

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery

Prepared for East Midlands Combined County Authority

CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS



**East Midlands
Combined County
Authority**

June 2025



Penna

FIND | EXCITE | SECURE

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East Midlands
Combined County
Authority

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Welcome Letter

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of **Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery** here at the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA).

We stand at a defining moment for our region. As England's first Combined County Authority, with our inaugural Mayor now in post, we are setting the pace for a new era of place-based leadership, investment and inclusive growth. Our time is now — and this is your invitation to help lead it.

The East Midlands is a place of extraordinary *heft*. The scale and diversity of our region — city and county — brings rich natural assets, a vibrant cluster of industries, and a proud identity rooted in enterprise and ambition. From the home of transport and transport policy to world-class universities and businesses with global reach, we have all the ingredients of a powerful proposition.

But heft is more than size — it's about potential, energy and direction. As a region, we are pivoting limitations into virtues: building on our coherence, our national links and our ability to speak with one clear, relentless and ready voice to government. We are the first of our kind — and we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build it right.

This role is mission critical. As our Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery, you will help shape and lead how we tell our story, influence decision-makers, and deliver what matters. You will need to work across organisational and political boundaries with clarity and sophistication, acting as a trusted advisor to the Mayor and myself. This is a role that demands strategic foresight, communication excellence, and pace of delivery — all rooted in a sense of purpose for the place and people we serve.

You will be someone who sees the bigger picture and gets ahead of the thinking — a natural system leader, able to harness the connections, intelligence and institutional clout across our region to pursue shared goals. We are ambitious about what can be achieved, but we know we can only get there together — through thoughtful collaboration, practical delivery, and real trust.

This is more than a job — it's a call to action. If you believe in the power of place, the strength of partnership, and the importance of telling the East Midlands story boldly and brilliantly — then I would love to hear from you.

Warm regards,



Amy Harhoff
Chief Executive
East Midlands Combined County Authority

Advertisement

Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery
East Midlands Combined County Authority
c.£120,000

Shape the world around you

The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) is at the forefront of a new era in regional governance and devolution. Established in March 2024 as England's first Combined County Authority and following the election of our first Mayor in May, we are setting the pace for transformational leadership and long-term change.

We are seeking an exceptional leader to take on the role of Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery – a position central to building our organisation, delivering on our priorities, and raising the voice of the East Midlands at regional, national and international levels.

As a key member of our senior leadership team and reporting directly to the Chief Executive, you will be responsible for the development and execution of an integrated Corporate Affairs Strategy, covering communications, marketing, media relations, government engagement and public affairs. You will be responsible for shaping how we deliver our programmes and projects, ensuring strategic alignment, governance, and pace of delivery through a robust Portfolio Office. Acting as a key and trusted advisor to the Mayor, Chief Executive, and Members, you will provide insight and leadership on strategic issues, reputational management, and political engagement. You will also chair decision-making boards and collaborate closely with senior stakeholders across government and industry to secure further devolution powers and investment for the region.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic and results-driven leader with a passion for change and the credibility to operate at the highest levels. You will bring proven experience of leading corporate affairs and communications in and/or understanding complex political or governmental environments, with the ability to influence across both Whitehall and Westminster. The successful candidate will also need to have extensive experience in the leadership of a portfolio of programmes and projects, ensuring these functions deliver results in a high-pressure, fast-paced environment. Above all, you will be a passionate advocate for the East Midlands. We were the culture of enterprise during the Industrial Revolution, and we want you to help lead us to be at the centre of the next. You will work to help our unique region be better connected, better funded and better prepared - leading the way to tell a bigger story than ever before.

We embrace a values-based culture, where we lift our region, work together, make an impact, and celebrate our diversity. You will embody these values and foster an open and transparent culture within the organisation and across the partnership. Your leadership will create an environment where every employee can thrive and contribute to the long-term prosperity of the East Midlands region.

This is a rare opportunity to be part of something truly pioneering. If you believe you can lead with purpose, deliver with pace, and represent one of the UK's most ambitious regions on the national stage – we want to hear from you.

We're ready... are you?

ROLE PROFILE

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND PORTFOLIO DELIVERY

CLAIRE WARD
MAYOR OF THE
EAST MIDLANDS



East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) is the country's first Combined County Authority, formally established in March 2024. The region elected its first Mayor in May 2024, marking the beginning of a new era of regional leadership.

We are committed to building a modern, effective, and inclusive organisation. This role will be pivotal in shaping EMCCA's corporate affairs, communications, and portfolio delivery. The Director will drive the promotion of the East Midlands with relentless energy, maximising every opportunity – regionally, nationally and globally – to ensure our voice is heard loudly and consistently.

