West Midlands Combined Authority

Job Description

Job Title:	Director of Communications
Directorate/Team:	Chief Executive
Location:	16 Summer Lane or other site/location
Responsible to:	Executive Director of Corporate Services
Responsible for:	Communications teams, including mayoral, corporate and internal communications, media, marketing, digital communications, brand, campaigns, events and communications-led engagement
Key working relationships: (internal)	Chief Executive; Mayor and Political Office; Executive Board; Director of Strategy; Head of Partnerships and Government Relations; Associate Director of Insight; Directors, Associate Directors, Heads of Service and equivalent specialists across WMCA; Communications teams; Corporate Services functions; thematic policy teams; and Delivery and Commissioning teams
Key working relationships: (external)	Senior media representatives, editors and journalists; communications and marketing leaders across local authorities and partner organisations; creative, digital, media-buying and research agencies; campaign and communications partners; representative bodies relevant to WMCA communications activity; and external consultants, commissioned partners and specialist suppliers. Government, elected representatives, strategic partners and regional and national networks in support of agreed communications priorities, working through or jointly with the Strategy Unit where it holds the lead organisational relationship.

Purpose of the Post

To lead the development and delivery of an integrated communications, marketing, media, digital and brand strategy that advances the Mayor's and WMCA's priorities, strengthens the West Midlands' regional, national and international profile, and increases public understanding, recognition and confidence.

The Director will shape, lead and continuously develop a high-performing Communications function, ensuring effective coordination across the Mayoral Team, Chief Executive and the wider organisation in relation to mayoral, corporate and internal communications, media, marketing, digital communications, brand, campaigns, events and communications-led engagement.

As the principal strategic adviser on communications, media and organisational reputation, the postholder will be a member of the Executive Board and will advise the Mayor, Chief Executive, Executive Directors and senior leaders. The Director will protect and enhance organisational and regional reputation and provide clear, authoritative communications leadership through high-profile, politically sensitive and crisis situations.

Working in close partnership with the Strategy Unit, the postholder will translate organisational strategy, policy priorities, evidence and stakeholder insight into clear and compelling narratives, campaigns and communications. The role will support the effective communication of WMCA's policy, devolution and investment priorities, while responsibility for government relations, devolution policy, public affairs and strategic partnership management sits with the Strategy Unit.

Accountabilities

- Lead the Communications portfolio, including mayoral, corporate and internal communications, media, marketing, digital communications, brand, campaigns, events and communications-led engagement, ensuring delivery of agreed organisational and regional priorities.
- Contribute to the development of WMCA-wide strategy, policy and organisational priorities as a member of the senior leadership community.
- Set strategic direction for the Communications portfolio and ensuring alignment with organisational objectives, regional ambitions and public value outcomes.
- Provide visible corporate leadership and contributing to the overall success, culture, reputation and performance of the WMCA.
- Ensure effective governance, assurance, compliance and risk management arrangements across the Communications portfolio Manage significant budgets, resources and workforce capacity to ensure sustainability, efficiency and value for money.
- Lead strategic change, transformation and continuous improvement activity across the portfolio.
- Establish and promoting professional, technical and organisational standards for communications, marketing, brand and public affairs activity across WMCA.
- Establishing and maintaining clear operating arrangements with the Strategy Unit so that organisational strategy, government relations, public affairs, stakeholder management and communications activity are aligned, while avoiding duplication or conflicting ownership.
- Build organisational capability, succession strength and leadership resilience.
- Developing high-performing, inclusive and accountable leadership cultures.
- Building and maintaining effective relationships with the Mayor, political leaders, senior stakeholders, the media and communications partners, and supporting engagement with government departments, agencies and strategic partners through agreed joint working arrangements with the Strategy Unit..
- Ensure that equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility considerations are embedded in decision-making and communications and engagement activity.
- Promote collaboration across organisational and system boundaries to maximise the reach, impact and influence of WMCA communications for residents, businesses and communities across the West Midlands.
- Representing WMCA on communications, media, marketing, brand and reputation matters at regional, national and sector forums, and supporting the Strategy Unit's policy and partnership objectives through coordinated narrative, communications and campaign activity.

