



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Job Description

Job Title:	Innovation Policy Manager
Directorate/Team:	Employment, Skills, Health and Communities
Location:	16 Summer Lane or other site/location
Responsible to:	Head of Business Innovation and Technology
Responsible for:	Up to 1
Key working relationships: (internal)	West Midlands Innovation Board, Mayoral Growth Taskforce, Mayoral Skills Taskforce, WMCA colleagues involved in economic and skills strategies, innovation plans and wider mayoral priorities.
Key working relationships: (external)	Local authorities, universities, FE colleges, employers, business representative organisations, relevant government departments and agencies like Innovate UK, Research Councils and Catapults, central government.

Purpose of the Post

This role will help shape the strategic development of innovation policy in the West Midlands, strengthening its links with employment and skills policy and the WM Growth Plan.

Working as part of the innovation and technology service area, you will develop evidence-led policies and programmes to drive inclusive growth in the West Midlands, levelling-up inter- and intra-regional inequalities. In particular, you will lead the development of our policies and partnership on innovation and Research & Development (R&D), working to the advisory West Midlands Innovation Board and internal governance forums.

The successful applicant will have proven experience in using research and analysis to support policy development and will have an excellent knowledge of economic and innovation policy, with an ability to create strong linkages to social and environmental outcomes. The interface between innovation and skills will be a particular policy leadership responsibility of this role.

Accountabilities

Lead the development of plans and approaches relating to near-to-market innovation funding aligned to Plan for Growth outcomes.

Lead research and policy development to help inform the rationale and evidence for devolved innovation funding.

Provide research, intelligence and insight to inform regional economic strategies, innovation plans and wider mayoral priorities.

Provide high quality, policy advice, briefings and reports to internal and external stakeholders, including central government.

Manage the West Midlands Innovation Board strategy, operations, and stakeholder relations.

Lead on coordination, commissioning, oversight of delivery, and evaluation of the work programme of the West Midlands Innovation Board – including a strong focus on innovation-skills linkages.

Lead the development of the West Midlands business-technology commercialisation agenda, including but not limited to a focus on AI.

Responsibilities
Strategic
• Lead and contribute to policy development around productivity, innovation and skills. • Identify and lead the development and delivery of linkages between innovation and skills agendas. • Provide research, intelligence and insight to help inform and implement priorities within the WMCA area economic strategies and innovation plans and wider mayoral priorities. • Lead the development of our R&D and innovation plan, setting out what WMCA seeks to achieve through directly commissioned activity and its levers of influence, and how impact will be evaluated. • Lead and undertake research and policy development to help inform the rationale and evidence to make the case for wider economic development devolution and co-commissioning. • Provide policy input and support for new WMCA and partner-led programmes, including contributing to pilot design and leading bids for new funding. • Work flexibly and with integrity to meet the needs of the WMCA and the Employment and Skills function.
People
• Establish, develop and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, particularly with local authorities, universities, FE colleges, employers and business representative organisations, and relevant government departments and agencies like Innovate UK, Research Councils and Catapults. • Line manage the Delivery Manager, providing clear direction, setting objectives and supporting their performance, wellbeing and professional development.
Operational
• Provide high quality written and oral briefings, policy advice and reports for a range of internal and external stakeholders, including central government. • Coordinate the governance and administration of key meetings, working groups and commissions, particularly the West Midlands Innovation Board, including the provision of effective secretariat support. • Represent WMCA at external events and meetings.
Financial
• No direct budgetary responsibility. The role will contribute to funding bids and support the development of funding proposals in accordance with WMCA governance requirements. • Ensure Value for Money and follow the appropriate governance processes for dealing with any financial activities.
Other
• There may be a requirement to work outside normal office hours on occasion to meet work deadlines, give presentations, attend meetings etc., including a requirement to work within stakeholder and partner offices within the WMCA Constituent area on a regular basis. • Represent the WMCA in a professional manner. • Undertake such tasks as may reasonably be expected commensurate with the scope and level 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*
Substantial experience of leading the development of evidence-led innovation, R&D or regional economic policy and strategy within a complex political and partnership environment, translating national and regional priorities into deliverable plans and programmes.		X		X	X
A successful track record of undertaking and critically interpreting complex quantitative and qualitative research to develop policy options and robust advice for arrange of internal and external stakeholders.		X		X	X
Proven experience of leading multi-partner policy or programme work, including programme design, commissioning, governance, delivery oversight, performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting against strategic outcomes.		X		X	X
Experience of building effective working relationships with senior business leaders in a public-private partnership environment.		X		X	X
Skills / Knowledge		E	D	A*	I* T*
Excellent knowledge of economic development and innovation policy.		X		X	X
In depth knowledge of the regional policy landscape including transport policy, housing, employment and skills, business support, inward investment and trade.		X			X X
Strong analytical skills, with the ability to critically assess complex research and data to develop evidence-based policy options and recommendations.		X			X X
Ability to draw on a range of research and data analysis techniques to inform policy.		X		X	X
Strong negotiation and influencing skills, with the ability to secure agreement across partners on innovation priorities, funding, commissioning and delivery.		X		X	X
An understanding of key economic policy issues including regional economics, macroeconomic policy and housing, transport, skills and enterprise in the UK.		X		X	X
Understanding of the political processes and experience of managing politically sensitive issues.		X			X
Acts in a collegiate and collaborative style that engages with people at all levels and promotes positive relationships.		X			X
Qualification / Education / Training		E	D	A*	I* T*
Relevant degree or similar qualification			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, building trust, connection and shared purpose across teams and partners to create the biggest impact for our region.
Inclusive	Every voice matters – we create belonging, fairness and psychological safety so everyone can thrive.
Innovative	We think future and act smarter – embracing curiosity, creativity and continuous improvement to shape the future.
Driven	Focused on impact – leading with clarity, care and courage to deliver meaningful results for the West Midlands.

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.

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
11/09/2026	JEP866	SP44-SP48	
Position Reference			