

# Democratic Services Officer/ Senior Democratic Services Officer Candidate Pack



## Democratic Services Officer/ Senior Democratic Services Officer

**£23,706 to £31,077**

Our bright and busy Democratic Services team are key in underpinning our Constitution which is essential for the Council to function. Variety shapes this role so organisational skills are key and you will be able to respond quickly and with confidence to changing circumstances.

As a team, we strive for excellence and accuracy in our work. This is vital in our role conducting and minuting the Council's formal meetings as well as providing administrative support to the Chairman of the Council.

Our Democratic Services Officers:

- Work well under pressure
- Have a flexible approach
- Show a passion for Customer Service

If the above approach appeals to you then we love you to join our dynamic team to be a committee clerk and to support the Council's decision making process!

Please note political sensitivity is a key element in the role.

## Do you want to know more about the role?

Please contact Martin Goodman, Head of Legal and Democratic Services on 01732 227245 to find out more details.

## Do you want to ensure you have the best chance of being shortlisted?

Read the Job Description and Personal Specification attached to the role and ensure that your supporting statement explains how you meet the essential requirements as your application will be judged against these criteria.

**Closing date:** Sunday 31 October 2021

**Interviews:** week commencing Monday 8 November 2021







Sevenoaks District Council is a unique place to work. It's a place where positive and passionate people deliver some of the very best services in local government. We are honoured to be recognised as one of the most efficient, well managed councils in the country, an achievement we work hard to maintain.

There are very few councils that still collect all the rubbish and recycling every week using their own team of people. We are exceptionally proud that the people who work here care deeply about what they do, that they are creative, embrace risk and work hard to deliver exceptional services to our customers and to improve the Sevenoaks District. It's our team of people that makes Sevenoaks District Council unique.

We've worked hard to develop a no 'blame culture' among the people that work here. It's a place where staff take responsibility for the work they do and are empowered to take the decisions that help them to do their job effectively. We encourage new ideas and innovation and provide people with the support and training they need to become the very best at what they do.

Our mantra of 'the customer is anyone who isn't me' helps to grow strong and positive working relationships across our council services, and ensures our residents, businesses and partners receive the very highest quality of service each time they contact us.

Recruiting the right people to our team is incredibly important to us and instrumental to our success. We value personal qualities as much as we do the skills and knowledge to do the job. We want people who can embrace our culture, that have ambition and determination and have the ability to shape our future

## Our vision

We're committed to delivering excellent services. This means we are ambitious for our staff, our customers and our Council. Together we work to shape the District for future generations to make it a great place to live, work and enjoy.

## Our mission

To work smarter with an empowering culture, a focus on wellbeing and a dynamic and innovative approach.

The Sevenoaks District provides a great range of housing options whether you are looking to rent or buy.

Many of our staff live outside of the District. With excellent links by road and rail it makes Sevenoaks District Council an employer that is accessible from most parts of Kent and further afield.

The Council is fortunate to have its own car park

which, increasingly rarely, is free to all staff to use. The council also supports car sharing and is a member of the cycle to work scheme.

Much of the District is surrounded by beautiful countryside, but our towns and villages have excellent transport links, good schools and a vibrant local economies.

Amongst the national chain stores are thriving local businesses, there are great places to eat and drink and a wonderful range of attractions for days out with friends and family.

The Sevenoaks District has three leisure centres, a range of local sports clubs and its own theatre. So if you have an interest in sport, film, comedy and stage there is something for you.

## Transport

Sevenoaks mainline train station is a short walk from the Council offices and regular trains take approximately 30 minutes into central London.

The M25, M20 and A21 are all within a short drive of the Council offices.

Gatwick airport is just over a 30 minute drive and Heathrow airport is just over an hour's drive away.

## Sevenoaks town

The Council's offices are based a short stroll away from the heart of Sevenoaks town. Sevenoaks is a busy town centre with a wide variety of shops, restaurants and cafes. There is a regular weekly market, as well as a choice of supermarkets, a theatre and a cinema.

