

Recruitment

# Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth

Candidate Pack | December 2025



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# Welcome

Dear Candidate, thank you for your interest in becoming our next Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth. This is a defining role for Islington, one that sits across economic development, employment, business growth, culture, innovation and the future of work in our borough.

Islington is home to world-leading sectors, from cutting-edge digital and tech businesses to pioneering life sciences clusters, alongside a vibrant cultural ecosystem and some of London's most dynamic small enterprises. At the same time, too many residents remain locked out of the opportunities on their doorstep. Our challenge and your opportunity is to close that gap.

You will be the strategic and delivery lead for the Islington Inclusive Growth Plan, shaping how we grow our economy in a way that is fair, sustainable and genuinely inclusive. This includes helping us to shape the borough's Industrial Strategy, strengthening our ties with the GLA, and ensuring Islington plays a leading role in national and regional programmes, from the DWP Connect to Work and London Growth Plan.

This role reaches across every part of our local economy. You will work with employers, anchor institutions, universities, the voluntary sector, cultural partners, and neighbouring boroughs to unlock opportunity for residents. You will oversee our employment and skills offer, helping residents, whether young people, those affected by migration, or adults seeking progression, secure meaningful, good-quality work.

You will also lead major partnerships, including our joint LIFT collaboration with Camden and Hackney, which is opening new pathways into the tech, digital and knowledge-based sectors. This programme is helping establish inclusive pathways for local talent into high-growth sectors, and your leadership will be central to shaping the next phase.

Commercial and investment insight will be key. You will work closely with planning colleagues on Section 106 contributions, drive business-to-business engagement, and support new investment in the borough's priority sectors, including the green economy, creative industries, and life sciences. Much of this work spans borough boundaries, giving you a unique platform to influence regional economic priorities.

Culture and creativity are also part of Islington's identity, and you will help strengthen relationships with our cultural partners and creative organisations, ensuring they remain a powerful force for inclusion, local pride and economic growth. Alongside this, you will focus on our town centres and the development of inclusive economies, places where independent businesses can thrive, communities feel connected, and your work contributes to vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods for everyone.

Above all, this role is about impact: ensuring growth in Islington genuinely benefits the people who live here.

If you are motivated by the challenge of blending economics with social purpose, partnership with creativity, and long-term strategy with hands-on delivery, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Warm regards,



**Caroline Wilson**  
Director of  
Inclusive Economy  
Islington Council



We pledge to reduce carbon emissions

We pledge to boost jobs and employment

Islington's Anchor Institutions Network

We pledge to support local businesses

#Islington's Anchor Institutions Network

# Our Values

At Islington, how we work is just as important as what we deliver. Our **CARE Values** guide how we lead, collaborate and serve our communities:



## Collaborative

We're more effective when we work together as one team, with our partners, our colleagues, our managers and with residents.

## Ambitious

We will challenge ourselves to be the best and we are ambitious in creating new solutions that deliver the best for our communities.

## Resourceful

We will look for ways to make things happen, especially when faced with new or difficult situations, by making the most of what we have, coming up with solutions, thinking creatively in our approaches, and finding ways to effectively and sustainably use our resources.

## Empowering

Empowering. We respect our differences and champion inclusion in our workplace. We invest in a high performing workplace by providing opportunities for colleagues to learn and develop their skills and experience. We empower every colleague to be their best for our residents.

# Join us and help change the future



Watch our video



[https://youtu.be/ULQaMkrU3w8?si=CN5844N\\_oumU5GDY](https://youtu.be/ULQaMkrU3w8?si=CN5844N_oumU5GDY)

Please note: Clicking this link will open the video on YouTube in a new tab.

# Key facts about life in Islington

Inequality is a defining feature of life in Islington. For many people in Islington, differences in access to wealth and opportunity mean that they often feel as if they lead parallel lives to those around them, even those who live on the same street. We know that not only is this a moral failing, but that this disparity has very real impact on the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our residents and our borough.

