

JOB PACK

Sheffield Innovation Spine Project Director



Sheffield Technology Parks

Cooper Buildings | Arundel Street | Sheffield S1 2NS

t. 0114 22 11 800 | enquiries@shefftechparks.com | www.shefftechparks.com
Sheffield Science Park Company Limited t/a Sheffield Technology Parks (Registered in England and Wales No. 1825398)

Sheffield
Innovation
Spine

Welcome to Sheffield!

I'd like to thank you for your interest in working with us here at Sheffield Technology Parks (STP). Established over 35 years ago, we've been the City's bedrock of innovation and economic development activities for a generation.

You join us at a pivotal time for Sheffield, as the £500m Heart of the City scheme comes to completion promising a renewed purpose for the Centre designed around an urban neighbourhood for families, professionals, and visitors.

Dovetailing with this new City Centre is a new strategy for economic growth. The Sheffield Innovation Spine is a project that has been developed over the past 18 months with an array of City institutional partners – Together they recognise the impact and legacy that can be created through an ambitious strategic intervention for our City's future.

Whilst this work was being undertaken, Sheffield City Centre was included within the Government's Investment Zone geography and has access to a share of £160m over the next 10 years. The Spine will become one of the flagship projects under this funding.

There's a lot happening, and the Project Director will find themselves in the driving seat as we develop a plan for the next decade.

The Founding Partners include Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield Science Park Company (STP) and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. Together, Founding Partners are funding this Project Director role which will be employed and hosted by Sheffield Technology Parks (on behalf of the partnership) along with the rest of the core Spine team.

I look forward to discussing your interest in this role in more detail soon



Tom Wolfenden
CEO
Sheffield Science Park Company

What is included in this job pack

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- Background information into The Sheffield Innovation Spine
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- Further information about the application process

Why Sheffield?

Nature, culture, people, peaks. Make yourself at home in 'the outdoor city'.

Sheffield is a world unto itself – one of unique contrasts, with endless stories to offer.

Full of people who are both down-to-earth and restless. A city of makers, past and future. This spirit fuels the collaborative, creative culture that's unique to Sheffield. Every day, defining a place that never fails to raise an eyebrow.

Sheffield was the 2nd best City Break destination in Europe for 2023, according to TimeOut. That means amazing food (the Observer Food Monthly declared us the UK's foodie hotspot), theatre, street art, gigs, bars, clubs and festivals can all be enjoyed, while you also hike, climb, run and ride through the greenest city in the UK (1/3 of Sheffield is actually inside the Peak District National Park). Lose yourself in [one of the world's coolest neighbourhoods](#) and then find yourself on the [longest gritstone edge](#) in the country. Go from [inner-city paddle boarding](#) to independent shops and enjoy [street food](#) among world-class [street art](#). Experience the music, the comedy, the [theatres](#) and drink in this '[Real Ale Capital of the World](#)'. Explore [vibrant suburbs](#) scattered across the city's hillsides and wander along fascinating riverside trails.

You'll find a melting pot of innovation and industry, where one idea leads to another. Where possibilities and potential are turned into products, processes and practice, and applied research meets real world needs. Powered by two excellent universities, internationally renowned big business, and a flourishing cluster of start-ups and spin outs, Sheffield brings together technology, people, business, research and industry which all connects across specialisms, to solve market and societal challenges.

With this type of business ecosystem, the thriving independent scene, the sense of community and adventure, the famously friendly welcome - you won't find another city like it.

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The Sheffield Innovation Spine – Background information into the project

Many founders, investors and local stakeholders share a desire to grow innovation-led and scalable businesses in Sheffield city centre, but a lack of suitable clustering, incubation and scale-up space for deep-tech/med-tech/life-science companies is restricting ambition and the realisation of potentially significant benefits.

The “Sheffield Innovation Spine” has been identified as a location for incubation and scale-up space, forming a natural route from the University of Sheffield's campus to the Sheffield Hallam University campus via West Bar Square and Castlegate - approximately following the Supertram route and comprising potentially 5m sqft of mixed-use space across new and existing sites.