The town also has the advantage of the wonderful Knole Park, including its deer, just a few minutes walk from the door of the offices for those that like to get away from it all during their lunch break.

## The local area

5



**S**

Strong sense of pride in our district

**E**

Enthusiastic and committed

**V**

Valuing others, valuing each other

**E**

Empowered to achieve

**N**

No blame culture

**O**

Open to new ideas; dedicated to developing talent

**A**

Ambitious with our community

**K**

Keep learning; keep improving

**S**

Sharing services; working closely with others

## Annual Leave

You will be given a generous annual leave allowance of 27 days (plus an additional 5 days depending on having Continuous Local Government Service) as at 1 April. You will be eligible to buy additional leave or have an increased salary by selling annual leave.

## Pension

We are part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). There is a 50/50 section which enables a member to pay half rate contributions for half the benefits. The LGPS is a contributory scheme that requires contributions from both employer and employee. The rate Sevenoaks as the employer currently pays is 18.7%. Your contribution rate up to 6.5% would be based on your salary.

## Health and wellbeing benefits

### Free and confidential employee assistance programme

Confidential and expert advice in many areas, including family, legal, financial and consumer issues.

### Regular onsite health check appointments available

We regularly offer mini health checks with our onsite Occupational Health Advisor, who offer checks on blood pressure, 'Know your numbers', body mass index, weight, risk of diabetes, stress management tips and 'Take a Walk' tips.

We also offer onsite free flu vaccinations and discounted osteopathy treatments.

### Eye care

We offer eye care vouchers on request every two years to staff who use computers for a significant part of their work.

## Financial benefits

### Free staff car parking

Onsite staff car park, free of charge to everyone.

### Cycle to work scheme

You can get a new bike for a significantly reduced cost by saving on tax and National Insurance (and paying for it monthly through your salary).

## Staff Benefits

7



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE | Platinum  
Until 2022

**Sevenoaks**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



## Season ticket loan

We offer season ticket loans up to a maximum of £5,000, repayable over 12 months.

## Car loan

You can apply for a loan up to a maximum of £10,000 to purchase a car, repayable over a maximum of five years at a low rate of interest.

## Professional fees

Staff in roles where ongoing membership of a recognised professional body, (where this membership is gained through a qualification), is an essential requirement in the person specification for their job can claim the cost of one membership fee per year.

## Recognition, Learning and Development

We believe all our employees have the potential to grow, both in their work role and personally, and endeavour to provide opportunities for this growth. We work within recognised good practice guidelines, including Investors in People, to ensure both the quality and quantity of training and development is relevant and “fit for purpose”.

### The Talent in Me (TiM)

TiM is open to everyone and there are more than 60 courses available to choose from. Courses are ‘bite-sized’. Each one takes one to two hours to complete and are delivered by our own in-house service experts or external providers.

### E Learning

We offer e-learning courses that enable you to train at your desktop, working at your own pace wherever and whenever you want.

### Coaching

We offer a tailored coaching programme with a number of professionally trained internal volunteer coaches, designed specifically to support staff performance and development and our culture, with a focus on specific skills and goals.

### Apprenticeships

Any member of staff can apply to undertake an apprenticeship. There are now over 200 new apprenticeship standards with more in development.



## Family friendly policies

### Maternity leave

All pregnant employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks' maternity leave regardless of length of service. Staff who have worked for us for more than 12 months by the time their baby is born receive enhanced maternity pay of the first six weeks paid at 90% of the weekly salary.

### Paid paternity leave

Fathers to be or employees who will share the responsibility with a partner for bringing up a child, may have the right to Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay. Employees who have worked for us for more than 12 months by the time their baby is born receive enhanced paternity pay of two weeks full pay.

### Flexible working

We are proud to offer a range of flexible working arrangements to all of our staff. We are happy to consider reduced hours, job shares, home working and more, ensuring the needs of the organisation continue to be met.