The Director will lead a high-performing stakeholder and communications function, delivering a strategic, disciplined, and forward-looking approach to positioning the East Midlands at the forefront of investment, growth, and opportunity. Alongside this, the role is critical to ensuring that EMCCA operates efficiently and effectively, overseeing programme delivery to meet our strategic ambition.

The Director will maintain a firm grip on organisational performance, forward planning, and portfolio management, leading the Portfolio Office to ensure there is pace in our programme of delivery.

EMCCA's work programme is ambitious, dynamic, and future-focused, designed to deliver tangible, lasting, and systemic change for our communities within a strong governance framework. We are seeking a results-driven, innovative, and analytical leader with a passion for change. You will thrive managing multiple priorities, taking initiative, and delivering high-quality outcomes. Working closely with the Mayor and elected Members of our constituent councils, you will help translate EMCCA's vision into reality and secure a better future for the East Midlands.

The Role

The Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery will report directly to the Chief Executive and work in close partnership with the Mayor and Senior Leadership Team.

The Director will oversee the strategic management and governance of EMCCA's full portfolio of programmes and projects, ensuring they are properly defined, approved, and delivered to agreed standards. This will include establishing and leading processes that guarantee robust assurance, consistent delivery, and clear alignment with EMCCA's strategic objectives. A core element is driving collaboration across teams and ensuring that monitoring, reporting, and decision-making are governed effectively through the appropriate frameworks.

The Director will also shape, lead, and deliver a new, integrated Corporate Affairs function. This will include overseeing coordination between the Offices of the Mayor and Chief Executive, and leading Mayoral, corporate, internal communications, marketing, public affairs, and Government relations activity.

A key responsibility will be the execution of a strategic communications and corporate affairs strategy that is focused on impact and not volume, enhances the visibility and proposition of the Mayor and EMCCA both regionally and nationally, and drives greater understanding, recognition, influence, and impact.

Building and sustaining strong alliances will be integral to success. The Director will forge relationships across a wide range of stakeholders - national and local media, government departments, agencies, businesses, think tanks, and community bodies - navigating competing demands to amplify the Mayor's and EMCCA's impact and influence at regional, national, and international levels.

Key Accountabilities

The specific key accountabilities for the role are as follows:

- Provide counsel and advice to the Mayor, Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team, on matters related to the reputation and influence of the Combined County Authority.
- Develop and implement a Corporate Affairs Strategy (that includes Communications and Public Affairs) built in collaboration with the Mayor, Combined County Authority, Chief Executive, and Senior Leadership using creativity, diplomacy and innovation, that tells a compelling story of progress and vision, increases our impact and supports the delivery of EMCCA's priorities.
- Work with government to influence national policy, promote the opportunities devolution is delivering and secure further devolution of powers, funding and opportunities to the region, showcasing the strengths and assets of EMCCA, with a particular approach to joining up opportunities between departments.
- Be responsible for setting up and leading how EMCCA manages its programmes and projects, making sure everything supports the organisation's goals. This includes deciding which projects to take forward, in what order, and making sure they are delivered in the right way. The Director will put in place clear processes, tools, and rules to make sure work is well planned, well run, and delivers results.
- Chair key decision-making boards, help manage risks and spot opportunities, and work closely with the Executive Director of Resources to manage the organisation's risks.
- Produce and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess operational effectiveness and implement improvements across EMCCA.
- Develop, implement, and improve operational processes to ensure optimal productivity and cost-effectiveness across portfolios. Reprioritising the Pipelines necessary to ensure organisation agility.
- Lead on the alignment of relations with government departments to ensure consistent messages and a strategic approach, directing engagement to be led by the Mayor and Chief Executive..
- Develop a network of regional and national ambassadors to assist in influencing Government, to inform the development of EMCCA's policy priorities.
- Identify Government priorities through monitoring, horizon scanning and feeding into the policy development & project prioritisation process, in collaboration with the Strategy and Inclusive Growth (SIG) team
- Work with the SIG team to understand and develop proposals linked to the English Devolution White Paper.
- Working with the SIG Team to provide evidence to support decision making, establishing the facts and insight required to develop and then put into practice programmes that supports inclusive growth of the East Midlands.

Our Values

We have proactively become a values-based organisation from the outset. In conjunction with our operational ethos emphasizing the importance of people, processes, and outcomes, we embrace continual improvement, and are guided by four core values supported by a behaviour framework:

We Lift Our Region | We Work Together | We Make an Impact | We Are Human

These values shape our culture, influence expected conduct, how we work and interact with each other and our stakeholders, fostering positivity, and supporting the achievement of our goals and progress together.

