

South Midlands Business Board

Shaping our region's future



August 2024

Opportunity

The South Midlands is an exciting region of growth and innovation, situated at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge region. Made up of six dynamic local authority areas, it is a formative time for the region as the Leaders of the six local authorities seek input from the business community to help shape economic strategy and focus for the region.





Who we are looking for

The South Midlands Authorities Board^[1] is seeking industry experts and key opinion leaders not only within our region but also with national and international networks, interests and focus. The Authorities are looking for representatives from key growth sectors (including high tech/innovation, logistics, visitor economy, property, infrastructure or development), rural representatives and SME representatives to ensure that there is a clear voice of business in strategically developing the South Midlands region.

Other useful skills and experience include strong connections in and knowledge of communities in the South Midlands (the areas covered by the Local Authorities of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough, Milton Keynes City, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils).

Applicants should be willing to learn the duties and responsibilities of being a Board Member who represents regional businesses and acts as an ambassador for the Business Board and its work to support economic growth including potential funders, educational partners and business communities. Membership should reflect the diversity of society and welcome a range of skills and experience as well as geographical representatives across the six local authorities.

Members will work closely with the South Midlands Authorities Board and Council Officers to set strategic direction for the Business Board, including how the Board works in partnership with elected Members and the South Midlands Authorities Board to implement economic strategy within the region. Board Members will develop relationships with business networks in the region and seek opportunities to engage in economic strategy.

The Business Board Chair agrees with the Chair/Co-Chairs of the South Midlands Authorities Board, Lead Officers, and Business Board members on the time commitments of members, frequency of meetings, and input required from the Board for the Authorities Board's work across an annual cycle.

[1] Or successor bodies as relevant

About the region

The South Midlands consists of Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes with a population of over 1.8 million, 80,000 businesses and over £50 billion GVA.

Leading our economic growth are the globally recognised businesses with specialisms in technical testing, precision engineering, connected and autonomous vehicles and robotics, digital technologies and artificial intelligence. This has placed South Midlands businesses at the forefront of the UK's response to the future of mobility Grand Challenge.

We have the people with the ideas, the research institutions and businesses working together to create innovation that is reshaping the way we will live, work and move around in the future.

In shaping economic policy to support growth, we all have an environmental imperative to change the way we do things. This brings huge opportunities for the area. We already have major strengths in the clean growth field. Alongside the commitment and the opportunity, we also have the beacon projects that showcase the practical application of renewable energy, green design and clean technology.

The ambition for this area is to fuse all of this together to create attractive, well-designed places where people want to live and work today, and that meet the needs of generations to come.



Purpose of the Business Board

The purpose of the Business Board is to advise the decision-making of the South Midlands Authorities Board[1] on matters of specific interest to businesses, specifically on economic growth and development. The Business Board itself would be supported in its work by advisory groups that exist within the SouthMidlands, including the Growth Hub Board and the Careers Hub Steering Group which oversee the operational work and ensure a business voice input into the South Midlands services. These services are hosted by West Northamptonshire Council, on behalf of the six authorities.

The Business Board will play an important role in shaping future economic strategy and ensuring that regional priorities align with the needs and opportunities that businesses within the region face.

[1] Or successor bodies as relevant



Key roles of the Board will include

Input on Strategy

- Providing advice on the development and shaping of economic strategy and day-to-day oversight of progress on implementation, on behalf of the South Midlands Authorities Board who decide on and own the strategy and local decision making.
- Providing an employer and business perspective for employment and skills challenges and informing related strategies for the region.
- Challenging thinking, exploring creative options and innovative ways to tackle challenges businesses face in the defined geography.
- Contributing to the wider economic growth agenda, both regionally and nationally.



Key roles of the Board will include

Function

- Providing a co-ordinated business voice for the private sector to inform, challenge and influence local and national economic policy by providing strategic business advice on economy, business, skills, transport, housing, UKSPF and future devolution deals.
- Representing business to the South Midlands Authorities Board to ensure relevant resources and provisions are present and providing advocacy for the needs of businesses.
- Engaging with key stakeholders and businesses when required to provide advice, guidance and responses to consultation to assist in the delivery of the South Midlands Authorities Board's strategic objectives for the region.
- Acting as sector champions for Board Members' areas of expertise – leading on engaging with local and national networks, bringing insight into discussions, and supporting stakeholder engagement with Officers on specific pieces of work.
- Working with the South Midlands Authorities Board and Officers to identify key opportunities to engage the business community on influencing priorities within the Government and maintain a role in developing local networks to support this.
- Being prepared to lead on and assist with key subgroups and focus areas – for example, the Growth Hub, Careers Hub, or specific existing or new sector advisory groups.