Creating the Spine will leverage the city's burgeoning technology-led start-up enterprises, the [University of Sheffield's spinout pipeline](#), key existing incubation space at [Sheffield Technology Parks](#) and the laboratory facilities at [Sheffield Hallam University](#) and will create a fantastic inward investment opportunity for IP-rich companies that can drive economic growth in the city centre. It will also complement, create a feeder pipeline for, the South Yorkshire Innovation District, which is the home of world-leading manufacturing and scale-up infrastructure located 2 miles outside the City Centre.

Under clear narrative, and through coordinated stakeholder activity, Sheffield city centre can support further opportunities for innovation-led growth and investment, supporting civic initiatives and strategies (including the Local Plan) and aligning to broader regional activity, particularly the emerging South Yorkshire Growth Plan and the South Yorkshire Investment Zone.

Key civic partners are creating a structure through which to agree joint objectives, develop and manage the city's Innovation Spine and ensure that complementary work streams combine into one collective narrative. Operational Working Group Members from the different partners have been identified to complete tasks that will turn this exciting idea into a realistic and deliverable proposition.

Our next step is to appoint an experienced professional Project Director to drive the project forwards, develop the strategy and set the direction for the project to commence. This is a unique opportunity for an ambitious individual to adopt, design and develop one of the UK's exciting strategic city developments which will have a lasting and tangible legacy beyond the fixed term contract.

Job Title	Project Director
Department/Project	Sheffield Innovation Spine
Reporting to	CEO Sheffield Science Park (HR), Working Group (Project Updates)
Duration of the role	Fixed Term 2 years
Hours per week	37.5
Salary	£80-95k depending on experience
Location	Sheffield City Centre
Projected start date	Summer/Autumn 24
Probation period	3 months

Job Description for the position of Sheffield Spine Project Director

Purpose of the Role:

This role will take the Sheffield Innovation Spine from concept to delivery master plan, and enable Sheffield's ambitious development project to embed a legacy of innovation within the City Centre.

The project director will be required to set the strategic direction and business model for the Spine to develop a compelling strategy to attract investment and ensure it delivers on its vision and mission. This will require establishing and managing strategic relationships with a number of external and internal partners, ensuring their ideas and requirements are integrated into the strategy; and developing the programme delivery of the Spine.

Direct involvement with partners across the wider region will also be key in relation to the South Yorkshire Investment Zone and the South Yorkshire Innovation District which along with the Spine, all of which form part of the regional innovation ecosystem.

Key Deliverables:

Within the first 2 years the project aims to achieve a detailed understanding of the opportunities of the Innovation Spine concept. This includes collating research and data around the local economic strengths and trends, wider regional and national trends and how Sheffield City Centre can align with the needs of innovative businesses to attract them to locate here. It also means driving interest from the private sector from both a property and end tenant perspective:

The publication of the Prospectus document will:

- clearly articulate vision and mission;
- set out development guidance
- demonstrate how the Spine fits with the LDP
- represent the drivers of all partners
- provide a compelling case for investors

You will have liaised with interested parties with a key result being at least one investor interested in deploying resource into the Spine geography

Working with the Inward Investment teams, you will have a pipeline of enquiries from relevant and complementary businesses wishing to move into the Spine.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership:

- Develop and implement the Sheffield Spine strategy including a detailed prospectus document and delivery plan.
- Align the Spine with stakeholder objectives and vision.
- Develop strategic Objectives and Key Results (OKRs).
- Collaborate with operational groups within the Founding Partners, including both universities' estates teams and Sheffield City Council property team, on site selection, potential operating models, and investment cases.
- Co-create and support delivery of operational plans within the Founding Partners.

Stakeholder Management:

- Be the main contact for stakeholders.
- Chair the Working Group sub-groups of the Founding Partners.
- Build collaborative relationships and integrate stakeholder feedback into the plan.
- Ensure key messaging is understood and conveyed by other parties including the region's inward investment teams.

Promotion and Advocacy:

- Elevate the Sheffield Spine profile.
- Represent the initiative at public forums, conferences, and in the media.

Research and Analysis:

- Monitor urban development, technology, and innovation trends.
- Provide advice based on research findings.
- Engage with the UK Innovations District Group (UKIDG) network and other professional development activities.

Reporting:

- Create Agendas and present the Spine Working Group meetings at regular intervals. The meetings are chaired by the CEO of Sheffield Science Park with support from Founding Partner staff.
- Document best practices and lessons for knowledge sharing.