Responsibilities

Strategic

- Lead the development, delivery and review of communications strategies aligned to WMCA corporate priorities and regional outcomes, raising the profile of WMCA with residents, businesses, political leaders, partners and stakeholders through proactive, flexible and innovative campaigns, events and initiatives.
- Contribute communications, audience and reputation expertise to organisational strategy, policy development and business planning, working with the Strategy Unit to ensure that strategic priorities can be communicated clearly and effectively to relevant audiences.
- As an Executive Board attendee, provide strategic communications advice, challenge and recommendations to the Mayor, Chief Executive, Executive Directors, the Executive Board and political stakeholders, including communications support for devolution, investment and policy priorities led by the Strategy Unit.
- Lead complex transformation, improvement and change programmes to enhance organisational effectiveness, communications capability and public value.
- Establish and maintain productive communications relationships with local authorities, public agencies, businesses, community organisations, the media and regional partners, working with the Strategy Unit where it holds the lead strategic or governmental relationship.
- Anticipate and respond to changing political, economic, legislative and policy environments, identifying implications and opportunities for WMCA and leading the protection and enhancement of organisational reputation, including during crisis situations requiring Mayoral and WMCA messaging.
- Influence regional and national understanding of WMCA priorities through strategic communications, media, campaigns and narrative, and contribute communications expertise to relevant partnerships, networks and

stakeholder forums. Lead the management of the WMCA brand, associated identities and narrative to ensure they are communicated clearly, consistently and creatively. .

- Ensure communications strategy, campaigns and channel decisions are informed by audience research, resident insight, intelligence and evaluation, drawing on evidence produced by the Strategy Unit and other relevant professional functions.
- Promote innovation, organisational learning and evidence-informed decision-making across the organisation, including the development of creative and effective communications practice.

People

- Lead, inspire and develop senior leaders and teams across the Communications portfolio, providing visible professional leadership for communications, marketing, media, digital and brand activity across the organisation.
- Create and sustain a high-performing, inclusive and psychologically safe working environment.
- Drive workforce planning, succession planning and talent development activities across the portfolio.
- Build organisational capability and leadership capacity across the portfolio, working collaboratively with managers to ensure effective communications advice and support contributes to WMCA's strategic aims and objectives.
- Foster collaborative leadership across organisational boundaries and multidisciplinary teams, leading the strategic management of relationships with senior political and executive stakeholders and communications leads across WMCA's constituent authorities.
- Ensure effective performance management, accountability and staff development arrangements are in place. Lead relevant professional networks of communications leads across constituent and non-constituent authorities and key partners to share best practice and coordinate joint communications, campaigns, events and initiatives, working with the Strategy Unit where activity relates to strategic partnership or government relationships.
- Champion WMCA values, behaviours and leadership expectations.

Operational

- Ensure effective delivery and continuous improvement of media relations, events, campaign and communications-led engagement, marketing, digital communications, internal communications, design and brand management within agreed timescales, quality standards and performance frameworks.
- Establish effective governance, assurance, compliance and reporting arrangements for communications activity, including major marketing campaigns, TfWM, capital delivery projects and associated transport functions.
- Monitor, review and improve organisational and service performance through robust performance management processes, ensuring communications are research and insight led, measured through key performance indicators and evaluation, and demonstrate impact and return on investment.
- Ensure strategic, operational, financial and reputational risks are identified, managed and escalated appropriately, including risks arising from high-profile communications, major behaviour-change campaigns and the reputation of WMCA.
- Oversee the preparation of communications strategies, reports, recommendations, business cases, campaign evaluations and governance papers, providing evidence-based communications and reputation advice to internal and external stakeholders.
- Ensure delivery activity remains aligned with organisational priorities and statutory responsibilities, providing communications advice and options that support transformation, improved business systems and processes, effective organisational communication, and changes in people and culture.
- Lead responses to complex operational, organisational or reputational challenges, applying an insight-driven, forward-thinking and results-focused approach that supports effective delivery in a commercial environment.
- Promote consistent professional, technical and operational standards across the portfolio, researching and adopting best practice to maintain market-aligned, best-in-class communications capability and delivery.