Principles of the Business Board

- The Board will be diverse and representational of the businesses and stakeholders within the defined geography.
- The Board will have a clear relationship with the South Midlands Authorities Board, with the business chair (and other Members for relevant topics) being invited to be an Associate Member of the South Midlands Authorities Board. A Leader from the Authorities Board will also lead on business engagement and at least one Authorities Board Member will attend the Business Board.
- The Board will provide an important strategic advisory role to the South Midlands Authorities Board.
- Conflicts of interest will be managed appropriately.
- All Board Members will be expected to sign a code of conduct before attending a board meeting.
- Board meetings will be supported by secretariat support provided by Officer support from within the transitioned LEP team.
- Recruitment to the Board will be open and transparent – through an open process involving an application process and interviews. A recruitment panel will oversee the process, with an Authorities Board Member chairing the panel.



Roles available

The Business Board Membership will comprise of a maximum of 15 Members as follows:

Type of specialism or interest area	Places available	Any additional criteria
Business representative organisation	1+	Can demonstrate scale of representation from the defined geography
Key growth sectors	4+	Can demonstrate expertise and alignment to key growth sectors within the defined geography, for example high tech/innovation, logistics, visitor economy, property, infrastructure or development
Rural business representative (geography or sector)	1+	Can demonstrate experience and understanding of the issues faced by rural businesses
SME (small and medium enterprise) representative	1+	Is in a senior management position within a small or medium sized business within the defined geography

Roles available

Type of specialism or interest area	Places available	Any additional criteria
Large business representative	1+	Is in a senior management position within a large business within the defined geography
Education representative	1+	Is in a senior management position within the education sector within the defined geography
VCSE representative organisation	1+	Can demonstrate experience and understanding of the issues faced by the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector
Local Authority Business Board representative	1	Nominated by the South Midlands Authorities Board as the Leader to attend the Business Board

General information

Time commitment

There will be 4 meetings per year, lasting approximately 2 hours each, and an annual strategic Board away day.

There are additional opportunities to be involved in workstreams and sub-groups.

Terms of appointment

Board members will be recruited for a three-year term in accordance with the terms of reference for the Board.

Remuneration

Board Members will give their services on an honorary basis and receive no remuneration, apart from exceptional travel and other expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

Eligibility

Must be employed by, self-employed or have a substantial interest (by virtue of ownership/control) in businesses in the area served by the Business Board.

General information

Ineligibility

- 1) Must not be a member, or officer of any of the Unitary Councils in the South Midlands as the area served by the Business Board, or otherwise employed under the direction of a Local Authority;
- 2) Must not be a non-executive director or officer of an NHS Trust;
- 3) Must not be subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order;
- 4) Must not be subject to a sexual risk order or be on the sexual offender's register;
- 5) Must not be subject to a civil injunction or criminal behaviour order;
- 6) Must not be disqualified from acting as a director, a chartered trustee or charity trustee;
- 7) Within five years before the date of submission of application, have been a director or person of significant control of a company subject to a creditor's compulsory liquidation;
- 8) Within five years before the date of submission of application, have been convicted of any offence and have had passed on them a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine;
- 9) Must not be an active member of parliament, serve as an officer in any recognised political party or make substantial personal contributions to any recognised political party.

Application Process

To apply, please send:

- An up-to-date CV which shows your full career history that is no longer than three pages to Emma.Panter@westnorthants.gov.uk by 9am on Monday 16 September 2024.
- A supporting statement summary of your skills and experience, highlighting your suitability for the role and which area of specialism is applicable to you.
- If you are interested in Chairing the Board, please indicate this in your supporting statement.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about the Business Board and the opportunity, please contact Emma Panter at Emma.Panter@westnorthants.gov.uk.

The recruitment process will include due diligence including right to work, companies house and social media checks, and interviews in the following weeks after the closing date.

Candidates needing any assistance to complete their application should also email to the above address. If there is anything about this recruitment process or the way we have promoted this opportunity that has created any barriers to you applying, please let us know.

