WEST OF ENGLAND | MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Head of Democratic Services & Internal Governance
MANAGED BY:	Director of Law and Governance
GRADE:	Head of Service 2

THE ROLE

The Head of Democratic Services & Internal Governance is a senior leadership role responsible for ensuring the effective operation of governance and decision-making across the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). Reporting to the Monitoring Officer, the postholder will lead the Democratic Services function, supporting the Mayor, Combined Authority Committee, and statutory committees. The role ensures robust, transparent, and legally compliant governance arrangements that enable the delivery of WECA's strategic priorities across transport, housing, economic growth, skills, and environment. The role will also oversee high-quality executive officer support for internal governance to advisory boards, partnership forums and internal governance boards aligned with WECA's priorities, ensuring effective engagement with regional stakeholders and translation of advice into formal decision-making.

The postholder will oversee:

- Mayoral Decision Notices, management of WECA committees and executive decision processes
- Key Decision and Forward Plan management
- Publication and compliance with access to information rules
- Operational reviews of WECA's Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, and governance protocols.

The role will act as the Mayoral Combined Authority's principal adviser on matters relating to democratic governance, scrutiny, and the support of Members in the discharge of their duties, including advising Members on declarations of interest and standards matters. The post holder will be required to attend evening meetings, as is regularly required to support the scrutiny and committee process.

This role will have terms and conditions required by Local Government Officers (Political Restrictions) Regs 1990. This is a **politically restricted post** under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Democratic Services & Committee Management

- To regularly review committee activity and prepare member and officer training to optimise committee performance and member engagement.
- Lead governance arrangements supporting the West of England Mayor's executive functions, ensuring decisions are lawful, transparent, and aligned with WECA's Constitution.
- Ensure effective alignment between the mayor's executive powers and decisions reserved to WECA Committees.
- Provide strategic governance advice to the Mayor, Combined Authority Members (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire), and senior officers.
- Advise Members and internal stakeholders on declarations of interest, standards, and related governance matters.
- To assist the MO and Deputy MO investigating complaints regarding conduct at committee and board meetings.
- Lead and manage democratic services support for:
    - WECA Committee (Combined Authority Board)
    - Overview & Scrutiny Committee
    - Audit Committee
    - Joint and advisory panels, including regional partnerships where applicable
    - Internal Governance Boards
- Oversee governance arrangements and officer support for WECA advisory boards and stakeholder forums, ensuring effective operation within agreed governance frameworks and terms of reference.

Leadership and management

- To ensure that Democratic Services is appropriately organised and structured to meet the Council's statutory obligations, recognised best practice and where appropriate any national and local performance indicators.
- To look to continuously improve the services provided by Democratic Services identifying where possible, value for money savings and managing within allocated budgets.
- Support chairs and senior stakeholders to deliver benefits for residents, businesses and communities in the West of England through robust governance and high-quality decision making.
- Manage budgets and develop team resources efficiently, aligning funding and capacity with delivery priorities.
- Support effective collaboration between WECA and constituent councils ensuring the strategic outcomes and benefits can be realised for the region.
- Foster an inclusive and curious culture with clear objectives, shared learning, and professional growth opportunities.

- Lead and develop a skilled and motivated team, setting clear behavioural standards for their team which empower and motivate the team and colleagues to deliver high quality services in pursuit of WECA's strategic goals
- Carry out specific corporate roles and assignments and such other duties commensurate with the role
- Will be required to deputise across the Directorate as required.

Operating and Reporting

- Ensure production of high-quality agendas, reports, and minutes in line with statutory requirements and WECA protocols.
- Maintain and develop WECA's Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, and governance protocols.
- Be responsible members allowances and the Internal Remuneration Panel
- To ensure that all formal and ancillary informal meetings, including those involving outside bodies as appropriate, including partnerships, are properly supported and administered.
- Work closely with the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer to manage governance risks.
- Lead continuous improvement of governance arrangements in line with best practice across combined authorities and devolved institutions.
- Carry out specific corporate roles and assignments and such other duties commensurate with the role.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS AND EXPECTATIONS
Heads of Service are expected to: **Lead with Ambition** Sets high expectations for outcomes and performance and takes personal ownership for delivery. **Work Collaboratively** Actively works across boundaries, prioritising organisational outcomes over functional silos. **Act Inclusively** Create inclusive, high-performing teams and environments where people can contribute and succeed **Lead with Confidence** Takes timely, evidence-based decisions and owns the consequences. **Drive Innovation & Improvement** Continuously improve services, systems and ways of working in line with the TOM (Target Operating Model).

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)
Qualifications and Knowledge • Sector specific degree in Public Sector Administration, Social Sciences or equivalent professional experience. • Understanding of the Nolan Principles of Public life. • Strong political awareness and understanding of working in a democratic, • publicly accountable environment. • Strong understanding of mayoral combined authority governance, including scrutiny and executive decision-making. • Knowledge and experience of working on Elections.
Experience • Significant experience in democratic services or governance at a senior level within local government or a combined authority. • Strategic leader who is able to operate within a political environment and demonstrate tact, diplomacy and political acumen when working with members of different political parties, groups and individuals. • Experience communicating with and influencing senior political figures, the Chief Executive and Officers on statutory duties, governance and decision-making protocols. • Resolving ambiguous and politically sensitive challenges where there is limited

precedent and competing stakeholder interests.
- Experience of independently managing complex workloads, prioritising competing demands, and delivering accurate work to tight deadlines within a politically sensitive environment.

Skills and Competencies

- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to prioritise and manage complex high pressure democratic processes independently, producing accurate work to tight deadlines in a politically sensitive environment.
- Diplomatic with the ability to remain neutral when advising on and promote good governance and ethics and support the monitoring officer in the promotion of the Nolan Principles and high standards of conduct.
- Ability to develop trusted partnerships within the organisation and with wider partners and oversee the delivery of comprehensive, professional and solution focussed advice.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including report drafting and advisory work.
- High levels of integrity, discretion and professional credibility.
- Ability to provide strong strategic leadership and direction to ensure the effective performance management, motivation and development of staff.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the proven ability to establish positive relationships with staff at all levels, members and external organisations, which generate confidence, respect and trust.
- Ability to balance logical and analytical approach to decision making whilst bringing innovative solutions to complex problems

DESIRABLE

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Membership of ACoP (Association of Democratic Services Officers)

Experience

- Experience of working with Government Departments civil servants and other government agencies on public sector reform.
- Experience of working with the Boundary Commission and Electoral Commission on democratic arrangements.
- Experience of other governance arrangements like PCC and Fire Authority.