

AMBITIOUS

CREATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

SUPPORTIVE

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Employment Land Specialist (Principal Planning Officer)
MANAGED BY:	Strategic Planning Lead
GRADE:	Tbc (anticipated Grade 10) Fixed Term contract until 30 June 2022.

BACKGROUND

Working at the West of England Combined Authority

The West of England is a fantastic place to live and work; a place where ideas flourish and businesses grow, and a diverse population calls home. With a highly-skilled workforce, innovative businesses, rich cultural and natural assets, and excellent connections, the West of England competes on a global scale.

In 2017, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) was formed to bring the region together to drive economic growth. A West of England Mayor was elected, and significant powers and funding were transferred to the region to support work to ensure residents have better skills, more job opportunities and a better quality of life. We're working with our regional partners and with Government to protect the environment and ensure the West of England continues to be a thriving, successful and innovative place for future generations.

Covid-19 has had a big impact on the West of England, and we are leading the regional economic recovery, bringing people together to ensure our region remains a thriving, successful and innovative place to live and work. By joining WECA, you will be helping us with this important work.

WECA is made up of three of the region's local councils - Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Building on a strong track record of partnership working in the region, the West of England Combined Authority continues to work closely with North Somerset Council. The Combined Authority also the accountable body for the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

WECA is an equal opportunities employer, in line with the Equalities Act 2010, and invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support needed during the recruitment process.

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

The purpose of this job is to act, under the guidance of the Strategic Planning Lead, as the Principal Planning Officer to support the West of England Combined Authority strategic planning activities, with a particular focus on employment land. The postholder will also be working closely with the Principal Economist on matters relating to the Local Industrial Strategy.

To contribute at a senior professional level to, the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of strategic planning policies and to work with the unitary authorities and LEP on joint planning work.

The post holder will be responsible for supporting the Strategic Planning Lead and relevant partners in developing the agenda and reports related to Planning and Housing for the Joint Committee, Planning and Housing Board, and for undertaking or commissioning projects and initiatives identified in the work programmes of these groups.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide support to the Strategic Planning Lead to:

- Develop the West of England policy response to National Policy and initiatives, including the revised National Planning Policy Framework, any emerging planning policy review.
- Lead and scope strategic planning work and project teams to deliver strategic policy and plans with a particular focus on employment land and other spatial and infrastructural needs relevant to economic functionality and strategic priorities for the economy, including clean and inclusive recovery and growth.
- Lead and scope an employment space delivery strategy to support the implementation of the Local Industrial Strategy and Spatial Development Strategy and Recovery Taskforce agendas (working closely with the principal economist on matters relating to the local industrial strategy).
- Ensure that employment land and spatial needs issues are given appropriate consideration in broader projects, particularly strategic [infrastructure] master planning.
- Develop and undertake a work programme to implement the functions agreed in the West of England devolution deal on strategic planning and housing activities.

Develop key partnerships with the Unitary Authorities and our partners to:

- prepare reports and presentations for Committees and other public meetings.
- ensure that there is participation by stakeholders, community interest groups and others in the development, review and implementation of the Combined Authority's strategies, policies and schemes.
- procure and manage technical input and expertise in the commissioning of consultancy work for housing and planning policies and projects.

assist in any other areas of comparable work as may be required by the Head of Regional Housing and Planning because of workloads and priorities.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

Essential:

- Qualified to degree standard or equivalent in relevant subject.
- High level numeracy skills and ability to present complex arguments in a clear and understandable manner.
- Understanding of key local government politics, political structures and culture.

Desirable:

- Higher level degree or post graduate qualification
- Relevant professional qualification.
- Membership of the RTPI or at least eligibility for membership

Experience

Essential

- Experience and proven ability of delivering relevant strategic planning policy work from evidence base development through to examination, adoption and implementation, notably that relate to employment land, other planning policy support for economic development, regeneration and growth and spatial strategy development more generally.
- Experience in partnership working, developing and maintaining effective sub-regional inter-authority and cross-sectoral partnerships to deliver and co-ordinate relevant work area across service, professional, administrative and organisational boundaries.
- Experience of working in a political environment, including with senior local authority members, and officers.
- Experience of project managing consultants to deliver expected outputs in relation to a broader programme.
- Demonstrable understanding of the national, regional and local planning policy context with the ability to translate this into effective co-ordination of joint working arrangements in the sub-region.

Skills and Competencies

- Ability to communicate effectively with elected Members, colleagues at all levels across the Authority and members of the public.
- Ability to prioritise workload to achieve desired outcomes and meet deadlines.
- Ability to give advice and, when necessary, negotiate assertively but with tact and diplomacy.
- Good organisation skills and ability to promote an organised working environment.

DESIRABLE

- Experience of supporting delivery of new employment spaces to support wider strategies, through pursuit of funding, enabling infrastructure, and other relevant interventions.
- Experience of supporting master planning and infrastructure planning with a focus on employment and economic objectives.

REWARDS AND BENEFITS

WECA staff receive:

- 25 days annual leave, rising to 30 after five years' continuous service, plus bank holidays, pro rata
- Auto-enrolment into the Avon Pension Fund
- Cycle to work scheme and secure bike parking
- Free eye tests for all display screen equipment (DSE) users
- Commuter Travel Club - WECA employees can sign up to receive discounted monthly bus tickets, unlimited bus travel for work or leisure within your chosen zone, automatic ticket renewal and price freeze for 12 months.