**↑19%**

The population of Islington is estimated to be 216,767 in 2022. **This is an increase of approximately 19% (39,189 people) since 2011.**



It is estimated that the population of Islington will grow by 2.7% (6,600 people) between 2022 and 2032. **The biggest population increases are expected in those over 65 years.**



33% of Islington's residents are from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group.

**16,699 people** **1km<sup>2</sup>**

**Islington is the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales, with 16,699 people per square km.** This is almost triple the London average and more than 38 times the national average.

**3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Islington is the third smallest borough in London covering 15km squared.**



**Only 13% of the borough's land is green space,** the second lowest proportion of any local authority in the country.

**24<sup>th</sup> → 53<sup>rd</sup>**

Islington has moved from the 24th most deprived local authority in England in 2015 to the 53rd most deprived in 2019 (out of 317 local authorities). **Islington is now the 6th most deprived local authority in London (it was 5th in 2015).**



**There are approximately 32,000 micro businesses, 2,440 small businesses, 964 medium businesses, and 500 large enterprises operating in Islington. This shows the borough's economy is heavily driven by micro and small enterprises, which make up the vast majority of its business landscape. Key sectors include: professional, scientific and technical activities, wholesale and retail trade, and information and communication, reflecting a strong service and tech-based economy.**



**Men living in the most deprived areas in the borough are expected to live 9.8 years less than those who are the least deprived in Islington.** This is higher compared to London (7.2 years).

**↑80%**

**There is 80% higher death rate from avoidable causes amongst the most deprived in Islington.** Black communities are more likely to die prematurely of cardiovascular disease.



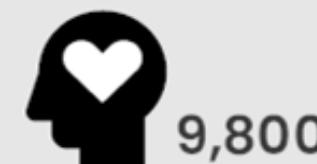
**34% of adults aged 60 or over are living in income deprived households** – more than double the average for England (14%) and 11% of Islington households experience fuel poverty.



Young people as a group are more likely to live in deprivation than the rest of the population. **28% of children aged under 16 live in income deprived families** – the highest percentage in London and 10th highest in England.



**On average, rent accounts for about 70% of gross earnings in Islington.**



Islington had had the highest proportion of working age population claiming sickness and disability benefits (approx. 9,800 people) in London in February 2020 – the main reason being mental ill health.

Nationally and globally, we are facing tough times – an economic downturn and a cost of living crisis which are likely to push many more of our residents into poverty. National research has shown that the cost of living crisis is likely to continue to drive inequality – as the Runnymede Trust has revealed, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are 2.2 times more likely to be in deep poverty than White people, and drilling down, Bangladeshi people are more than 3 times more likely.

The picture is stark, but we need to understand what we are up against. This is the moment when strong leadership is most important. We are committed to standing with our communities and using all of the power and resources at our disposal to help them through these challenging times.



space

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@betterspace  
www.betterspace.com

hp

@Better Space

# The Opportunity

## Join us and help build a thriving borough! Assistant Director, Inclusive Growth

Islington is a vibrant and wonderfully diverse inner London borough, home to over 215,000 residents. We are determined to create a more equal Islington – a place where everyone has an equal chance to thrive.

We are seeking bold, innovative leaders to help us deliver a more inclusive economy, redirecting wealth into the local economy and back into the hands of our people and businesses. Following a recent service reorganisation, we have created a new Assistant Director role to drive our Inclusive Growth and shape economic policy and practice in one of London's most dynamic boroughs.

There has never been a better time to join us.

In this pivotal role, you will drive forward Islington's strategic ambitions for local economic development, employment, and social impact. You will lead the delivery of the forthcoming Islington Inclusive Growth Plan, translating corporate priorities into tangible, high-impact programmes that promote prosperity, sustainability, and fairness for all residents. Your remit will include:

- Developing and implementing sector strategies across key clusters such as construction, care & health, the knowledge economy, and the green economy.
- Leading significant employment programmes that create pathways into good jobs and careers.
- Championing innovation and inclusive growth to ensure Islington remains at the forefront of progressive economic development.
- Strengthening the everyday economy through support for local businesses, and place-based initiatives that enhance jobs, commerce, and sustainability.

