

AMBITIOUS

CREATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

SUPPORTIVE

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Communications and Engagement Manager (Infrastructure)
MANAGED BY:	Head of Communications
GRADE:	11 (2 year fixed term contract)

BACKGROUND

The Employer: The West of England Combined Authority (WECA)

The West of England is an economic leader with an economy worth over £33 billion a year. With a population of over 1.1 million people, one of the highest rates of employment in the country, and over 45,000 businesses, the region competes on a global scale. The West of England is a place where highly-skilled people work, where ideas flourish, and where businesses grow. It's also a place that a diverse population of people call home.

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) was formed in 2017, to champion the region and drive clean and inclusive economic growth. As a result, significant powers and funding have been transferred to the region through the new Combined Authority and West of England Mayor.

Our aim is to deliver economic growth for the region and address some of our challenges, such as productivity and skills, housing and transport.

WECA is made up of three of the local authorities in the region - 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.

Economic growth that benefits every resident is at the core of the vision for the West of England. We want local people to benefit from more job opportunities, a stronger economy and a high quality of life.

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

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Working to the Head of Communications and closely with the Head of Capital Delivery and Head of Housing and Planning, you will lead on engagement for a number of key projects in the Infrastructure Directorate, ensuring that all communications align with the Combined Authority's broader communications and marketing strategy.

You will work with colleagues to devise, develop and implement communications and engagement plans, and manage the public interface for high profile projects and workstreams undertaken by WECA's Infrastructure Directorate, covering planning, housing, transport and capital delivery. You will have detailed understanding of the Directorate's programme of work and lead on planned and managed communications to support project delivery, ensuring the public and stakeholders are informed and able to participate and engage. This will include high profile projects such as the Spatial Development Strategy, MetroWest and Mass Transit.

In this exciting and fast-paced role, you will provide vital support to WECA's busy Infrastructure and Communications teams, to promote activity and engage with audiences across the West of England. As part of a small team you will be flexible, providing both strategic oversight and practical delivery of engagement activities to meet the needs of the Directorate.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Key duties and responsibilities will include:

- Plan and deliver proactive and coordinated communications and engagement activity to support the delivery of high-profile strategic plans and infrastructure projects.
- Provide a strategic overview of programme delivery, with planned communications to support project delivery teams across the Directorate. This may include working with consultants supporting delivery of specific projects and programmes.
- Plan and deliver consultations including promotion, design, project management, analysis, interpretation and dissemination. This includes advising on quantitative and qualitative approaches, corporate policy and best practice.
- To lead on public engagement including the development of networks to ensure consultation and engagement activity is inclusive and reaches the West of England's diverse communities and hard-to-reach groups.
- Use a range of channels to manage the delivery of the communications and engagement strategy for the Spatial Development Strategy, including innovative approaches to digital engagement.
- Responding to restrictions to traditional engagement approaches due to Covid-19 pandemic, seek to engage with targeted, relevant, and diverse audiences across the region, and monitor impact and effectiveness to ensure inclusivity.

- Provide a responsive customer service function, monitoring and maintaining consultation email inbox(es) and directly responding to enquiries from the public following an agreed joint working protocol.
- Put together briefings for senior leaders as necessary.
- Work closely with the Communications and marketing team to increase the reach and raise the profile of WECA's activities and ensure that all activities are delivered in line with the Combined Authority's overall Communications Strategy, brand, visual identity, tone of voice and key messages.
- Work with partner Unitary Authorities to ensure a regional and collaborative approach to promoting infrastructure related activity.
- The post holder will be expected at times to provide support to the wider Communications and Marketing Team to support WECA work areas

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Knowledge and interest in issues relating to strategic planning, housing and transport.

Experience

- Experience of working on high-profile and complex projects, with multiple stakeholders and high levels of public interest.
- Experience of developing, leading and implementing large-scale public consultation and engagement strategies.
- Experience of leading on consultations with the public, on complex and multifaceted issues
- Experience of quantitative and qualitative consultation techniques, including the design and commissioning of research projects, sampling and the analysis of results. This includes the use of statistics and experience using appropriate software.
- Experience of innovative engagement tools, including online and digital, to engage audiences.
- Experience of delivering inclusive and accessible communications, demonstrably reaching a broad audience.
- Experience of working in a political environment.

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent interpersonal skills, with ability to manage complex relationships with a range of stakeholders across multiple projects. Ability to develop effective professional relationships and networks, including businesses, commercial partners and investors.
- Excellent communication skills including writing, presentation, influencing, negotiation, demonstrable political sensitivity, tact and diplomacy as well as strong relationship management skills.
- Ability to translate complex information into clear messages for a broad audience
- Ability to understand complex issues and communicate these clearly, briefing senior leaders as necessary.
- Good organisational skills with proven ability to manage priorities and deliver results on time, and work well under pressure to tight deadlines.
- Willingness to take a flexible and adaptable approach to the role, according to capacity and work priorities.

DESIRABLE

- Understanding of local, regional and national context relevant to the post.
- Experience of delivering successful social media campaigns
- An understanding of the technical basis of infrastructure projects.

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.