WEST OF ENGLAND | MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	**Senior Policy and Innovation Manager**
MANAGED BY:	Head of UK Mayors Network
GRADE:	12

THE ROLE
About the UK Mayors Network The UK Mayors Network brings together the directly elected Mayors across England to collaborate, influence, and share innovation. Through collective advocacy and insight, the network strengthens the voice of devolution and enables practical collaboration between places, government, and partners. The Secretariat team provides strategic, policy, and operational support to the Mayors and their Chief Executives — ensuring the network operates effectively, remains outward-facing, and drives tangible impact. About the role This is a unique opportunity to join the Secretariat team that supports the UK Mayors Network – the collective voice of England's directly elected Mayors. Working in a small, high-impact, ambitious, and collaborative team, you'll be a strategic and forward-thinking professional ready to help shape and deliver the next phase of the UK Mayors Network's development. As Senior Policy and Innovation Manager, you will generate insights, strengthening cross-government relationships, and translating emerging ideas into actionable policy and innovation opportunities for the Network. You will act as deputy to the Head of the Network when required, and help ensure the Secretariat remains proactive, coordinated, and high-impact. This role will suit someone who enjoys navigating complex systems, connecting dots across

government and local leadership and driving collaborative solutions that deliver both policy influence and on-the-ground outcomes.

The Senior Policy & Innovation Manager is an opportunity to shape the future of devolved leadership in the UK - influencing how Mayors collaborate, innovate, and deliver for their regions. You'll work to help strengthen the collective voice and capability of Mayoral leadership.

We work in ways that are:

- **Proactive and agile** – anticipating needs, not just reacting.
- **Collaborative and outward-looking** – connecting Mayors, MHCLG, and partners across sectors.
- **Pragmatic but ambitious** – focused on delivery while always pushing for better.
- **Reflective and self-challenging** – assessing relevance and impact as we go.
- **Learning-oriented** – drawing on global and cross-sector practice to inform innovation.

If you're driven by purpose, enjoy connecting ideas and people, and want to learn at pace in a high-impact political environment - this is the role for you. You'll be part of a team that values curiosity, agility, and people-led delivery, helping to shape the future of mayoral leadership across the UK.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

You'll support the smooth running and strategic development of the UK Mayors Network by:

1. Policy Leadership and Insight

- Lead on developing and coordinating the network's policy and innovation agenda, aligning with Mayoral priorities and national developments.
- Identify emerging policy opportunities, trends, and risks — synthesising insights to support collective positions and forward planning.
- Work with mayoral offices and senior officers to develop and refine shared policy propositions, briefing materials, and thought leadership pieces.
- Coordinate cross-cutting workstreams on issues such as economic growth, skills, net zero, and local powers.

2. Innovation and Systems Learning

- Embed a culture of innovation and learning across the network - drawing from international, cross-sector, and academic insights.
- Lead horizon scanning and facilitate peer learning activities (e.g., Innovation Days, learning partnerships, or case studies).
- Translate evidence and research into practical tools and frameworks for Mayors and their teams.

- Support the development of new collaborations, pilots, or proof-of-concept initiatives that demonstrate impact.

3. Strategic and Operational Leadership

- Act as deputy to the Head of the Network when required, including leading Secretariat meetings, representing the network in senior forums, and ensuring continuity of operations.
- Support the Head of the Network in delivering the strategic plan, setting priorities, and monitoring progress across workstreams.
- Line manage and mentor colleagues, fostering a collaborative, values-driven, and high-performing team culture.
- Ensure smooth governance, clear communication, and effective engagement across the network's boards, working groups, and stakeholders.

4. Relationships and Influence

- Build trusted relationships with Mayoral offices, Chief Executives, and senior government officials across departments.
- Represent the network in cross-sector discussions, ensuring local perspectives shape national policy.
- Engage with external partners, think tanks, and academic institutions to expand the network's influence and knowledge base.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)
Qualifications and Knowledge • Understanding of how policy, strategy, politics, and organisational priorities interact. • Ability to navigate the local–national interface with confidence, building trusted relationships with senior stakeholders.
Experience • Strong experience in policy development, strategy, or innovation in a complex, multi-stakeholder environment. • Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and develop team members or peers. • Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to distil complexity into clarity. • A proactive, systems-oriented mindset — able to connect ideas, people, and opportunities. • Sound judgement, political awareness, and discretion in managing sensitive relationships. • Previous experience deputising, communicating with confidence or leading projects on behalf of Mayors and C-suite executives.
Skills and Competencies

- Ability to build positive working relationships across teams and disciplines, bringing clarity and structure.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills to ensure that priorities are communicated effectively, with purpose and precision.
- Ability to take initiative to drive work forward.
- Adaptable to change when priorities or politics may change and require alternative action.

DESIRABLE

Experience

- Experience working with or around local government, central government, or public affairs.
- Familiarity with devolution and the policy landscape for place-based leadership.
- Experience in systems thinking, foresight, or innovation methods (e.g., design thinking, futures, experimentation).