### What we are looking for

We want leaders who are:

- Strategic and visionary, with strong corporate leadership skills to improve outcomes for all residents.
- Collaborative, with a proven track record of delivering results through partnership.
- Governance-savvy, ensuring robust organisational performance.
- Innovative and solutions-focused, driving inclusive growth and economic transformation.
- Empowering, creating a culture where everyone can thrive.
- Committed to equality, delivering first-class services and ready to champion a more equal Islington.

Join us and help shape a borough where opportunity is shared, and everyone can prosper.

For a confidential discussion, contact:



**Pete John**

on 07858 306725 or email:  
[pete.john@penna.com](mailto:pete.john@penna.com)



**Mark Baldwinson**

on 07764698139 or email:  
[mark.baldwinson@penna.com](mailto:mark.baldwinson@penna.com)



**Bruna Varante**

on 07858 306725 or email:  
[bruna.varante@penna.com](mailto:bruna.varante@penna.com)

**Role Closing  
Date: Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>  
January 2026**



# Youth Employment Hub

@Youth Employment Hub

# The Role

## Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth

**Service area:** Community Wealth Building

**Grade:** CO4 £86,754 - £105,113

**Reports to:** Director of Inclusive Economy

**Your team:** Inclusive Economy

**Work style:** Hybrid, with minimum 3 days working in-borough

### Our mission

We are determined to create a more equal Islington, where everyone who lives here has an equal chance to thrive.

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering.

### Key responsibilities

**1.** Support the Director of Inclusive Economy, in providing strategic leadership for the development and delivery of the council's Community Wealth Building strategy, ensuring long-term prosperity, sustainability, and fairness for all residents.

**2.** To lead and manage a portfolio of services, including the Employment, Inclusive Growth, Local Economies, and Creative Economies, ensuring effective collaboration and achievement of strategic goals.

**3.** To assist the Director for Inclusive Economy in converting strategic vision and priorities into operational plans, regularly monitoring progress, identifying exceptions and risks, and ensuring the Inclusive Economies department produces comprehensive and measurable goals to meet all performance targets within the service portfolio. To deputise where appropriate.

**4.** Oversee the creation and implementation of sector strategies across key local economic clusters, including construction, care & health, the knowledge economy, and the green economy, promoting inclusive economic growth.

**5.** Provide oversight of the council's employment service, enabling effective employability support and career progression opportunities for residents.

**6.** Work closely with the Assistant Director of Progressive Procurement to ensure the delivery of the social value objectives set out in the Council's Progressive Procurement Strategy.

**7.** Represent, shape and lead cross-sector and subregional partnerships aimed at driving inclusive economic growth, fostering collaboration with local businesses, residents, and external partners.

**8.** Ensure that the council's Inclusive Economy services are designed and delivered in line with the council's strategic and corporate priorities, contributing to sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

**9.** Responsible for the implementation of best practices, legislative changes, and other developments, integrating them into service delivery and strategy development. Carry out duties and responsibilities in accordance with the council's commitment to customer service excellence and ensure compliance with the customer care standards.

**10.** Empower direct reports to lead, motivate and develop the performance of staff, encourage the full participation through team meetings and briefings and planning work in consultation with team members.

**11.** Monitor and evaluate the performance of the inclusive economy services, ensuring alignment with the council's objectives and high standards of service delivery. Drive performance within the services by setting clear goals, supporting continuous improvement, and addressing performance challenges as necessary.

**12.** Lead and develop a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence, ensuring service

transformation while supporting the successful delivery of the council's inclusive economy and jobs agenda.

**13.** To strategically lead negotiations and secure external funding, ensuring effective financial, budget, and resource management to advance the council's inclusive economic development objectives and maximize the impact of available opportunities.

### **Leadership**

As a member of the council's management team, to contribute proactively to the collective leadership for the council, working collaboratively with Members, services across the council, partners and stakeholders to deliver the council's objectives and priorities.

To drive positive cultural change, embodying and promoting the values and behaviours of the council and empowering staff to reach their full potential. Ensure that the performance and development framework is effective for all staff.

To lead on and ensure the effective implementation of corporate initiatives and transformation programmes that cut across the whole or part of the council's activities.

