

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Democratic Services Officer
<b>MANAGED BY:</b>	Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager
<b>GRADE:</b>	Grade 8

### BACKGROUND

The West of England Combined Authority is seeking to appoint a Democratic Services Officer to join the Democratic Services team.

This is an exciting time to join the West of England Combined Authority. In the last year nearly three quarters of a billion pounds of new investment has been secured for the region. New plans are in place to deliver on Mayoral priorities to improve transport, skills and housing for our residents, take decisive action to tackle the climate emergency, and to support communities facing the cost-of-living crisis. There is a relentless focus on delivery to put the West of England on the map for regional, national and global success.

Led by the regional Metro Mayor, the West of England Combined Authority brings together three local councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership and works with communities, other public services, and industry to deliver for the region.

Come and help shape the future of the West of England, a place so many people are proud to call home.

### THE ROLE

Reporting into the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, the Democratic Services Officer will specialise in maintaining the efficient running of the democratic process. They will:

- To provide an efficient, digitally enabled, effective and inclusive Democratic Services function at the West of England Combined Authority to enable all relevant individuals to fulfil their democratic duties and responsibilities and to facilitate lawful, transparent and accessible decision making in accordance with the Combined Authority's statutory duties and in line with the Constitution.

- Ensure the effective, planning, organisation and administration of the West of England Combined Authority and Joint Committee meetings, Audit Committee, Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Advisory Boards, Employment and Appointments Committee, LEP Board and any other committees which may be convened, in accordance with the Local Government statutory requirements and the West of England constitutional obligations.
- To offer advice to officers, elected members, partner organisations and members of the public on the provisions of the legislation relating to local authority meetings and the requirements of the Combined Authority Constitution.
- To write the minutes of meetings and to ensure an accurate record of the decision that has been made and the key points of discussion are captured. To provide information governance, ensuring that key records are identified and retained.
- Assist in the delivery of the Metro Mayoral priorities

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To work with the Democratic Services & Scrutiny Manager to ensure the smooth running of all the Committees, Advisory Boards and decision-making meetings to ensure:
  - Committee meetings and Boards are appropriately resourced and managed
  - A standard approach is taken to all public meetings to ensure these are open, transparent and accessible
  - Appropriate advice and guidance is provided to the Mayor, partners, elected members, Combined Authority officers and Unitary Authority officers and members of the public involved in the meetings process
- Liaise with the Combined Authority officers and others as necessary to ensure the timely preparation of all agendas, reports and forward plans
- Ensure the requisite papers are published in accordance with the Statutory and Constitutional requirements for all meetings
- As part of the Democratic Services function, maintain the Committee forward plans, and manage agenda forward plans for internal and other meetings to ensure these align with the published Committee forward plans
- As part of the Democratic Services function, take ownership of the management of the West of England Combined Authority Committee and Joint Committee. To include the preparation of agendas, reports, minutes, publication and follow

up of decisions for all formal democratic meetings and promoting and supporting the needs of all relevant stakeholders including:

- managing agenda forward plans
  - arranging meetings
  - preparing agendas
  - attending meetings
  - preparing minutes and finalising for publication
  - carrying out follow up actions
- To work with key contacts, in particular chief officers and executive members across the local authorities in the West of England region, to ensure the smooth delivery of the Democratic Services function.
  - Provide pro-active, appropriate, accessible (Plain English), timely written and verbal communications that are appropriate for the complexity and/or sensitivity of the issue and political environment to all relevant stakeholders throughout all stages of the democratic process. To enable stakeholders to fulfil their duties and to contribute to effectively maintaining the reputational management of the Combined Authority.
  - Ensure the maintenance, management and proper use of the Authority's document management system, ModGov.
  - Ensure key decision records are identified and managed appropriately and in line with legislation.
  - Provide guidance to the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager and Director of Legal/Monitoring officer for key meetings, including managing agendas, taking minutes and following up actions.
  - To undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may be determined from time to time by the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the post holder.
  - Work to review processes and procedures on an ongoing basis to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the service with particular focus on increasingly digitally enabled service that encourages self-service and improves the customer interface across the organisation. This includes the ongoing monitoring and development of the Combined Authority's Constitution.
  - Deliver training on the relevant democratic procedures for internal and external stakeholders.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

#### Qualifications and Knowledge

- Qualified to degree level or equivalent relevant experience
- Knowledge and understanding of Committee work within local government  
Excellent IT skills, including Outlook, Word and Excel

#### Experience

- Experience of Democratic Services gained in a local authority environment, or experience of managing administrative functions at a senior level in a relevant public or private sector organisation
- Experience of handling public enquiries to provide a high level of customer service
- Good degree of political awareness and experience of working closely with elected members and/or Chief Executives and Directors of Local Authorities and Businesses
- Experience of working in a dynamic and complex environment

#### Skills and Competencies

- Excellent written and oral communication skills, with ability to communicate to different audiences including elected members and the public
- Self-motivated and able to organise own and others' workload to meet deadlines
- Team-player with an enthusiastic and collaborative approach to problem solving to ensure high performance across the team
- Able to build and maintain relationships with colleagues in partner organisations
- Focus on excellent customer service
- Ability to deal appropriately with confidential and sensitive information

### DESIRABLE

#### *Qualifications and Knowledge*

- Experience of supervising others
- Understanding of constitutional, governance and standards issues relevant to a Democratic Services function
- Use of Modern.gov software

Please note this is a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

## REWARDS AND BENEFITS

Alongside a competitive salary, we offer an excellent benefits package including:

- 26/31 days annual leave plus bank holidays
- Generous Employer-Contribution Pension Scheme through the Avon Pension Fund
- Cycle to work scheme and secure bike parking
- Free eye tests for all display screen equipment (DSE) users
- Discounted monthly bus tickets
- Hybrid working to split your week between the office and home to help you achieve the best work/life balance and career goals.

We have recently moved into a new bright, airy, modern office space, with all the latest technology, under a 10-minute walk from Bristol Temple Meads Train Station. We offer flexible and hybrid working options too if you would rather work from home, or another suitable location.

*As an equal opportunities employer, we invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support they may need during the recruitment process.*

## WE PAY THE LIVING WAGE

We're proud to have been accredited as a Living Wage Employer

Living Wage accreditation means that everyone working at The West of England and Combined Authority receives a minimum hourly wage of £15.17 - higher than the government minimum for over 23s, currently £11.44 per hour



It also means that anyone who provides services to, or has contracts with us, must pay the Living Wage, setting the bar for good employer practices in the region. This includes those who provide services to The West of England and Combined Authority, such as cleaning and facilities management contracts, as well as those who have contracts with us - such as IT providers.

## WE ARE A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER

We're proud to have been accredited as a founding Member of the West of England Good Employment Charter.

The [Good Employment Charter](#) is a voluntary membership and accreditation scheme aimed to create an active network of employers within the West of England that are committed to



supporting the basis of 'good work'. The Good Employment Charter is defined by seven key characteristics of good employment: recruitment, secure work, Real Living Wage, developing people, health & wellbeing, flexible work and engagement & voice.