Person Specification

The appointed person will take overall ownership of the project and act with agency on behalf of all the Founding Partners. We're looking for someone who has the experience and understanding of what a spatial and economic strategic project looks like in the context of the Innovation Spine and who understands the need to tailor the narrative to resonate in different contexts.

What's important to us in a person is candour and determination. Sheffield is a hands-on city where people get involved to make an impact, and they will expect to see results from the Project Director role.

Operational skills and competencies

- Outstanding communication skills with the ability to quickly establish rapport and credibility with stakeholders at all levels
- Sound knowledge of innovation-led economic development, environmental sustainability, data and digital transformation and network management

- Able to tactfully challenge and influence others, including more senior colleagues and stakeholders, to ensure that the right outcomes are achieved
- Able to manage a cross-institutional team without direct line management
- Able to translate complex information into easy to understand, transparent, clear and engaging communication.

Qualifications and Experience:

Essential:

- Proven experience in high profile urban development projects, with a particular emphasis on innovation and technology.
- Demonstrated ability to manage and collaborate with a diverse group of stakeholders including investors, statutory and non-statutory organisations and elected representatives and community organisations
- Strong track record of successfully managing budgets and resources
- Strong Presentation Skills

Desirable:

- Commercial experience in innovation, having led or worked closely with start-ups or scale-ups
- Experience of developing similar innovation districts in UK or International cities

Our Values

At STP, our values form the foundation of our culture. We believe that a strong set of values is crucial to fostering a positive work environment, driving success, and ensuring the collective well-being of our team.

Our core values reflect the essence of who we are and guide our decision-making. These values are:

Integrity: For STP integrity means a commitment to ethical conduct and transparency. We expect our team members to act with honesty, maintain the highest standards, and take responsibility for their actions.

Collaboration: We recognise that great ideas emerge from collaboration. Our commitment to collaboration means actively seeking diverse perspectives, valuing teamwork, and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone's voice is heard.

Customer-Centricity: Our customers and stakeholders are at the heart of everything we do. We are dedicated to understanding their needs, anticipating challenges, and delivering solutions that exceed their expectations.

As Project Director, you will play a crucial role in upholding our values, particularly when dealing with a diverse group of stakeholders and nurturing constructive relationships across the City and beyond.

Behavioural Expectations:

Integrity: Demonstrate integrity by being forthright with information, admitting mistakes, and always acting in the best interests of our team and customers.

Collaboration: Embrace collaboration by actively seeking and valuing input from colleagues,

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contributing ideas, and supporting team goals.

Excellence: Strive for excellence by setting high standards for yourself, continuously improving your skills, and taking initiative to go above and beyond expectations.

Customer-Centricity: Prioritise customer needs by actively listening, understanding their challenges, and working collaboratively to deliver solutions that surpass their expectations.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:

We actively seek and celebrate a spectrum of thought within our team and colleagues, fostering a sense of inclusivity and belonging. In our workplace, diverse perspectives drive our success and we welcome applications from all backgrounds.

Benefits offered

In addition to the base salary this role offers 5% pension contribution and 30 days' annual leave (plus public holidays).

Policies

We acknowledge the evolving nature of work, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. As an organisation, we place trust in our staff to fulfil their role to the highest standard. Flexible working is supported, provided that it facilitates the effective delivery of OKRs.

The successful candidate should understand that this project is inherently tied to its location and is geographically focused on Sheffield City Centre. Therefore, we expect the majority of working time to be conducted within the city, recognising the significance of being immersed in and understanding the local context in which you will operate.

Application Process

In the first instance, we welcome a short covering email sent to tom@shefftechparks.com detailing why you are interested in the job and some of the relevant projects and experience you have. If appropriate, we will arrange an informal initial meeting with select partners from the Working Group. Final date for expressions of interest and initial calls will be 30th April.

Formal Application

We are accepting applications on a rolling basis, and will interview at a mutually convenient time.

Appropriate candidates will be invited to visit Sheffield for a brief tour of the geography before a formal interview process which will include a short 10 minute presentation.

Commencement of the role is anticipated for Autumn, depending on notice periods.

General Disclaimer

This job description is intended to provide a general overview of the responsibilities and qualifications required for the specified position. It is not an exhaustive list of duties, and additional tasks may be assigned as necessary. Sheffield Science Park Company is an equal opportunity employer committed to promoting diversity and inclusion. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, or any other status protected by applicable law.