



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council

## **Biodiversity Officer**

# **Information for Candidates**

**May 2023**

## **1. The Position**

The Council is seeking applications from dynamic, creative and motivated individuals with relevant experience for the position of Biodiversity Officer (analogous to Executive Scientist Grade).

It is suggested that the Biodiversity Officers will have a cross departmental role in providing advice and information on biodiversity for each section. It is intended that the Biodiversity Officer will work closely with the Heritage Officer as part of a Heritage Team.

## **2. Role, Duties & Responsibilities**

The main ethos of the post is to be positive and proactive about biodiversity and the development of the county, putting structures in place for the protection of biodiversity and increasing awareness. The position may from time to time require work to be conducted/completed outside of normal office hours. The position will involve day-to-day administrative duties. The salary scale for this post will be analogous to the Executive Scientist Grade pay scale.

It is intended that the main work of the biodiversity officer will be divided into two strands:

- i. The development and implementation of a County Biodiversity Plan. This should involve extensive public and stakeholder consultation which focuses on information gathering, awareness raising and providing best practice methods and support to enable groups and individuals to implement their own projects.
- ii. The second part of the role is to establish the responsibilities for the County Council as they relate to biodiversity and to prepare a work plan for this area. This may involve the introduction of appraisal projects, developing information bulletins on areas of biodiversity that certain departments are likely to encounter, or physical projects in parks and lands etc in the care of the Council.

The key responsibilities of the post include, but are not limited to:

- Prepare, manage and implement a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan in parallel with the County Heritage Plan and with cross referencing to the County Climate Action Plan.
- Establish a County Biodiversity Forum/Working Group within the wider context of the County Donegal Heritage Forum.
- Facilitate the implementation of government initiatives in relation to biodiversity and national plans and programmes that are developed to support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan, such as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan;

- Advise the Local Authority on biodiversity related issues and the Authority's obligations in relation to protecting biodiversity (conducting Appropriate Assessments is beyond the scope of this role);
- Work with Local Authority staff to assist in advancing the restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems and support ecosystem services in within the Local Authority Area;
- Assist Local Authority departments in integrating biodiversity into their actions and policies, for example through training, supporting information dissemination;
- Promote new biodiversity initiatives based on best conservation practice;
- Work with Local Authority led projects and provide advice to colleagues on the management of ecological resources such as urban woodlands, wetlands, parks, verges, wild flora grasslands and open areas in a biodiversity-friendly manner;
- Raise awareness of biodiversity, natural capital and ecosystems services and issues affecting biodiversity in the Local Authority, including climate change with a broad range of groups;
- Commission biodiversity related research, audits and surveys and provide data obtained to the NBDC and NPWS in a suitable format for reporting purposes.
- Apply for and deliver biodiversity projects under the Heritage Council funding and National Biodiversity Action Plan and other sources available sources of funding.
- Work closely with the County Heritage Office on a programme of public engagement for biodiversity through Field Clubs, Environmental Groups/NGOs, National Heritage Week, Summer Schools and other public events.
- Be an active participant/member in the County Heritage Forum, Culture Division, Creative Ireland team and Council climate action group.

The particular duties and responsibilities attached to the post may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or level of responsibilities entailed. The post holder may therefore be required to perform duties appropriate to the post, other than those detailed above and to take instruction from and report to an appropriate officer or such designated officer as may be assigned from time to time by Donegal County Council.

### **3. QUALIFICATIONS & Requirements of Post**

#### **(a) Character:**

Candidates shall be of good character.

**(b) Health:**

Candidates shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Successful candidates will be required to undergo a medical examination carried out by the Council's Occupational Health Doctor prior to appointment.

**(c) Education, Training, Experience, Etc.**

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms –

- (a) Hold a recognised degree (at least Level 8 in the National Framework of Qualifications) in a subject relevant to biodiversity including but not limited to environmental science, ecology, earth/natural sciences, zoology, botany or natural resources management;
- (b) Have at least five years relevant satisfactory experience of scientific work in biodiversity, sustainable development goals, biodiversity, energy and climate action;
- (c) Possess a high standard of technical training relevant to the areas of natural sciences and natural resources management;

**AND**

- (d) Have a satisfactory knowledge of public service organisation or the ability to acquire such knowledge.

**(d) Desirable Skills and Experience**

The ideal candidate will:

- Have experience of habitat survey and mapping, data management and analysis methods;
- Be able to work within a multi-disciplinary team;
- Be capable of working on his/her own initiative;
- Possess good interpersonal and communication skills and have the ability to engage with stakeholders;
- Possess good organisation and IT skills;
- Have a knowledge of health & safety legislation and safety regulations;
- Have an ability to manage deadlines and effectively handle multiple tasks;
- Be able to demonstrate competence in the following areas – Strategic Ability, Personal Effectiveness and Delivering Quality Outcomes and Ensuring Compliance

## **4. Particulars of the Post**

### **(a) General**

Donegal County Council proposes to create a panel of qualified candidates for the position of Biodiversity Officer from which it will fill any vacancy that may arise.

