD:

Key work areas and duties:

- The protection, maintenance and improvement of the public rights of way and countryside access network
- Technical support for Officers (CA) alongside professional support by Principal Officer (CA) including escalation of complicated, sensitive or enforcement issues.
- Input into major development schemes in partnership with Principal Officer and Technical Officer (CASD)
- Technical support for Principal Officer role, including procedure development, leading on FOI/EIR requests, complaint research etc
- Development mitigation delivery - in conjunction with Technical Officer (CASD), ensuring coordinated delivery of projects on the ground arising from developer funding such as s106
- Lead on City PRoW - liaising with Oxford Direct Services, Oxford City Council and internal Countryside Access staff on network management within Oxford City
- County-wide oversight on volunteer coordination including inter-group learning, newsletter, volunteer forum etc. Maintain links to Principal Officer (Volunteer Coordination) to share expertise, ideas and integration of volunteer effort
- Development, coordination and implementation of proactive network survey programmes, for example bridge inspections
- Work with PO (CA) and TO (CT) to input into delivery of capital and additional externally funded schemes, primarily bridges, including liaison with appointed contractors regarding design, cost and delivery
- Work in conjunction with TO (CASD) in delivery of Access Land, with specific responsibility for practical input, for example furniture and surface improvements
- Public information management including oversight of web content
• Assistance with leave cover / backfilling vacant posts, for example district planning, priority 1 issues etc
• Lead on reviewing current protocols to ensure all processes are applied consistently, reviewed regularly and fit for purpose
• Support the TO (CT) in drawing together programmes of work including vegetation management programmes and preparing contracts for such work where required.

Selection criteria

Educational achievements, Qualifications, Training and Knowledge:
• A degree level qualification in a relevant subject and/or evidence of vocational development in a directly relevant subject area that demonstrates competent knowledge of current rights of way legislation and procedures as part of the wider countryside and agricultural environment
• At least three years’ experience in public rights of way and/or countryside access work, including successfully liaising and negotiating with landowners, user groups and local communities, and managing and prioritising a complex and dynamic workload
• Understanding and experience of project management within a rights of way context; developing and overseeing significant projects, for example bridges, from inception, through design to delivery as part of a revenue or capital funded programme
• Understanding of the planning system and how it can impact on public rights of way and what can be done to limit negative impacts; and how developments can provide infrastructure and wider access improvements
• Experienced user of ICT for office, site and presentations including normal MSOffice products and GIS based databases such as Countryside Access Management System or similar
• Competent in the use and interpretation of Ordnance Survey and GIS based maps in the field and the personal mobility and willingness to make unaccompanied site visits including walking up to 10 miles per day over all parts of the Oxfordshire public rights of way and countryside access network throughout the year and in all weathers.

Job related aptitude and skills:
• Self-motivated with the ability to act on own initiative and as part of a team, with excellent time and priority management
• Proven ability to work and communicate effectively with a wide range of people and organisations, including colleagues, local councils, members of the public, user and community groups, farmers and land managers, and to deal with a variety of challenging situations in an appropriate and effective manner
• Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines.

Special Requirements
• Hold a full driving licence and have access to own vehicle for use at work
• Ability and willingness to work outside normal office hours including occasional evenings and weekends with time off in lieu.

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