

Senior Leader Post Specification

Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title:** Interim Programme Director – Devolution
- **Date:** 18/03/2025
- **Term: Fixed Term:** (May 2025 to August 2026)
- **Tier Level:** Tier 3, Level 3 (Salary £79-87.9k)
- **Reports to:** both unitary council Chief Executives (line management W&F CEX)

Purpose of this Post

To lead Cumbria's engagement in the Government's Devolution Priority Programme and if agreed oversee the establishment of a new Mayoral Strategic Authority for Cumbria with mayoral elections in May 2026.

The role will be largely externally-facing, working collaboratively with private and public sector partners.

Working closely across the two unitary councils as well as with national government on their Devolution Priority Programme.

This is an interim, temporary role to provide support, leadership and manage the process and decision making for the establishment of a new authority.

The post holder will have oversight of a complex programme of activity related to the Devolution Priority Programme. Through robust programme management the role will provide assurance and effective governance in relation to the requirements of the Programme.

Key Job Specific Accountabilities

- Lead and coordinate activity related to the Devolution Priority programme that will ensure devolution is inclusive and sustainable for Cumbria, working with the relevant anchor institutions and partners to realise the benefits of devolution for Cumbria.
- Provide leadership, strategic direction and co-ordination in relation to all aspects of the Devolution Priority Programme for Cumbria.
- Collaborate with the extended leadership teams of both unitary authorities, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner and Enterprising Cumbria to ensure devolution in Cumbria is co-designed, developed and delivered in the most effective, efficient and co-ordinated manner and resources are aligned accordingly.
- Foster and cultivate constructive relationships with key stakeholders at both a local and national level, to position Cumbria at the centre of relevant networks and be at the front for opportunities related to devolution and therefore delivering the best outcomes for the residents of Cumbria.
- Drive Cumbria's engagement in the Devolution Priority Programme, shaping and influencing Government devolution policy to support and sustain private and public sector development, housing, and inclusive and sustainable economic growth across Cumbria.
- Monitor and assess devolution programme benefits and ensure informal and formal reporting arrangements to senior leadership team and elected members for both unitary councils.
- Develop a governance structure to manage delivery and engagement in the Devolution Priority Programme. Providing advice, guidance, clarity and report on opportunities, key issues, risks and decisions required.

- Ensure adequate staff resources are in place and budgeted for, including working to ensure appropriate use of external funding from Government through the Devolution Priority Programme.
- Work alongside partners to put improved community outcomes at the heart of devolution ambitions for Cumbria.
- Work with Cabinet/Executive Members within both unitary councils, and with the MPs to provide advice, guidance, clarity and to report on opportunities, key issues, risks and decisions required related to the Devolution Priority Programme.

Knowledge / Skills / Experience required

- Significant demonstrable experience of leading a major group of services of Corporate Assets, Fleet and Capital Programme Functions within a complex and diverse organisation and leading within an environment of constant change and transformation, bringing the workforce with you.
- An experienced professional in the areas that cover Regeneration, Inclusive Growth and Programme Management, with a breadth of understanding of all areas that the role covers, and strong knowledge of the local economy and its opportunities and challenges.
- Demonstrable experience of translating strategic vision and priorities into delivery
- Understanding of regulations/legislation and best practice in economic development, regeneration, skills, assets, infrastructure, securing investment, housing and planning with a thorough understanding of national and local government developments, policy, and emerging trends.
- Able to use leadership skills to build an understanding of the agendas or motivations of others in order to keep them positively engaged.
- Able to foster an innovative mindset that drives an ambitious and inclusive way of working and empower staff to see continuous learning as a positive that drives better solutions and outcomes.
- Strong organisational and political acumen, with the ability to work with elected Members and interest groups to build consensus and shape services.
- Degree and post graduate qualifications (or willing to work towards a post graduate qualification if not already gained) in relevant disciplines, and/or leadership and management qualifications with demonstrable continuing professional development.
- Experience of creating effective relationships and being able to work across departmental and organisational boundaries to collaborate with and influence key stakeholders, building support for ideas and initiatives behind the scenes to support the implementation of solutions across other public bodies, government, the private sector and the third sector.
- Excellent commercial acumen and financial management skills.

Context and Scope

The Government has set out its intentions to widen and deepen devolution in England. Devolution is seen as a key enabler of their mission to increase economic growth. Their proposed approach is explained in the English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024. An English Devolution Bill is expected to go through the Parliamentary process later this year.

Following Government invitation, Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council agreed to join the Devolution Priority Programme. Five other areas in England are also part of the programme. Subject to a final decision by each council in autumn 2025, this sets Cumbria on the path to becoming a devolved administration and the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority

(MCA). Should both councils agree to proceed, a new MCA would come into existence on 1 April 2026, with elections for a Mayor happening in May 2026.

The new MCA would include representatives from both councils and the Mayor, with the MCA taking on the powers and responsibilities that will be set out in the English Devolution Bill. These include responsibilities around strategic planning, economic development, transport, housing, skills, climate and environment, and public sector reform. The MCA would be an entirely new organisation and would work closely with the two constituent authorities to deliver its agenda.

It is the responsibility of the two councils, working with closely Government, to ensure that, if agreed, a new MCA could be operational by 1 April 2026 and elections conducted in May 2026. The Programme Director has a critical role in this process.

Competencies

Cultivate Innovation

Creating new and better ways for the organisation to be successful.

Customer Focus

Building strong customer relationships and delivering customer-centric solutions.

Manages Complexity

Making sense of complex, high quality, and sometimes contradictory information to effectively solve

Demonstrates Self-Awareness

Using a combination of feedback and reflection to gain productive insight into personal strengths and weaknesses.

Manages Ambiguity

Operating effectively, even when things are not certain or the way forward is not clear.

Instils Trust

Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

Action Oriented

Taking on new opportunities and tough challenges with a sense of urgency, high energy, and enthusiasm.

Ensures Accountability

Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.

Optimises Work Processes

Knowing the most effective and efficient processes to get things done, with a focus on continuous improvement.

Drives Vision and Purpose

Painting a compelling picture of the vision and strategy that motivates others to action.

Collaborates

Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives.

Builds Effective Teams

Building strong-identity teams that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.