



## Job Description

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|---|---|
| <b>Job Title:</b>                               | Senior Policy Officer (Higher Education collaboration)  |
| <b>Directorate/Team:</b>                        | Strategy, Economy & Net Zero Directorate / Economy Team   |
| <b>Location:</b>                                | 16 Summer Lane based, with hybrid/travel across the region  |
| <b>Responsible to:</b>                          | Head of Business Innovation and Technology  |
| <b>Responsible for:</b>                         | n/a   |
| <b>Key working relationships:</b><br>(internal) | WMCA Strategy & Policy Team; Directors of Economic Development; Mayor's & Chief Executive's Offices; West Midlands Innovation Board; West Midlands Growth Company |
| <b>Key working relationships:</b><br>(external) | Universities (Vice-Chancellor & Director of research/regional engagement level); DSIT, UKRI & Research Councils; Local authorities.                               |

## Purpose of the Post

The WMCA needs strong and effective relationships with the nine universities based in the West Midlands to achieve the ambitions of the West Midlands Growth Plan.

Universities, the WMCA and its local authorities and the West Midlands Growth Company each have specific influence, powers and resources to help the region prosper and for residents to achieve their potential. The purpose of the post is to help senior leaders and specialists across the WMCA, universities and other relevant partners to understand priorities for bi-lateral or collective collaboration and work in partnership to realise better outcomes.

The impact of this engagement should form part of the region's storytelling of a leading region, focused and effective in delivering its shared priorities.

## Accountabilities

To lead and co-ordinate a framework of senior and regular engagement on issues of mutual interest within the context of the West Midlands Growth Plan across WMCA, universities, local authorities and the West Midlands Growth Company, from Mayoral/Chief Executive to operational levels.

The Senior Policy Officer (HE collaboration) will work as part of the Economy policy team to advise and support senior leaders in the WMCA and partner authorities by undertaking policy research, analysis and delivery to deepen collective and individual partnerships with universities recognising opportunities to align regional priorities between universities and the WMCA. Supporting regional universities to identify opportunities to collaborate with the region on opportunities and priorities.

Working with university leaders to deliver the WMCA-Universities framework that strengthens links between the WMCA and universities across the West Midlands. Complementing formal governance and institutions like the West Midlands Innovation Board, West Midlands Growth Company and Investment Board/Investment Zone Board, the framework should evolve to address issues of mutual interest, both collectively across universities and priorities for each individual institution.

Reporting on the progress and outcomes of critical projects which are in planning and delivery.

The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not exhaustive and the jobholder may be required to undertake other duties within the general scope of either the level or nature of the post.

## Responsibilities

### Strategic

- Support the development and management of a foresighting programme that harnesses leading regional academics and their wider networks to identify evidence-based solutions to regional policy priorities.
- Manage and coordinate the review and forward workplan for the WMCA-Universities Strategy and Policy meeting, liaising with the Head of Economic Policy and Partnerships to agree programme for future meetings. For each meeting, liaise with members, observers, and paper leads to agree timelines for the provision of information, timely circulation of papers, organisation of meeting, and writing of minutes. Follow-up of meetings to ensure actions arising are monitored, managed, delivered, and reported. Review the meeting function to ensure check-ins provide valuable insight and progress work for the WMCA with universities.
- Providing research, policy advice and coordination of activities to support the Head of Business Innovation and Technology to maximise investment and impact of place-based science, research, and innovation in the West Midlands. Areas of personal leadership might include:
  - Supporting the WMCA's strategic relationship with UKRI and its constituent research councils, as set out in the English Devolution White Paper, identifying specific opportunities and actions to increase public research funding into the region.
  - Evidencing regional R&D strengths, demonstrate investment impact and support visits from Chief Scientific Advisers and Ministers.
  - Identifying and managing relationships with Public Sector Research Establishments (such as the NPL), identifying shared priorities, growth opportunities, and formalising relationships where appropriate through mechanisms such as memorandums of understanding and formal partnership agreements.
  - Supporting the WMCA's ambitions for closer engagement with the European Union and, particularly, working on funding opportunities through Horizon Europe with the Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels Office.

### People

- Acting as a key point of liaison for regional universities into WMCA activities, securing high quality and timely solutions for senior stakeholders, and support the strengthening of bi-lateral relationship between senior leaders at the WMCA, universities, and civic leaders.
- Maintaining strong links with the WMIB, mayoral Growth Taskforce, the WMCA's Research and Intelligence Community of Practice and related groups by identifying issues in papers which have strategic policy implications and ensure these are actioned or escalated in line with significance.

