



Job Description

Job Title:	Executive Director of Strategy and Policy
Directorate/Team:	Strategy and Policy
Location:	16 Summer Lane or other site/location
Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer
Responsible for:	Strategy and Policy directorate
Key working relationships: (internal)	Mayor & Mayoral Office, Executive Board, Finance Services, People & Culture Services, Communications & Public Affairs
Key working relationships: (external)	Government departments and ministers, local authorities, business groups, regulators, NHS, Police, Fire, universities, voluntary and community sector, investors and national bodies

Purpose of the Post

The Executive Director of Strategy and Policy is a pivotal member of the Executive Board, providing visionary leadership to shape and integrate strategies that deliver tangible, inclusive and sustainable impact for the West Midlands region. This role sets the strategic agenda for economic growth, jobs and skills, transport, housing and regeneration, energy and climate change, and public service innovation, ensuring that WMCA operates as a high-performing, evidence-led organisation with national influence.

Acting as the Chief Executive's principal adviser on long-term strategy and policy, the postholder will lead a high performing directorate that aligns Mayoral priorities, devolution commitments, and place-based planning, translating them into actionable forward-thinking policies and frameworks and affordable programmes that improve lives across the region. The postholder will champion collaboration, insight-driven decision-making, and organisational excellence, positioning WMCA as a trusted partner to government, business, and communities at regional, national and international levels.

Accountabilities

- Act as the Chief Executive's principal adviser on long-term strategy and policy, providing insight into the state of the region to ensure that regional outcomes are realised.
- Embed the Strategy and Policy directorate, aligned to the organisation's Target Operating Model and Transformation timelines.
- Deputise for the Chief Executive Officer when required.
- Lead a coherent, evidence-led strategy for economic growth, jobs and skills, transport, housing and regeneration, energy and climate change, and public service innovation and health.
- Lead the Strategy and Policy directorate, including research and insight, strategic planning, policy and integration functions, building a high performing, inclusive team.
- As an Executive Board member, take collective responsibility for corporate leadership, strategic direction, and visible, effective management of the WMCA, ensuring delivery of improved outcomes for the region.

Responsibilities

Strategic

- Shape and govern the policy framework that underpins devolution deals, the integrated settlement and other major agreements with government.
- Ensure strategic activity across WMCA is integrated and aligned with the corporate strategy, business planning and financial planning.
- Develop and maintain a strong understanding of the priorities, challenges and opportunities of member authorities and key partners, through regular engagement at political, executive and professional levels.
- Lead the development, review and communication of the overarching regional strategy, ensuring alignment between Mayoral priorities, the Growth Plan, devolution commitments and local authority plans.
- Oversee a professional policy function that designs practical, innovative policy proposals in areas such as economic growth, jobs and skills, transport, housing and regeneration, energy and climate change, and public service innovation, ensuring they are deliverable and affordable.
- Shape WMCA's positions and the regional narrative on major national and regional policy issues, working with the Mayoral Office, Communications and Public Affairs so that the organisation speaks with a clear, coherent voice to government, Parliament, regulators and national bodies.
- Lead negotiations with central government on devolution deals, the integrated settlement and other strategic agreements, ensuring robust evidence, clear asks and realistic delivery plans.
- Develop, with the Executive Director for Major Capital Programmes, regional capital investment strategies for investment propositions that support regional priorities, including major infrastructure and clean growth.
- Lead horizon scanning and scenario planning to future-proof regional strategy in light of economic, technological and social trends.
- Provide strategic leadership on key cross cutting agendas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, digital, innovation and organisational development, ensuring they are embedded in strategy and policy work, creating opportunities for everyone.
- Work flexibly and with integrity to meet the needs of the WMCA and Strategy and Policy function.

People

- Act as a key ambassador for the region, building strategic alliances with national and international partners to attract investment and strengthen influence.
- Role model and embed our People & Culture Strategy, values, behaviours and ways of working, driving engagement and innovation, and providing clear, strong and inspirational leadership to create a high-performing organisation.
- Create and role model collaborative and proactive ways of working across the organisation to ensure that all teams work effectively together to deliver the strategic objectives.
- Lead, motivate and develop the Strategy and Policy directorate, setting clear objectives, fostering a culture of collaboration, constructive challenge and delivery focus, and ensuring talent management and succession planning.

Operational

- Provide clear, timely advice and options to the Mayor, Chief Executive, Executive Board and WMCA Board.
- Ensure strategies are commercially focused and outcome led.
- Ensure that the agreed strategies are delivered through the commissioning of programmes, interventions or services.
- Ensure that equality and diversity issues are fully integrated into the approach to strategic planning and service delivery, as part of the WMCA's inclusive growth agenda.
- Lead WMCA's approach to evidence, research, data and insight, building a consistent capability and framework for outcomes measurement, evaluation and strategic performance reporting.

