

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Head of Partnership Development
MANAGED BY:	Director of Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholders
GRADE:	Head of Service 3

THE ROLE

The Head of Partnership Development will play a leading role in shaping the future of the West of England, designing and driving high-profile partnerships that deliver real impact for people and places across the region.

The role will lead the development and effective operation of the Combined Authority's priority partnerships, ensuring they are strategically aligned, outcome focused and directly support delivery of mayoral priorities.

Working across the public, private, voluntary and academic sectors, the postholder will build and sustain ambitious, high-quality partnerships that enable strong system leadership and unlock collective action to improve outcomes for residents. Reporting to the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholders, the role will translate strategic vision into practical, deliverable partnership models, putting in place clear governance, shared objectives and accountability for results.

As a senior and trusted interface with partners, the Head of Partnership Development will operate confidently across complex systems, bringing people together around shared goals and enabling alignment, collaboration and shared ownership of outcomes across the region. This role will be responsible for working with teams internally to deliver the sector outcomes set out in WECA's Growth Strategy.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Partnership development and delivery

- Lead the development and day today operation of WECA's priority partnership arrangements, ensuring they are effective, inclusive and outcomes focused.
- Translate strategic priorities into partnership frameworks, programmes and governance structures that support delivery.

- Ensure partnerships have clear purpose, shared objectives, appropriate decision making and performance oversight.
- Contribute to a coordinated, organisation-wide approach to strategic investment activity, ensuring clarity of roles, responsibilities and decision-making across WECA.

Management of priority partnership relationships

- Provide relationship management across a highly complex portfolio of key partners, including local authorities, the academic and skills sector, the voluntary, community and social economy, and multi-agency partnership bodies.
- Act as a senior, credible representative of WECA within partnership forums and networks maintaining professional relationships.
- Work with partners to align activity, investment and capacity with WECA priorities, strengthening collective delivery and impact.

System working and collaboration

- Operates with a high degree of autonomy within delegated authority, enabling system-wide collaboration to support WECA's priorities.
- Promote co-production, equal voice and strong, trust-based cross-sector relationships.
- Support partners to work collectively across organisational and thematic boundaries, addressing barriers to collaboration, risks and political sensitivities.
- Lead on the development and evaluation of complex strategic investment options and negotiations, advising Senior Leadership and Committees.

Supporting strategy, programmes and investment

- Collaborate with senior colleagues to embed partnership insight into strategic thinking, policy development and investment choices.
- Support the development of joint initiatives, funding bids and co-investment opportunities with partners.
- Provide leadership across internal teams and partner organisations to ensure successful delivery of WECA's Growth Strategy outcomes.

Leadership and management

- Provide strong and visible leadership to the partnership development team, fostering a culture of collaboration, professionalism and continuous improvement.
- Ensure effective management of people and resources to deliver value for money and measurable impact.
- Provide leadership of key resources across the team to enable efficient delivery of priorities, and act as deputy to the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholders as required.
- Undertake corporate responsibilities commensurate with the seniority and scope of the role.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS AND EXPECTATIONS

Heads of Service are expected to role model the values of the MCA through their behaviours. Leaders 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 Target Operating Model.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Educated to degree level or able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience in Business Administration/ Social Sciences or similar.
- Working knowledge of political environments, including sensitivities surrounding leadership changes, and balancing complex relationships between organisations.
- Understanding of the Nolan Principles of Public life.

Experience

- Proven ability of leading high-impact partnerships, influencing government bodies and key partners to develop and deliver high impact solutions on a regional scale.
- Skilled at negotiating, lobbying and coaching stakeholders to reach agreements for the benefit of those who live, work or visit the region.
- Strong background in shaping policies, strategic development and public affairs to drive partnerships
- Translating strategic priorities into workable partnership frameworks, programmes and governance structures that supports high quality delivery.
- Leading teams to success, providing clear direction, identifying and treating risks

collaboratively and ensuring planned work is delivered on time, to budget and to a high quality.

Skills and Competencies

- Adopts an entrepreneurial approach, with a proven track record of dynamic thought leadership.
- Excellent relationship-building skills, with the ability to establish trust, credibility and productive partnerships across a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Strong communication skills, with the ability to engage, influence and build effective partnerships with stakeholders at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Highly effective written and verbal communicator, able to translate complex strategic issues and initiatives into clear, compelling messages tailored to different audiences.
- High levels of emotional intelligence, enabling constructive partnership working, shared problem-solving and collaborative delivery of agreed outcomes.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, horizon scan and plan, taking account of external trends, risks and opportunities that impact the organisation and its partnerships.
- Ability to think laterally across a range of sectors and subjects with a strong capacity to quickly learn and apply new knowledge.

DESIRABLE

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Senior-level experience working in or alongside combined authorities, local authorities or complex partnership-based public sector environments, with a strong understanding of devolution and mayoral governance.