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| **Job Description** | |
| **Post title** | Innovation Engagement Officer |
| **JE Reference No** | N10714 |
| **Grade** | 11 |
| **Service** | Regeneration, Economy & Growth |
| **Service Area** | Business Durham |
| **Reporting to** | Inward Investment & Opportunities Team Manager |
| **Location** | Your normal place of work will be Salvus House, Durham but you may be required to work at any Council workplace within County Durham. |
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| **DBS** | This post **is not** subject to a disclosure. |
| **Flexitime** | This post **is** eligible for flexitime. Working outside normal office hours may be regularly required/ |
| **Politically restricted** | This post **is not** designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the requirements of Section 1(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State. |
| **Contract** | This post is part funded by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund Programme.  The post is fixed term until 30 June 2023. |



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| **Description of role** |

The Durham Future Innovation Building (DFIB) project is funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to provide a 2.5 year programme of business support to encourage and enable SMEs in targeted sectors in County Durham to invest in R&D to innovate by engaging with the businesses and connecting them to opportunities.

The role of this post is to engage with SMEs in County Durham providing support to help them to innovate. Three key sectors are focussed on – Construction, Elec-tech and Healthcare. The post will involve working with SMEs to identify their needs, signposting to support where available, and allocating grants to further their innovation ideas. Other key elements of the role will also involve identifying key innovation trends in the sectors, managing events, and awarding and administrating the grants awarded.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

**General**

* To proactively engage with SMEs in the targeted sectors – construction, elec-tech and healthcare - in County Durham to identify innovation needs and opportunities.
* To develop and implement a programme of masterclasses, workshops and engagement events for SMEs to meet the objectives of the project.
* To provide one-to-one support to the SMEs on the programme to ensure they are benefiting fully from the innovation ecosystem in the region and the programme.
* To identify clients that are likely to provide good projects and encourage and guide them on the application process for the innovation and recruitment grants from the programme.
* To review in detail client applications in relation to scheme and state aid eligibility.
* To liaise with customers to obtain clarification and challenge as appropriate their project information including state aid.
* To prepare applications for presentation to the Project Steering Panel, participate in the Panel meetings or discussions and present applications.
* To action feedback on applications as a result of decisions taken by the Panel
* To provide ongoing monitoring of individual client projects
* To monitor progress of the project’s performance against the targets and produce a monthly report.
* To manage the delivery of the sub-contractor for the capability mapping work which identifies the subject matter expertise available for innovation in the region for the target sectors, and the commissioning of the Summative Evaluation towards the end of the project.
* To develop relationships with other business support services available within the regional and develop appropriate referral mechanisms to ensure County Durham SMEs can be connected to SMEs to existing business support provision where appropriate.
* To gather information on SMEs engaged and activities undertaken, including original signed forms to evidence the eligibility of the SME and the support they have received from the project, in accordance with ERDF output evidence requirements.
* To ensure company records within the Business Durham CRM are maintained whilst also respecting the security of sensitive information gathered, maintaining trust and mutual confidence with the businesses who supply the information, and working to data protection guidelines.
* Undertake any such duties as may reasonably be required by the Business Development Director, commensurate with the grading of the post, in supporting the delivery of the ERDF funded Durham Business Opportunities Programme.

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| **Organisational responsibilities** |

* **Values and behaviours**

To demonstrate and be a role model for the council’s values and behaviours to promote and encourage positive behaviours, enhancing the quality and integrity of the services we provide.

* **Smarter working, transformation and design principles**

To seek new and innovative ideas to work smarter, irrespective of job role, and to be creative, innovative and empowered. Understand the operational impact of transformational change and service design principles to support new ways of working and to meet customer needs.

* **Communication**

To communicate effectively with our customers, managers, peers and partners and to work collaboratively to provide the best possible public service. Communication between teams, services and partner organisations is imperative in providing the best possible service to our public.

* **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

To take responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with the council’s Health and Safety policy and procedures.

* **Equality and diversity**

To promote a society that gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live, free from discrimination and prejudice and ensure our commitment is put into practice. All employees are responsible for eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination in everything that they do.

* **Confidentiality**

To work in a way that does not divulge personal and/or confidential information and follow the council’s policies and procedures in relation to data protection and security of information.

* **Climate Change**

To contribute to our corporate responsibility in relation to climate change by considering and limiting the carbon impact of activities during the course of your work, wherever possible.

* **Performance management**

To promote a culture whereby performance management is ingrained and the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. Contribute to the council’s Performance and Development Review processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase organisational performance.

* **Quality assurance (for applicable posts)**

To set, monitor and evaluate standards at individual, team and service level so that the highest standards of service are delivered and maintained. Use data, where appropriate, to enhance the quality of service provision and support decision making processes.

* **Management and leadership (for applicable posts)**

To provide vision and leadership to inspire and empower all employees so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the council’s values and behaviours. Managers and leaders must engage in personal development to ensure they are equipped to lead transformational change; always searching for better ways to do things differently to meet organisational changes and service priorities.

* **Financial management (for applicable posts)**

To manage a designated budget, ensuring that the service achieves value for money in all circumstances through the monitoring of expenditure and the early identification of any financial irregularity.

*The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by your manager.*

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| Person specification | | |
|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Qualifications | * Degree or equivalent in a relevant subject (eg. Business Studies, Science or Engineering) or be able to demonstrate extensive relevant experience. | * Professional qualification eg. CIM etc |
| Experience | * Recent experience of engaging with SMEs and delivering business support or business development services. * Recent experience of engaging, developing and managing business relationships. * Experience of innovation activities either in-company or in developing an innovation culture or ecosystem. | * Experience of delivering ERDF funded projects * Practical marketing and promotions experience including event management. * Understanding of the business support landscape in the North East LEP area |
| Skills & Knowledge | * Knowledge of business operations and ability to recognise key issues. * Knowledge and understanding of factors affecting corporate decision making, particularly business and economic drivers. * Commercial awareness. * Project management * Commitment to the provision of a high quality service with a positive attitude towards Customer Care. | * Understanding company finances * Appreciation of procurement rules and procedures. * Contract management. * Knowledge of the economy and geography of County Durham. * IT / keyboard skills, especially Word, Powerpoint, Excel, and ability to use e-mail and internet. |
| Personal Qualities | * Able to build relations and establish trust * Willingness/ability to work on own initiative and/or as part of a team, maintaining high levels of integrity and discretion. * Effective interpersonal and communication skills. * Good presentation skills. * Ability to work to deadlines with minimal supervision. * Proactive and positive approach to customer care. * Willingness to undertake flexible working arrangements to meet service and project requirements. * Able to travel * Performance oriented i.e. motivated by a desire to achieve performance targets and deliver a high quality service. |  |