### Operational

- Representing WMCA at external events and meetings. Where necessary, deputise for senior WMCA officers including on Economic Strategy, Business Innovation, Skills and Development in discussions related to universities and activities to deliver the West Midlands Growth Plan.
- Lead activities within and across WMCA officers, including:
  - Management of relevant business business planning, procurement, programme development, and project delivery.
  - Establish key working groups related to university collaboration priorities, managing secretariat functions for key meetings, working groups and commissions, working with teams across universities and the WMCA.
  - Building and maintain key stakeholder relationships throughout the programme, including distilling key messages for political figures.
  - Working closely with the communications team to enhance programme profile and access to its resources including liaising with key partners.

### Financial

- None

### Other

- Undertaking 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*        |
| <b>Experience</b>  | <b>E</b>              | <b>D</b> | <b>A*</b>      | <b>I*</b> | <b>T*</b> |
| Track record in developing impactful multi-organisation partnerships   | X                     |          | X              | X         | X         |
| Significant experience of using research and analysis to inform policy and strategy development and advice to senior executives and politicians  | X                     |          | X              |           |           |
| Experience of establishing practical ways of working in partnership and introducing new practices that help to achieve joint aims  | X                     |          | X              | X         |           |
| Experience of developing a forward-looking workplan of items for committees, agreeing actions and working with members to follow-up, evidence, and report actions  | X                     |          |                | X         |           |
| Experience of working with business leaders to understand key drivers, benefits, and opportunities, and collaborate to develop interventions and support   |                       | X        |                | X         |           |
| Experience of leading programmes, engaging with stakeholders and delivery partners to agree decisions and actions, mitigate barriers to delivery, negotiate best outcomes, and evidence outcomes                       | X                     |          | X              | X         | X         |
| Experience of research and gathering intelligence to produce policy briefings and reports which assess evidence and causal links   |                       | X        | X              | X         |           |
| <b>Skills / Knowledge</b>  | <b>E</b>              | <b>D</b> | <b>A*</b>      | <b>I*</b> | <b>T*</b> |
| Excellent knowledge of universities and their span of priorities, including income for research and enterprise activities, and a wider awareness of their priorities for regional impact                               | X                     |          | X              | X         | X         |
| Understanding of role of Government departments, agencies, public bodies, and public research institutions, and the dynamic of their relationships with the WMCA in relation to current and future devolved priorities | X                     |          |                | X         |           |
| Excellent written skills, with the ability to present information succinctly in a creative, clear and engaging way to a range of audiences   | X                     |          | X              |           |           |
| Excellent oral and influencing skills, with the ability to give clear advice on issues   | X                     |          | X              | X         | X         |
| Proven ability to build and maintain strong internal and external stakeholder relationships  | X                     |          |                | X         |           |
| Knowledge of Innovation as a mechanism of economic growth, the regional ecosystem of innovation strengths, and developing national policy on innovation and devolution   |                       | X        | X              | X         |           |
| Acts in a collegiate and collaborative style that engages with people at all levels and promotes positive relationship   | X                     |          | X              |           |           |
| Evidence of creativity in driving programmes forward by bringing or seeking new perspectives   |                       | X        | X              |           |           |
| Awareness of the role of Combined Authorities and their relationships with regional partners and Government departments and agencies   |                       | X        | X              | X         |           |
| <b>Qualification / Education / Training</b>  | <b>E</b>              | <b>D</b> | <b>A*</b>      | <b>I*</b> | <b>T*</b> |
| Relevant degree or comparable experience   | X                     |          | X              |           |           |

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

## Core Expectations

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Health, Safety &amp; Wellbeing</b> | 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. |
|---------------------------------------|--|

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>   | Promote and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of the role.   |
| <b>Learning &amp; Development</b> | Participate in and take responsibility of any learning and development required to carry out this role effectively.   |
| <b>Performance Management</b>     | Actively engage in the performance management process and take responsibility for managing performance outcomes.  |
| <b>GDPR</b>                       | 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. |
| <b>Adherence to Policies</b>      | Be aware of and comply with all organisation policies.  |
| <b>Other</b>                      | 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                                     |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Collaborative</b> | Team Focussed              | Works as part of team, managing and leading.  |
|                      | Service Driven             | Customer, resident, and partner focussed.     |
| <b>Driven</b>        | Empowered & Accountable    | Takes ownership and leads when needed.        |
|                      | Performance Focused        | Ambitious and going the extra mile.           |
| <b>Inclusive</b>     | 'One Organisation' Mindset | Believe in each other's expertise.            |
|                      | Open & Honest              | We do what we say we are going to do.         |
| <b>Innovative</b>    | Forward Thinking           | Embrace change and open to new possibilities. |
|                      | Problem Solving            | Go for clear and simple whenever possible.    |

### Additional Post Requirements

| Essential Car User           |  | Politically Restricted Post  |  | Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) |                                   |                                   |  | Vetting                      |  |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Basic <input type="checkbox"/>       | Standard <input type="checkbox"/> | Enhanced <input type="checkbox"/> | None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### Job Evaluation Details

| Date Evaluation Agreed | JEP Reference | Grade | Job Family |
|------------------------|---------------|-------|------------|
|                        |               |       |            |