

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs
MANAGED BY:	Chief Executive
GRADE:	Director

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Approx. size of team:	14
Approx. annual budget:	TBC
Key accountabilities:	Strategic communications and public affairs, media relations, marketing and campaigns, internal and stakeholder communications, narrative and reputation management, branding.
Key relationships:	Mayor, Combined Authority leadership, UA partners, Government departments and officials, media, local authorities, business leaders, national agencies, communications professionals across the region.

THE ROLE

Shape and amplify the West of England's voice, influence national policy and build public trust.

This is a unique opportunity to lead the strategic communications function at the heart of the Mayoral Combined Authority – shaping the brand, voice and impact of the organisation, and translating the Mayor's vision into powerful, regionally resonant communications. You will design and deliver a bold, integrated strategy across communications, media and engagement that positions the Mayor, the Combined Authority, and the West of England as national leaders in inclusive growth, net zero, connectivity and innovation.

Acting as a trusted advisor to the Mayor, Chief Executive and senior leadership team, you will navigate complex political landscapes and manage sensitive

reputational issues with discretion, clarity, and strategic foresight. You will lead a team of talented professionals and ensure our communications are impactful, inclusive, evidence-led, and aligned to our corporate and Mayoral priorities.

Key Attributes

Narrative Leader

Shapes and articulates a compelling story for the West of England, ensuring communications align with strategic objectives, reflect the voice of the Mayor, and resonate with diverse audiences across the region.

Strategic Leader

Sets direction and leads from the front – aligning communications, marketing and public affairs activity to deliver on the Combined Authority’s priorities and corporate ambitions.

Trusted Advisor

A politically astute, discreet and dependable partner to the Mayor, CEO and senior leadership, providing clear counsel on reputation, media strategy and high-risk or sensitive matters.

Collaborative Influencer

Builds trust and alignment across political, organisational and external boundaries – influencing nationally while fostering internal connection and shared ownership of the narrative.

Narrative and Reputation Strategist

Oversees narrative consistency and reputation management, ensuring the organisation communicates with integrity, accessibility and in a way that reflects its public values and responsibilities.

Impact-Oriented and Inclusive

Delivers high-impact communications that are insight-led, inclusive, and designed to inform, inspire and change behaviour – supporting the Combined Authority to reach every part of the region it serves.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Lead the Strategic Communications Function

Develop and deliver a bold, integrated communications strategy that positions the Mayor and the Combined Authority as national leaders in inclusive growth, sustainability and innovation. Oversee media relations, public affairs, marketing, campaigns, branding, and internal communications to ensure clear, consistent messaging that supports corporate priorities and builds public trust.

Shape the Regional Narrative

Lead the creation of a compelling and coherent story for the West of England. Use insight, creativity and strategic framing to communicate our regional

strengths, ambitions and achievements, engaging residents, businesses, and Government. Ensure that our public voice reflects the diversity of our region and the values of openness, fairness and ambition.

Advise with Integrity and Judgement

Act as a trusted advisor to the Mayor, Chief Executive, and senior leaders on communications and media strategy. Provide politically astute, strategic counsel in high-pressure and sensitive situations, ensuring risks are managed and opportunities are maximised. Handle confidential issues with discretion, professionalism and credibility.

Lead the Public Affairs Function

Provide strategic leadership across public affairs, government relations, and engagement to ensure the West of England Combined Authority speaks with one consistent, confident voice. Oversee public affairs activity including the development of briefings for Government officials, political stakeholders and MPs; support the positioning of the Mayor and CEO with national stakeholders; and ensure alignment of all communications with our policy and political context.

Ensure that the organisation's approach to public consultation, political stakeholder engagement, formal events, and correspondence is coherent, compliant and effective. Provide senior oversight of political diary management and Mayoral appearances to maximise influence, visibility and impact. Act as the senior corporate guardian of narrative integrity, ensuring that communications and engagement activity consistently reflects our values, ambitions, and public responsibilities.

Strategic Planning and Delivery

Lead the forward planning of communications across the organisation, developing a strategic calendar aligned to policy milestones, announcements, campaigns, and major events. Ensure messaging is timely, proactive and coordinated across platforms, with clear ownership and impact measures.

Public Engagement

Develop and deliver inclusive, accessible communications and engagement activity that helps residents understand and connect with the work of the Combined Authority and the Mayor. Use modern mechanisms of public engagement – including digital platforms, targeted campaigns and community-led approaches – to build trust and confidence in the decisions we take and the impact we deliver. Ensure all communications are accessible, inclusive, and underpinned by research, insight and behavioural science. Campaigns and engagement must be insight-led, strategically aligned, and capable of delivering measurable regional impact – from increasing public transport use to supporting skills development and the region's green transition.

Build strong, collaborative relationships with communications leads in the region's unitary authorities to ensure alignment of messaging, mutual support during high-profile activity, and effective management of regional issues. Enact and oversee delivery of the West of England communications protocol, ensuring it is applied consistently and constructively across all partners. Champion shared messaging where appropriate, foster consensus during politically sensitive moments, and maintain open channels of communication that support a joined-up approach to public information, campaigns and media response across the region.

Build Strategic Relationships

Cultivate strong relationships with UA partners, Government officials, media, national agencies, business leaders and other key stakeholders. Represent the West of England's communications voice in cross-regional and national networks, building influence and advocating for the region's priorities.

Lead a High-Performing, Agile Team

Inspire, develop and lead a team of skilled communications professionals. Build a high-performing, collaborative and innovative team culture focused on delivery, learning and excellence. Manage resources effectively and invest in professional development to attract and retain top talent.

Embed Continuous Learning and Improvement

Establish clear KPIs and evaluation methods to measure communications impact. Promote a culture of reflection and adaptation, using insights and evidence to improve effectiveness. Champion a digital-first, audience-centred approach that evolves with public expectations and technological change.

Promote the organisation's values in all public-facing activity and champion a customer-focused approach to communications and engagement, ensuring that our work reflects and supports the lived experience of residents and communities across the region.

PERSON SPECIFICATION - ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Educated to degree level or able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience in communications, public affairs, media or a related discipline.
- Strong knowledge of media relations, strategic communications, branding and digital engagement.
- Understanding of the local, regional and national political landscape and the role of a Mayoral Combined Authority.
- Awareness of the need for accessible, inclusive, and transparent communications in a publicly accountable organisation.

Experience

- Significant experience leading a high-performing communications function in a complex, politically led or public-facing organisation.
- Proven experience advising senior leaders or political figures on strategic communications and media handling.
- Successful delivery of campaigns that shaped reputation, influenced policy, or changed public behaviour.
- Experience handling media crises and managing reputational risk.
- Strong track record of team leadership, budget management, and stakeholder engagement at a senior level.
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Skills and Competencies

- Outstanding communicator with excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills.
- High political awareness and ability to navigate sensitive issues with confidence and diplomacy.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to align communications to broader organisational goals.
- Trusted to manage confidential or high-risk matters with integrity and discretion.
- Effective influencer and relationship builder, both internally and externally.
- Strong analytical and planning skills with the ability to evaluate and improve impact.
- Commercial awareness and ability to manage resources for maximum value.