### **Resources and Financial Management**

Ensure effective Financial Management, cost controls and income maximisation in an ever changing environment, fluctuating demands and priorities. Ensure resources are well managed and effectively deployed to the best possible effects assuring value for money in all activities.

### **Compliance**

Ensure legal, regulatory and policy compliance under GDPR, Health and Safety and in area of your specialism identifying opportunities and risks and escalating where appropriate.

### **Work style**

Flexible/Office-Based

# Person Specification

You should demonstrate on your application form how you meet the criteria. Please ensure you address all the criteria as this will be used to assess your suitability for the post.

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
<b>Qualifications</b>		
<b>E1</b>	Educated to post graduate level in a relevant discipline or with an equivalent level of work experience.	Application/Interview
<b>Experience</b>		
<b>E2</b>	Proven track record in leading large, cross-sector partnerships to deliver innovative and impactful solutions, particularly in the context of inclusive economic growth.	Application/Interview
<b>E3</b>	Extensive experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive employment, and inclusive economy strategies, with a demonstrated ability to convert high-level policies into actionable, measurable plans.	Application/Interview
<b>E4</b>	In-depth expert knowledge of inclusive economic development principles, with significant experience in applying these principles within complex urban settings, addressing diverse community needs and driving long-term sustainability.	Application/Interview
<b>E5</b>	Comprehensive understanding of national policies and drivers impacting skills development and employment, alongside a successful history of designing and delivering effective solutions in response to these challenges.	Application/Interview
<b>E6</b>	Experience in influencing culture and driving organisational change at all levels, with a focus on embedding inclusive practices, promoting continuous improvement, and achieving operational excellence across diverse service areas.	Application/Interview
<b>E7</b>	Demonstrated ability to think strategically and align the community wealth building service with the council's broader corporate and strategic priorities, ensuring a clear contribution to long-term goals.	Application/Interview

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
<b>Skills</b>		
<b>E8</b>	Skilled in thinking creatively to identify innovative solutions to complex challenges, particularly those related to high levels of unemployment, and in driving the council's inclusive economic development objectives.	Application/Interview
<b>E9</b>	Proven ability to build trust and gain confidence from senior leaders, elected Members, and key stakeholders, providing clear and robust advice on sensitive and high-profile matters.	Application/Interview
<b>E10</b>	Expertise in managing a complex portfolio of work, driving the delivery of ambitious community wealth building priorities and ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.	Application/Interview
<b>E11</b>	Ability to form strong partnerships and influence senior stakeholders, both internal and external, to align with the council's strategy, particularly in advancing inclusive economic development.	Application/Interview
<b>E12</b>	Strong analytical skills, with the ability to interpret, critique, and apply policy and research, ensuring that decisions are informed by evidence and strategic insight.	Application/Interview
<b>E13</b>	Competence in managing resources responsibly, balancing competing priorities, identifying income generation opportunities, and ensuring that savings targets and legal requirements are met.	Application/Interview
<b>E14</b>	Ability to lead staff effectively, ensuring performance targets are met, motivating teams to excel, and maintaining a focus on achieving outcomes aligned with the council's goals.	Application/Interview

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
<b>Special requirements of the post</b>		
<b>E15</b>	This role will require you to obtain an Enhanced/Standard/Basic satisfactory clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service	Application/Interview
<b>E16</b>	This post is subject to the council’s policy on pecuniary and personal interest	Application/Interview
<b>E17</b>	This post is designated as politically restricted	Application/Interview