Leadership

We expect inspirational leadership from this role, including:

- Provide visible leadership to the Directorate and wider organisation
- Create a positive and supportive learning and working environment through delegation, mentoring, and coaching of staff and promote a culture of collaboration by sharing knowledge and resources within the organisation.
- Support the development of individuals and teams to develop career pathways, ensuring a talent pipeline for the organisation.
- Create the right working environment for your team with a solid work ethic of working towards achievement of our vision.
- Develop and demonstrate a strong performance management culture, ensuring that people are accountable for the delivery of results.
- Promote an understanding of and adherence to the Combined County Authority's values by modelling appropriate behaviours and creating a corporate, collaborative and supportive environment that encourages and recognises those values.
- Ensure appropriate communication channels are in place and effective between you and your direct reports.

Organisational Landscape

Our Mission

We will be driven by our mission to ensure long-term systemic impact. Created by and for the benefit of our people, businesses, and places in the East Midlands area.

Our Vision

We will make our region more prosperous, sustainable, and fairer, helping our people and businesses to create and seize opportunities.

We are built on a foundation of systems leadership and partnership working.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level or commensurate business qualification or demonstrable work delivered to degree level standard
- It is desirable that you have a relevant qualification e.g. degree/ master's degree in journalism, communication, public relations, public administration, political science

Experience

- Substantial experience of leading on successful corporate affairs (including communications and public affairs) in a large, complex political organisation
- Extensive experience of operating in a politically led environment and having confidence in dealing with high-profile elected representatives.
- Experience managing high-impact public affairs campaigns
- Proven experience of developing communications and engagement strategies for multiple stakeholders
- Operating effectively within the decision-making framework and processes of an organisation including anticipating political (or comparable) appointees needs and responding to their feedback
- Experience of developing and maintaining effective strategic working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, with integrity, credibility and influence
- Understanding of both Central and local Government and the emerging landscape of local government reform.
- Proven senior level experience of leading and motivating teams, providing direction within a culture of delivery, effective managing of performance and continuous improvement
- Demonstrated experience in crisis communications and issues management
- Experience and understanding of the issues facing the East Midlands region or transferable skills that enable the absorption of quantitative and qualitative information about local and regional government, central government, and Westminster quickly and accurately
- Detailed and proven understanding of the strategic and operational challenges of managing within the private and public sector and being able to show a track record of success in this sector
- Experience of results driven partnerships with stakeholder organisations and agencies achieving mutually beneficial objectives
- Extensive experience in leading portfolio management in a large and complex organisation
- Experience leading on multi-million-pound projects, working closely with internal and external stakeholders to ensure delivery and governance
- Significant experience managing strategic partner relationships, making use of contract management levers to ensure effective delivery
- Proven track record of leading transformation design and delivery in a political environment
- The ability to confidently represent the organisation at external events
- A proven and success-based track record of managing performance successfully of direct line reports.
- Experience of start-ups or scaling organisations preferred

