Job Description - Head of Estates (West District) (PB3)

Job Summary

The Head of Estates will drive the delivery of professional land agency and building management services in West Forest District through the leadership of the Estates team, and supportive collaboration with the functional delivery teams – Forestry & Land Management, Recreation & Engagement and Finance & Business Support.

Together we are Forestry England, we grow forests for all, for life.

Key Responsibilities & Accountabilities

Team leadership

- Lead the estates team, supporting effective and efficient delivery through a culture of team working and mutual support and collaboration. Specifically act as line manager for the district's two Area Land Agents (Chartered Surveyors), Built Estates Manager and Deputy Gaveller (mining engineer). The Area Land Agents are each supported by an Estates Surveyor, and in the Forest of Dean an additional Estates Officer who leads the Forest Warden team. The Built Estates Manager is supported by a Building Surveyor, Project Development Manager and a Building Facilities Officer. The estates team is further supported by 2 business support officers and 3 administrative officers who work closely with the wider Finance & Business Support team.

- Actively engage with the district's strategic leadership team (director, head of finance & business support, head of recreation & engagement, head of forestry & land management and human resources business partner) shaping our district strategy and associated delivery plans. Take lead responsibility for the estates business planning and monitoring discussions at this level, engendering support and commitment to drive positive change.

- Foster a positive team working relationship between district and national estates and project management officers; engaging as required on national project work. Be open and realistic as to the challenges inherent in the business, promoting transparency and constructive dialogue.

- Proactively liaise with the internal engagement officer to report on business performance so that everyone in the team can be sighted on 'where we are, against where we need to be'.

- Support the team to grow professional knowledge and expertise, supporting training and career development at all levels and growing the capability and capacity of the estates team. As required, lead recruitment of professional staff into the estates team, and support career development / continuous professional development across the team.

Estate casework and legal support

- Support the Area Land Agents in their work, championing professional standards and guiding the team through complex casework.

- Support the Deputy Gaveller in the unique role overseeing the implementation of the Dean Forest (Mines) Act 1838, appropriate oversight of the mining and quarrying activities.

- Support the team with, and where necessary lead, legal casework so as to protect Forestry England's legal position and effective relations with our outsourced legal services.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

Hours of Work

- The position is a full-time post to work 37 hours per week. Normal working hours are Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm with an hour lunch break; and Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm with an hour lunch break. This can be worked flexibly by agreement.

Duty Rota

- The district operates an out of hours emergency duty officer rota and the postholder will be expected to join the rota and be eligible for on-call payments accordingly. Currently each duty officer has no more than 4 weekly duty turns each year.

Travel

- The postholder will be expected to travel to different office and depot locations to support the remotely located delivery teams as may be required; and to attend national meetings and training events. This will most likely require travel by car, and thus a current driving licence is seen as a requirement of the role although candidates may put forward a proposal that satisfies the business need to travel without recourse to driving.

Location-Specific Information (optional)

The postholder will be based in the district office at Bank House, Coleford, Gloucestershire. A blended working pattern can be agreed, with a minimum attendance at the office of 3-days per week.

Background information

West Forest District is responsible for the sustainable management of 38,664ha of the nation's forests and woodlands in the west and south-west of England.

The district team extends to some 177 employees, with frontline delivery through our 17 remotely located delivery teams (5 forest centre and 12 forest beats) which are supported by our network of highly valued volunteers and contractors.

We are growing the future, for **people**, **wildlife** and the **climate**.

For people: we want the nation's forests to be a living treasure for all, deeply connected to people's lives and improving the health and well-being of the nation.

For wildlife: our vision is that the nation's forests will provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

For climate: our vision is that the nation's forests are resilient to climate change, increasing the value of benefits they provide to communities, producing quality sustainable timber and absorbing more carbon emissions.

Our estates team provides expert legal, land agency and building management support to our frontline delivery teams, managing our property leases and maintaining our suite of buildings. The work is highly varied covering all aspects of land agency – for example telecoms, minerals, claims, valuations, boundaries, planning and leases and licences for sporting, commercial recreation partners, residential properties, wayleaves. Our built estate ranges from our operational depots and offices, visitor buildings to the myriad industrial and residential properties in our care. Our buildings team is also focused on the challenges of investing to support our net zero ambitions, building compliance and the needs of our frontline delivery teams and tenants. Project management is an important element of the teams work, engaging with project development and implementation at all scales to ensure effective and efficient delivery, and fit with the existing estate.

Our forestry and land management team is focused on increasing the resilience of our woods to our changing climate, actively managing tree health issues and maintaining and improving the natural habitats for wildlife, whilst also growing our woods with new woodland creation projects. We manage to the exacting standards of the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme, which ensures we maintain our independent accreditation under the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) schemes.

Our recreation and engagement team is focused on encouraging everyone to visit, enjoy and benefit from the nation's forests. We provide safe and welcoming visitor sites with increasing investment in providing opportunities for all. In West Forest District, we host around 2 million visits each year at out our main visitor sites. We are currently engaged in a programme to improve the financial performance of our main visitor sites so that we can cover our costs or, preferably produce a surplus for reinvestment. Our engagement team is key in promoting the opportunities we offer, and in telling our story, the story of sustainable forestry.

Our operational activity generates a very significant income that offsets our expenditure; however, we are dependent upon bringing in project-based grant funding and securing corporate sponsorship to deliver more for the nation. In West Forest District our operational expenditure this year (25/26) is planned to be £17.2 million and our income from trading activity £14.8 million. Our financial mission is to get to the point where our income and expenditure is sustainably matched.

Skills, Knowledge & Experience

Essential Professional and Technical experience

- Experience in rural or general practice Estate Management

Desirable Professional and Technical experience

- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and GIS systems.
- An understanding of sustainable forest management.

Qualifications

Essential

- Full chartered membership of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS or FRICS)
- Degree or equivalent in Rural (or other relevant) Estate management

Desirable

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Registered Valuer status
- Fellow of the Association of Agricultural Valuers