## Other staff benefits

We participate in the Kaarp Benefits Scheme, a voluntary benefit scheme for local authority employees. The Benefits change regularly but include:

- Activities - discounted theme park entry and/or hotel rooms
- Finance - special deals, insurance and personal finance
- Health - money off many sports and fitness centres and golf courses
- Motoring - discount car club, reduced breakdown cover, car servicing/MOTs and money off driving lessons
- Shopping - many deals and offers
- Travel - A travel club, discounts on holiday insurance, hotels and airport parking
- Local discounts – these include many offers and discounts for restaurants, hotel rooms, hairdressers, dry cleaners and more.

## Staff Benefits



## The structure of the Team

Head of Legal and  
Democratic Services

Democratic Services  
Team Leader

2 Democratic Services  
Officers/Senior Democratic  
Services Officers

**Title of post:** Democratic Services Officer/Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Band:** C/D

**Section:** Legal and Democratic Services

**Reports to:** Democratic Services Team Leader

**Purpose of post:** Providing reliable advice and support to Members and others as necessary to ensure that all procedures conform to the requirements of relevant legislation and the Council's Constitution, and to ensure the efficient running of the Council's Committees.

### Key Activities

- To undertake the efficient dispatch of agenda papers and associated paperwork to appropriate Members, Officers and external recipients. Attention to detail will be most important.
- To ensure the smooth and efficient running of Member level meetings including the preparation of agendas, reports and minutes, ensuring that they comply with relevant legislation and the Council's Constitution.
- Administrative support, diary and event management as required for the Chairman of the Council.
- Maintains knowledge of relevant legislation and guidance in order to ensure that all relevant documentation and formal procedures comply with statutory requirements and to be able to implement new procedures, as necessary. (Band D)
- Keeps under review practices and procedures relating to the duties of the post with a view to streamlining activities, including, where appropriate, by the application of new technology. (Band D)
- Dealing with more complex/demanding responsibilities in relation to servicing Council committees, e.g. responsibility for decision-making committees subject to more formal procedures. (Band D)
- To perform administrative tasks relevant to the office and other duties as may be required.
- To participate in any relevant training for the duties of this post and to achieve the key objectives of the Council.
- To participate fully in the Council's staff appraisal scheme.
- To comply with standard employee Health and Safety at Work responsibilities.
- To comply with Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

- To undertake any other duties that may be assigned from time to time, commensurate with the grade of the post.
- NB: The job description is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the tasks and responsibilities in the post. It may be changed, by agreement, in the light of experience and departmental needs.

## Conditions

Attendance at evening meetings is part of the normal duties of this post and there may be a requirement to provide cover for others, occasionally at short notice. For which time off in lieu will be granted subject to business hours office cover.

This post is politically restricted under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

## Location

Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG

## Approach

### Essential

- Thorough, attention to detail
- Flexible and willing to function as a member of a small team, covering work for others when necessary including a willingness to work in evenings.
- Operates with the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.
- Ability and willingness to learn quickly.
- Takes personal responsibility for own workload, ensuring that high quality, accurate work is produced to tight deadlines.
- Political sensitivity and awareness at all times.
- Ability to work under pressure.

## Skills and experience

### Essential

- Ability to communicate effectively (both orally and in written form) with a range of service users, including Councillors, members of the public and colleagues
- Minimum of Grade C GCSE or equivalent level (to include Maths and English)
- Ability to process and understand complex information from a range of sources and communicate it to others using a variety of methods, including verbally and in writing Certificate in Democratic Services (Band D).
- Demonstrable proficiency and practical knowledge of committee management (Band D)



- Demonstrable track record of strong performance in the role with responsibility for decision-making committees subject to formal procedures.( Band D)
- Ability to learn and use new technology quickly
- Ability to handle sensitive and confidential information.
- Knowledge and understanding of the role of an elected Member
- Detailed knowledge of Local Government with Committee experience.
- Ability to organise own workloads on a flexible basis to meet service needs and competing demands

## **Desirable**

- Willingness to undertake a relevant qualifications such as a Certificate in Democratic Services Practice (Band C)

## **Other**

### **Essential**

- Tact and diplomacy.
- Ability to work neutrally in a political environment.
- Use of computer packages (e.g. Word for Windows)

### **Desirable**

- Driving licence holder and car owner.