

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	County Highways Arboriculturist		
Directorate	Infrastructure and Transport		
Reporting to	Service Manager Highways Risk		
Grade	9		
Evaluation ref:	AU0315	Job ref:	Family EST09
Role purpose			
<p>Will contribute to the provision of a highway tree inspection and management service to the public by applying a uniform and consistent approach. As a key member of the team will be expected to promote the image of the Council and embrace a culture of customer care to ensure successful delivery of a quality highway tree management service.</p>			
Responsibilities			
<p>Manage and responsible for all highway tree management, inspections and maintenance, including establishing policies, maintaining and disseminating operating procedures in relation to the Highway Tree Policy, Health and Safety (risk assessments and working practices) to ensure consistent and accurate information is cascaded to all staff.</p>			
<p>Manage the Highway Trees Project and responsible for a £1m works budget which is allocated for the tree maintenance works. Monitor the budget to ensure that works are allocated to the correct budget.</p>			
<p>Manage performance indicators to be reported at director level. Performance indicators relate to the provision of the Highway Trees Project. Investigate poor performance and implement improvement plans.</p>			
<p>Provide policies to ensure Somerset Council fulfils its statutory obligations to maintain the highway in a safe condition (through production of the Highway Tree Policy).</p>			
<p>Manage a fully integrated tree management and maintenance service throughout the County. Manage a program of prioritised tree inspections, carry out detailed surveys of highway trees to assess their condition and identify any potential hazards or defects through a process of quantified risk assessment.</p>			
<p>Identify necessary tree maintenance works through the above process. Draw up detailed work specifications, tender and let contracts to specialised tree surgery contractors. Manage the activities of contractors engaged on tree surgery works on Somerset Council trees to ensure compliance with Council Policy, Health and Safety legislation and BS 3998 British Standard Recommendation for Tree Work.</p>			

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Manage pre-planned and reactive work programs and co-ordinate emergency tree surgery works in the event of severe weather events.

Provide advice on technical matters and legal position about trees and general horticultural matters and has extensive contact with the public, Area Highway offices, Property Services, District and Parish Councils and other bodies including statutory undertakers.

Develop, manage and maintain a tree inventory and condition survey of all trees situated on highway land. Liaise with and supervise the activities of the Highway Inspectors engaged in this exercise. Provide input into the Highway Asset Management Plan as required.

Provide horticultural advice within the service and liaise with Highways Development Control on the adoption of new landscaped areas. Estimate and administer Section 38 commuted sums for the future maintenance of the landscaped areas within and adjoining the highway.

Manage highway tree related insurance claims against the Council for damage allegedly caused by its trees and liaise with insurance companies, Structural Engineers, Loss Adjusters and Solicitors. Advise on the Council's liability and mitigates claims when possible and provide a defense in court (if required).

Undertake budget responsibility for tree maintenance work on highway land, District Council agency agreements and Highway tree inventory.

Make recommendations and prepare reports on Somerset Council policy for highway trees and verge maintenance for Senior Management and Committee.

Liaise with the District Councils on shared tree matters.

Manage a team of 6 staff. Manage, direct, supervise and train staff and undertake regular performance reviews. Direct the tree contractors that undertake tree works on behalf of Somerset Council.

Manage Somerset Council's response to Ash Dieback within the county and provides advice to adjacent landowners.

Manage and administers multiple enquiries regarding highway trees (email, Confirm, telephone) from third parties, e.g. members of the public, emergency services, Parish Councils, etc.

Impact

Contacts & Relationships

Provide specialist advice and information to members of the public, Area Highway Managers, District Council Officers, County and District Councillors and Parish

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Councils.

Regular contact and negotiation with solicitors, loss adjusters and structural engineers in connection with insurance claims.

Frequent contact and negotiation with Contractors are required, as is an ability to maintain effective business relationships.

Personal qualities required include diplomacy, negotiating and persuasive skills and the ability to communicate across a broad spectrum.

Internal contacts include advice to Highways Development Control, Highway Management, County Solicitor, Insurance Section, Finance Directorate and Historic Heritage.

Will represent Somerset Council at regional and national level.

Resources

Manage a team of 6 staff, office and site based, including recruitment, motivating, training and developing both new and existing staff.

Budget responsibility for tree maintenance works on highway land. The expenditure varies each year but is in the region of £1M per annum.
Advise and provide technical guidance on the highway trees policy to ensure compliance with Somerset Council's statutory duties.

Insurance claims for subsidence to properties caused by Somerset Council trees may involve sums up to £150,000. Claims for personal injury can far exceed this figure.

Will manage approximately 400 - 500 enquiries from third parties each year.

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
Knowledge of Local Government policies and Procedures	X		
Knowledge of tree related legislation and the law	X		
Knowledge of pests and diseases	X		
Knowledge of the planning process related to trees	X		
Knowledge and experience of utilising tree survey software, Microsoft Office, GIS, asset management		X	

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software, and other software and systems such as Confirm			
Experience			
Significant experience (at least five years practical) of tree assessment prescribing appropriate arboricultural management	X		
A minimum of five years professional experience, post qualification	X		
Experience of Graphic Information Systems (GIS) and tree surveying data recording IT systems		X	
Experience of project management		X	
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Experience and knowledge of landscape and green infrastructure delivery as a component of urban design		X	
Experience of developing effective partnerships with key stakeholders and external bodies.		X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
Level 6 professional qualification in arboriculture or equivalent level of experience	X		
Professional Tree inspection Qualification	X		
Tree quantification qualifications e.g. QTRA, VALID		X	
Professional/Technician member of the Arboricultural Association		X	
Chartered Arboriculturist/Forester with The Institute of Chartered Foresters.		X	
Skills			
This role has been identified as public facing in accordance with Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2017; the requirement to fulfil all spoken aspects of the role with confidence in English applies.	X		
Full driving license and ability to travel independently	X		
Working Conditions			
<p>This role involves working within a dynamic and supportive local authority environment. Candidates should be prepared for the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Hours: Standard working hours are 37, with occasional requirements for evening or weekend work to meet project deadlines or attend community events. 			

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- **Location:** The primary work location is County Hall, with opportunities for remote work as per organisational policies.
- **Travel:** Involves frequent travel across rural areas of Somerset and lone working on occasion.
- **Work Environment:** The role involves working both independently and as part of a team, with access to modern office facilities and resources.
- **Health and Safety:** Adherence to all health and safety regulations is mandatory, ensuring a safe working environment for all employees.

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Responsibilities

Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practice.

Deliver the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do, ensuring team members are also aware of their responsibilities and maintaining their understanding that Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: July 2025