Financial

- Lead financial planning, budget management and resource allocation across the portfolio.
- Ensure appropriate financial controls, governance and stewardship arrangements are maintained.
- Maximise value for money through efficient use of resources and effective commissioning and procurement practices.

- Support organisational investment, prioritisation and resource planning decisions.
- Ensure financial and workforce decisions support long-term sustainability.

Other

- Act as a corporate leader, exercising organisational and system leadership beyond the immediate portfolio to support WMCA-wide priorities, objectives and regional outcomes.
- Act as a steward of organisational values, culture and long-term sustainability.
- Represent WMCA at regional, national and sector-wide forums.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in all aspects of leadership and service delivery.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, governance frameworks, organisational policies and professional standards.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the responsibilities and seniority of the role.

Person Specification

Candidates/post holders will be expected to demonstrate the following:	Essential / Desirable		How Evidenced?		
Experience	**E**	**D**	**A***	**I***	**T***
Significant senior leadership experience within a large, complex organisation, leading substantial communications, media, marketing, digital and reputation portfolio	X		X	X	
Successful track record of leading a significant, multidisciplinary communications portfolio, including corporate communications, marketing, digital communications, public relations, media, brand and campaign delivery	X		X	X	
Experience of contributing communications, audience and reputation expertise to organisational strategy and policy development, and providing authoritative strategic communications advice to senior leaders, elected members and boards	X		X	X	
Experience of strategic planning, organisational change and transformation, with responsibility for multi-channel communications delivery	X		X	X	
Extensive experience of leading and developing senior managers and high-performing teams, empowering and motivating people to deliver, grow and achieve results	X		X	X	
Experience of budget and cost management, resource planning and financial stewardship at scale, delivering efficiency and value for money across people, services and commissioned activity	X		X	X	
Experience of managing complex organisational, operational and reputational risks within a high-profile communications and external affairs environment	X		X	X	
Experience of working effectively and reporting at Director level and to Elected Members or Boards within a politically sensitive environment	X		X	X	
Wide experience of communications partnership working and of communicating, engaging productively and influencing senior stakeholders across organisational boundaries	X		X	X	
Experience within local government, combined authorities, public services or related sectors, with an understanding of WMCA's strategic aims and the opportunities and barriers affecting regional policy and strategy		X	X	X	
Skills / Knowledge	**E**	**D**	**A***	**I***	**T***
Ability to provide strategic communications leadership and translate complex organisational strategy, policy, evidence and stakeholder insight into clear narratives and effective, outcome-focused delivery for different audiences	X		X	X	
Ability to apply systems thinking and work corporately across organisational, regional and partnership environments, establishing effective relationships with colleagues from other disciplines	X		X	X	

Ability to lead through others across complex organisational structures, coaching and empowering senior leaders and teams to develop solutions and strategies and deliver sustainable outcomes	X		X	X	
Outstanding leadership, adaptable communication and influencing skills, with the ability to convince and persuade peers and senior leaders internally and externally	X		X	X	
Strong understanding of governance, assurance and risk management principles and the professional, legal and regulatory requirements affecting communications, media, marketing, digital content, brand and public information activity	X		X	X	
Strong commercial and financial awareness	X		X	X	
Ability to lead complex transformation and continuous improvement programmes	X		X	X	
Understanding of organisational development, workforce capability and succession planning principles.	X		X	X	
Ability to build and sustain communications partnerships and stakeholder relationships, and to work effectively alongside strategy, policy, government relations and stakeholder-management functions	X		X	X	
Clear understanding of the respective roles of communications, organisational strategy, public affairs, government relations, stakeholder management and policy development, and the ability to establish effective interfaces between these disciplines	X		X	X	
Strong political awareness and demonstrable understanding of the political, social and public sector environment in which WMCA operates	X		X	X	
Ability to make sound decisions and adapt communications effectively in ambiguous, politically sensitive, changing and highly complex environments, demonstrating flexibility, tenacity and resilience under time pressure	X		X	X	
Knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion best practice and its practical application	X		X	X	
Understanding of regional economic, social and public policy issues affecting the West Midlands		X	X	X	
Qualification / Education / Training	**E**	**D**	**A***	**I***	**T***
Degree-level qualification or equivalent professional experience	X		X		
Chartered status or a relevant senior-level professional qualification in communications, public relations, marketing or a closely related discipline, such as CIPR or CIM accreditation	X		X		
Evidence of continuing professional and leadership development	X		X	X	