### **(b) Probation**

The successful candidate shall be required to be on probation for an initial period, as determined by the Council. This period may be extended at the discretion of the Council.

### **(c) Remuneration**

The current annual pay-scale for the position is: €54,699 min to max €76,035(as per Circular EL 01/23).

Holders of the post will be paid at the appropriate salary scale in accordance with the relevant Department Circular.

New entrants will commence on the minimum point of the scale.

### **(d) Base**

The base for the post of Biodiversity Officer shall be determined by the Council and will depend on the particular area and service to which the post holder is assigned.

The role of Biodiversity Officer may involve some travel, with some trips involving overnight stays and associated costs covered by the appropriate allowances.

### **(e) Residence**

It is up to the discretion of each local authority to decide where they wish to locate the post within their own organizational structure.

### **(f) Working Hours**

The normal hours of work will be 35 hours per week. The Council reserves the right to alter the hours of work from time to time.

### **(g) Requirement to Drive**

Holders of the office shall be required:

- a. To possess a full current category B Driving Licence.
- b. To have their own vehicle available for use while performing their duties and the associated costs will be covered by the appropriate allowances.

### **(h) Conflicts of Interest**

The post holder shall not engage in any gainful occupation, other than as an employee of a local authority, to such an extent as to impair the performance of his or her duties as an employee of a local authority or in any occupation which might conflict with the interests of the local authority or which might be inconsistent with the discharge of his duties as a local authority employee.

## **5. Recruitment Process**

### **A. Application Form**

- Applications must be made on the official application form and all sections of the form must be fully completed.
- **Please do not submit a CV with your application.** Only information contained in the application form will be considered as part of the assessment of a candidate's suitability for the post.
- Applications must be submitted in word or PDF format **by email only** to [vacancies@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:vacancies@donegalcoco.ie)
- Applications must be received by the deadline specified on the form.
- Applications that are late, lost or delayed will not be considered unless official evidence showing that the application was sent within the timeframe can be produced.

### **B. Short-Listing**

Candidates may be short-listed for interview on the basis of information supplied. In the event of a short-listing exercise being required, an Expert Panel will convene to examine and assess the application forms against a set of pre-determined criteria, based on the requirements of the job. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications and experience on the application form.

Where it is considered, by reason of the number and standard of applications received, that it would be reasonable not to admit all candidates to the interview, only persons likely to attain at the interview a standard sufficient for selection and recommendation for appointment shall be called for interview.

### **C. Right to Information and Review**

The Council is committed to offering feedback and information to candidates. Any candidate who wishes to do so may request to have a decision or the process reviewed. Any such request must be submitted in writing, stating the grounds of the request and this must be submitted to the HR Dept, Three Rivers

Centre, Lifford, Co. Donegal within five working days of the date of notification of a relevant decision.

#### **D. Confidentiality**

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

#### **E. Other**

Appointments to the Council are subject to satisfactory checks with regard to references, qualifications, medical examinations, and Garda Vetting, as applicable.

#### **F. Canvassing Will Disqualify**

Any attempt by a candidate (or by any persons acting on their behalf) to canvass or otherwise influence any officer of the Council (or persons nominated by it to interview or examine applicants) in the candidate's favour, either directly or indirectly, by means of written communication or otherwise, will automatically disqualify the applicant for consideration for the position.

#### **G. General Data Protection Regulation**

Donegal County Council is committed to protecting your personal data and we comply with our obligations under the Data Protection Acts, 1988 – 2018, and the General Data Protection Regulation.

- **Basis for Processing your Personal Information**

The basis for processing your personal data is to process your application for the position you have applied for with Donegal County Council under the Terms of the Employment (Information) Act 1994 and Human Resources Department policies and procedures.

When your application form is received, we create a computer record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied on your application form. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature. You are entitled to obtain at any time, a copy of information about you, which is kept on record.

- **Sharing of Information**

Outside of the relevant recruitment team, the information provided in your application form will only be shared for progressing the competition for which you have applied for, with a designated shortlisting and/or interview board.

If, following the competition, you are placed on a Panel and offered a position, the information provided in your application form will form part of your Personnel File.

Furthermore, should you be offered a position and subsequently confirm your interest in the position, the information provided on your application form will be used to request service records and employment references.

- Storage period

Your application will be retained for two years from the date a panel for this position is formed. Applications that are not progressed to interview stage will be destroyed post competition.

Donegal County Council's Privacy Statement can be assessed at:

[www.donegalcoco.ie](http://www.donegalcoco.ie)