## Our accreditations

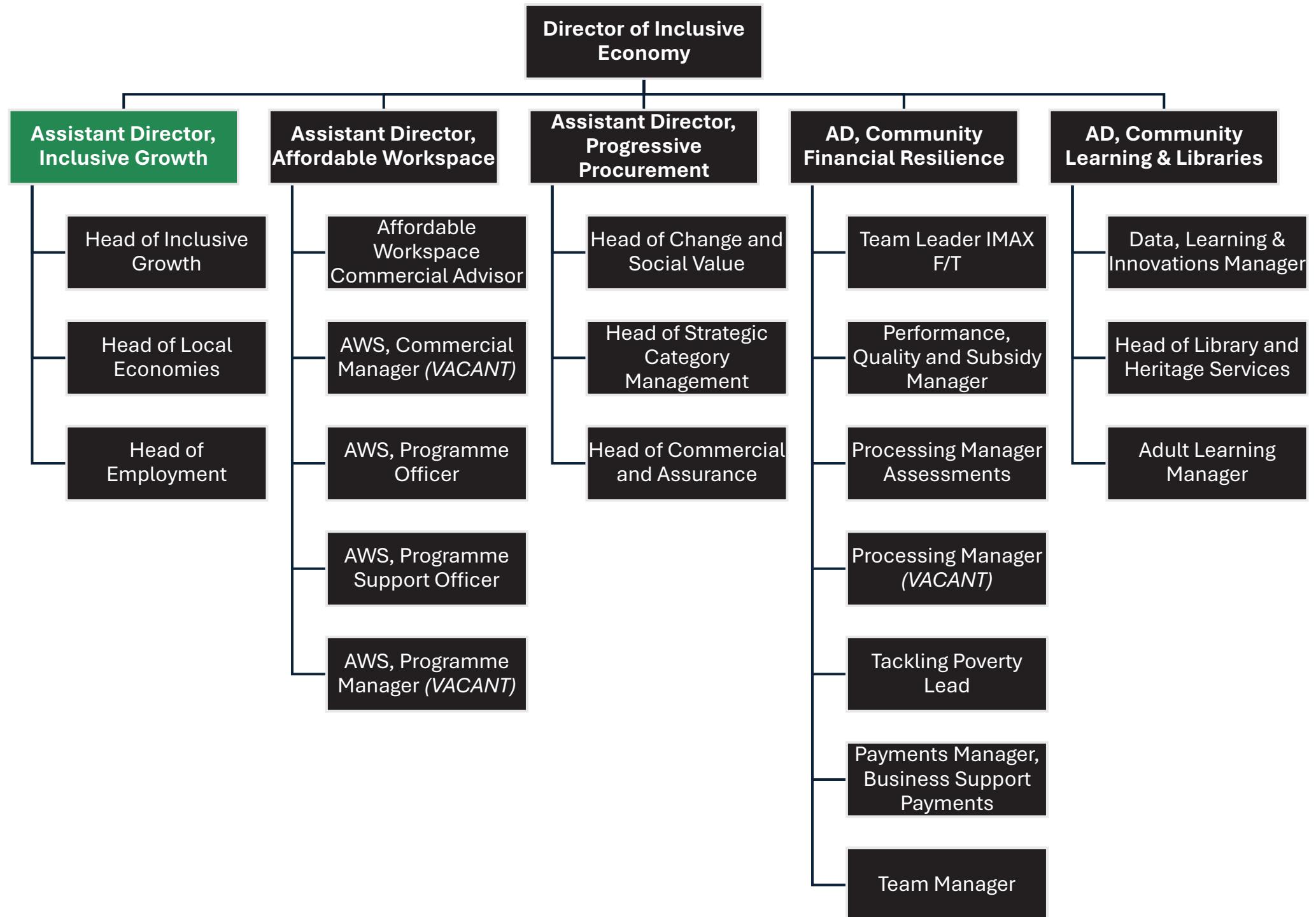
Our accreditations include: the Healthy Workplace award; Timewise; London Living Wage Employer; Disability Confident Committed; The Mayor’s Good Work Standard; Stonewall Diversity Champion; and Time to Change.





#ValuingOurCommunities

# Organisation Chart





#SupportingOurBusinesses

# Further Reading & Listening



**Islington Together**

Community Wealth Building Strategy  
Holding our Own: A new economy approach 29 Nov 2023 – v5.3

Foreword Executive Member Introduction  
Introducing Community Wealth Building

CHAPTER 1 What is 'Community Wealth Building'?