***Key: A** = Application, **I** = Interview, **T** = Testing/Assessment

Core Expectations	
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health, safety, and wellbeing of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work; and co-operate with their employer so far as is necessary to enable it to successfully discharge its own responsibilities in relation to health, safety, and wellbeing.
Equality & Diversity	Promote and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of the role.
Learning & Development	Participate in and take responsibility of any learning and development required to carry out this role effectively.
Performance Management	Actively engage in the performance management process and take responsibility for managing performance outcomes.
GDPR	Ensure the reasonable and proportionate protection, processing, sharing, and storing of WMCA information in accordance with the relevant legislation, corporate policies, and in the best interests of the data subjects (Data Protection/GDPR), the WMCA, our partners, and the West Midlands, in all aspects of the role.
Adherence to Policies	Be aware of and comply with all organisation policies.

Matrix Working	Work in a matrix way when required by actively collaborating across traditional boundaries—such as directorates, functions, or geographic areas—to achieve shared goals. Depending on your role, you may contribute to multiple projects or workstreams, often working alongside different teams and leaders.
Business Continuity	All staff should actively participate in business continuity training and exercises when required, ensuring they understand and follow business continuity plans and procedures to maintain organisational resilience during disruptions.
Other	There may be a requirement to work outside normal office hours on occasion, including a requirement to work within stakeholder and partner offices within the WMCA constituent area on a regular basis.

Values	
Collaborative	We work as one organisation. Together we build trust, connection and shared purpose across teams, partners and residents to create the biggest impact for our region.
Inclusive	We value difference. Creating an environment where people belong, and feel psychologically safe, so we can all thrive and shape a West Midlands built for everyone.
Innovative	We are courageous. We embrace new ideas and challenge the status quo to continuously improve and shape the future of the West Midlands.
Driven	We are focused on outcomes. We perform at our best to unlock productivity and delivery, achieving the greatest regional impact.
Our culture is built on collective leadership, where everyone plays a part in shaping how we work and succeed together. Guided by our values, we create an environment where people feel valued, supported and able to contribute their best. Through behaviours grounded in clarity, care and courage, as set out in our Leadership Statement we are making the West Midlands Combined Authority the best place to work and belong.	

Leadership Capabilities	
WMCA Integration	Owning the whole organisation and system
System & Partnership leadership	Commissioning, convening, holding to account
Translating complexity **Accountable & adaptive performance**	Turning ambiguity into clear direction Delegated accountability, clear lines of sight
Building Organisational capability	Developing next layer leaders/experts/specialists
Digital & AI enabled leadership	Designing how AI reshapes work and judgement
Lead through transition & transformation	Hold steadiness & momentum through change

As a WMCA leader, the leadership capabilities mean that you are expected to:

- Lead beyond your function, not within it
- Deliver through others (partners, system), not just your teams
- Turn complexity into clarity and pace
- Build capability, not dependency
- Lead through ongoing change, not stability

Additional Post Requirements							
Politically Restricted Post		**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**				**Vetting**	
Yes ☐	No ☐	Basic ☐	Standard ☐	Enhanced ☐	None ☐	Yes ☐	No ☐

Job Evaluation Details			
Date Evaluation Agreed	**JEP Reference**	**Grade**	**Job Family**

Position Reference	