- Collaborate with partners, including West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service, the NHS, universities, business and the voluntary and community sector where there are opportunities for shared advocacy and joint programmes.
- Promote inclusive engagement, ensuring residents, communities and businesses have meaningful routes to inform and influence strategy and policy, including through engagement with community groups, citizens' panels and the third sector.
- Ensure that strategy and policy activity complies with WMCA's constitution, Single Assurance Framework and governance arrangements, providing clear advice on risks, dependencies and trade-offs to support sound decision making.
- Represent WMCA at regional, national and international forums, promoting the West Midlands as a place to live, work, invest and innovate.

Financial

- Provide financial leadership for the directorate, aligning budgets to strategic priorities, assuring value for money and long-term financial sustainability.
- Work closely with the Chief Finance Officer to shape the corporate financial strategy and ensure affordability of strategic choices.
- Ensure Value for Money and follow the appropriate governance processes for dealing with any financial activities.
- Work closely with the Chief Legal and Governance Officer to ensure effective and compliant decision making.

Other

- Represent the WMCA in a professional manner at all times.
- 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?		
	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Experience					
Strong experience of strategy development, implementation and measurement and an understanding of the national, regional and local policy landscape.	X		X	X	
Highly developed leadership skills and substantial experience at senior managerial level, including managerial responsibility for a large and complex multi-functional service portfolios.	X		X	X	
Significant experience and a proven track record of achievement in leading and managing strategy and strategic programmes of comparable scope, size and complexity, can demonstrate experience of utilising various strategy development approaches.	X		X	X	
Significant experience of operating in a complex political environment together with consultation and negotiation skills in order to seek to change opinion and influence political and other stakeholders, on a regional and national level.	X		X	X	
Demonstrable success in leading major change, embedding innovation, digital and data-driven decision-making, and shaping organisational culture in a large and complex organisation	X		X	X	
Extensive experience of providing sound strategic advice that informs and facilitates successful policy formation and aligns resources to the Combined Authority priorities and vision.	X		X	X	

Demonstrable experience of working effectively in partnership with other organisations and agencies towards mutually beneficial objectives.	X		X	X	
Highly experienced in managing communication challenges in a fast paced and highly pressurised environment.	X		X	X	
Skills / Knowledge	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Detailed understanding of and sensitivity to the political judgements influencing both the overall objectives of the Combined Authority and ability to work with all political parties.	X		X	X	
Detailed understanding of the major strategic challenges facing local government and the public sector as a whole, along with a high level of awareness of the opportunities available for improved collaboration and partnership working required in order to respond to increasing service demands and substantial reductions in available resources.	X		X	X	
A track record of corporate working and embedding a strong culture of performance management.	X		X	X	
Excellent knowledge of portfolio, programme and project management techniques.		X	X	X	
Excellent analytical skills, with the ability to use data and risk evaluation in decision making. Excellent analytical skills, using data, risk evaluation, insight, horizon scanning and scenario planning to inform choices.	X		X	X	
Good knowledge of economics, data collection and market research.	X		X	X	
Excellent communication and presentation skills, with the ability to present complex issues with clarity, the proven ability to strongly lead, influence and challenge and provide appropriate solutions to issues and problems.	X		X	X	
Commitment to inclusive leadership, ensuring EDI, engagement and accessibility are integral to strategy and delivery.	X		X	X	
Experienced in forming effective senior level working relationships with Members, Government and partner organisations.	X		X	X	
Qualification / Education / Training	E	D	A*	I*	T*
Degree level or equivalent in a civil service or business-related subject area.	X		X		
Postgraduate qualification.		X			
Evidence of continuous professional development in strategy, leadership, governance, or programme management.	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.
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.
Adherence to Policies	Be aware of and comply with all organisation policies.
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

Our culture is underpinned by what we do and how we do it. Our behaviours outline the ways we need to work to deliver success, become truly inclusive, and make the organisation somewhere where everyone can give their best contribution.

Value	Competency	Behaviour
Collaborative	Team Focussed	Works as part of team, managing and leading.
	Service Driven	Customer, resident, and partner focussed.
Driven	Empowered & Accountable	Takes ownership and leads when needed.
	Performance Focused	Ambitious and going the extra mile.
Inclusive	'One Organisation' Mindset	Believe in each other's expertise.
	Open & Honest	We do what we say we are going to do.
Innovative	Forward Thinking	Embrace change and open to new possibilities.
	Problem Solving	Go for clear and simple whenever possible.

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