

South Midlands Business Board

Shaping our region's future



September 2026

Opportunity

The South Midlands Business Board plays a role in ensuring the region's business community have a voice in South Midlands Authorities strategic decision-making.

Members advise on, establish and help lead projects, schemes and programmes that feed into the work of the South Midlands Authorities and deliver real change to our local economy, with a continuing focus on Inward Investment, Place Shaping, and Strategic Business Growth and Skills.

We are now seeking business leaders who can bring insight, experience and integrity to the Business Board's work. They will help the South Midlands to ensure business growth and that local people can access high-quality jobs so all communities benefit from the region's economic success.

This is an unpaid, voluntary role, but an opportunity to shape the South Midlands' business landscape for years to come. The Business Board meets quarterly, with the Chair feeding back directly to South Midlands Authorities Board.

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 South Midlands, 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





Who we are looking for

We are seeking individuals with strong regional, national and international networks who can bring insight, challenge, and ambition to the strategic economic development of the South Midlands. In particular, we welcome representatives from key growth sectors, including:

- Logistics
- Advanced manufacturing
- Defence
- Property, infrastructure and development
- Life sciences
- Rural

Candidates Should:

- Be a business owner, have significant experience at a senior management level in a business based in – or operating in – Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, or Northamptonshire.
- Have experience of forging strong stakeholder engagement, with a proven ability to network with diverse decision makers in both the public and private sectors.
- Have a proven track record of leadership in an environment of comparable scale and complexity, alongside experience of working with others.
- Have the ability to demonstrate excellent and sound judgement when representing their industry specialism, while fairly representing members of their business community.
- Have an understanding of the factors that ensure effective business growth.

Board Members will act as ambassadors for the Business Board and South Midlands region, representing regional business interests and supporting economic growth by engaging with potential funders, education and skills partners, and business communities. Applicants should be willing to contribute constructively to strategic discussions and decision-making to help shape and deliver a strong economic strategy for the region. This includes building relationships with business networks, identifying opportunities for collaboration, and supporting the effective partnership working required to drive sustainable growth.

[1] Or successor bodies as relevant

Key roles of the Board will include

Input on Strategy

- Providing an employer and business perspective for employment and skills challenges and informing related strategies for the region.
- 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.
- 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.

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, Connect to Work, or specific advisory groups.

Application Process

To apply, please send an up-to-date CV and supporting statement to businessboard@southmidlands.org.uk.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Monday 5 October 2026.

Suitable candidates will be invited to take part in an interview process in the following weeks. unsuccessful applicants will be notified after the closing date.

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

“The calibre of the people around this table matters. The South Midlands has genuine economic strength, but it also faces real uncertainty - from an unresolved devolution debate to fast-moving national policy - and we need leaders with the experience, credibility and judgement to navigate that on business’s behalf. We are looking for people who bring real commercial insight, who will challenge our thinking, and who can help build a stronger regional economic offer: one that backs our existing business sectors, secures the investment and infrastructure our region needs, and delivers for the communities who depend on a thriving South Midlands economy. This is a genuine leadership opportunity, not a ceremonial one, and at this moment it has never mattered more.”

Jason Longhurst, South Midlands Business Board Chair