- Definitions
- Why does Islington need a Community Wealth Building Strategy?
- Inequality in Islington – At a Glance

CHAPTER 2 Our Vision

- Vision
- Overview

OBJECTIVE 1: Economic Wellbeing

- Introduction
- Sub-objectives – rationale, practice, and plans

OBJECTIVE 2: Inclusive Economy

- Introduction
- Sub-objectives – rationale, practice, and plans

OBJECTIVE 3: Progressive Procurement

- Introduction
- Sub-objectives – rationale, practice, and plans

OBJECTIVE 4: Social and Economic Infrastructure

- Introduction
- Sub-objectives – rationale, practice, and plans

OBJECTIVE 5: Challenging Inequalities

- Introduction
- Sub-objectives – rationale, practice, and plans

OBJECTIVE 6: Anchor Institution Network

- Introduction
- Sub-objectives – rationale, practice, and plans

Conclusion

- Success for the Community Wealth Building Strategy
- Outcomes and performance management

APPENDIX Performance Framework

## **Community Wealth Building Strategy Holding our Own: A new economy approach**



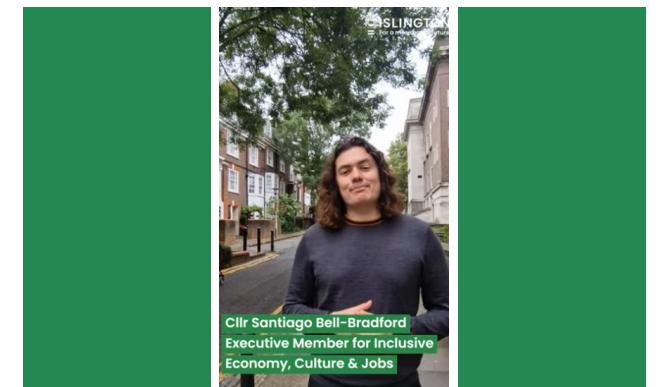
**Inclusive Economy and Jobs Annual report – 2023-2024**



**Social Value at Islington Council**



**Creating a thriving local economy in Islington**



**What is Community Wealth Building?**

Please note: These links will take you to external browsers.



#Investing in the Local Economy

# How to Apply?

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

Please apply by submitting a CV and Cover Letter (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.

Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications please make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.

Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.

Please share with us in your Supporting Statement the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details via our website.

Please upload your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.

Following long-listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.

Asking for adjustments: we're committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to consider doing anything differently during the application, interview, or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us.

**To apply for this role, please visit the following link to upload your CV and Cover Letter: <https://execroles.penna.com>**

Date	Stage
11/01/2025	Applications Deadline
w/c 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Longlist Meeting
w/c 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Technical Interviews
w/c 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Shortlist Meeting
w/c 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	Final Interviews

For questions or an informal discussion, please contact:



**Pete John**  
on 07858 306725 or email: [pete.john@penna.com](mailto:pete.john@penna.com)



**Mark Baldwinson**  
on 07764698139 or email: [mark.baldwinson@penna.com](mailto:mark.baldwinson@penna.com)



**Bruna Varante**  
on 07858 306725 or email: [bruna.varante@penna.com](mailto:bruna.varante@penna.com)

# Jean's café

Good for you,  
good for the planet

Helping you get more from  
your meals, without costing the earth.

*Join us for pay-what-you-feel lunches, every Friday at 1pm.*

Follow @jeans.cafecally for feel-good food tips.



#ProtectingOurFuture

## Penna Executive Search

*Inclusive Leadership ...Redefined!*

At Penna, we specialise in connecting outstanding professionals to senior leadership roles that shape the future of local government.

Our decades of experience working with local authorities set us apart. We understand the demands of political leadership, the importance of corporate plans, and the skills needed to navigate complex, challenging environments.

We work with integrity, imagination, and determination to ensure every placement is the right fit. Whether you are looking for leaders who can deliver major change initiatives, champion high performance cultures, or build stronger partnerships with communities and stakeholders, our specialist team will help you find the talent who can turn vision into reality.

At Penna, we want to build leadership that delivers stronger, fairer, and more sustainable communities.

[www.penna.com](http://www.penna.com)



Thank you for your  
interest in the role!