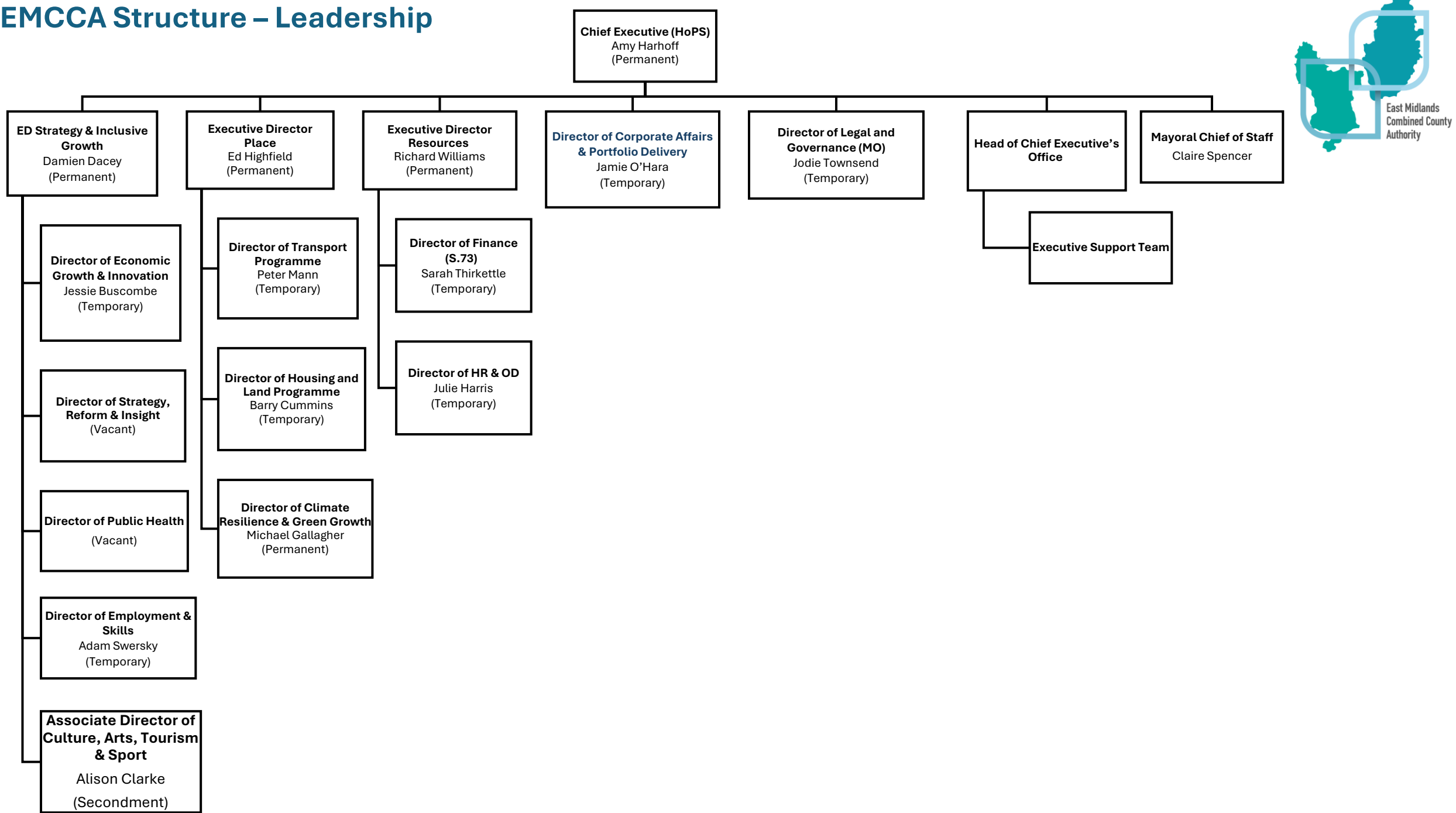
Skills and knowledge

- Excellent people management, with experience of establishing high performing technical teams through developing ability and creating an inclusive and collaborative culture which values diversity and encourages openness, approachability and sensitivity.
- Strategic thinking and influencing skills
- Ability to manage media relations, public affairs and marketing initiatives including the ability to be diplomatic and work with multiple stakeholders
- Wide experience of communicating and engaging productively with identified stakeholders, in a changing and challenging environment
- Able to deliver and lead others to prioritise work, working within a fast-paced environment providing a creative approach to problem solving
- A sound understanding of the public sector procurement regulatory framework.

The role requires an ability to be able to work flexibly to fulfil the requirements of the role and to attend meetings inside and outside of the region

This is a politically restricted post as designated under the LGHA and any subsequent amendments

EMCCA Structure – Leadership



Further Information

Please click the links below for further information:

[EMCCA-Spatial-Vision-FINAL.pdf](#)

[What we do - East Midlands Combined County Authority](#)

[The Mayor - East Midlands Combined County Authority](#)

Please visit EMCCA's LinkedIn page for current stories and information (you will need to be logged into LinkedIn on your browser to access the link):

[LinkedIN](#)



How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and covering 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; and that where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications you 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.
- Please return 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.
- At any point throughout the process our retained consultants at Penna will be happy to help you with information, insight and guidance about the process and our clients.

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

Date	Activity
Closing Date	Midnight, Thursday 17 th July 2025
Longlist Meeting (Candidates are not required to attend)	Wednesday 23 rd July 2025
Preliminary Technical Interviews (Virtual via MS Teams)	W/c 28 th July 2025
Shortlist Meeting (Candidates are not required to attend)	W/c 18 th August 2025
Stakeholder Panel & 1:1 with the Mayor	W/c 18 th August 2025
Final Panel Interviews	Tuesday 2 nd September 2025

To apply for this role, please click the link below:

[Director of Corporate Affairs and Portfolio Delivery](#)

For further information or confidential discussion, please contact:

Fizza Islam on 07542 855009 or email: fizza.islam@lhh.com

Rachael Morris on 07840 711217 or email: rachael.morris@penna.com

James Miller on 07701 233159 or email: james.miller@penna.com

Charles Wilson on 07801 880420 or email: charles.wilson@penna.com

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