

Advisory Board – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

1.1. The Advisory Board aims to promote the West Midlands as an economic powerhouse, highlighting its robust industries in life sciences, renewable energy, creative sectors, and advanced manufacturing. Notably, the region's tech sector is a significant driver of economic growth, aligning with the UK's position as Europe's fastest-growing technology hub.

Known for its unique character, quality of life, rich industrial heritage and a vibrant cultural scene, the West Midlands drives innovation and growth by connecting businesses, universities, the public sector, and community groups.

It will raise awareness of the West Midlands' vital role in the UK economy, which has allowed for the region to host major global events like the Commonwealth Games and will host the Invictus Games in 2027.

The West Midlands is a vast region encompassing several towns, cities, and counties, including Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and the West Midlands Combined Authority area which covers Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton, and the surrounding boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, and Walsall. The APPG will create a forum for the equal representation of these diverse areas, ensuring that no part of this vital region is overlooked or left behind.

Advising MPs and Peers would be an Advisory Board. This model is widely practised in APPGs and was pioneered by CalComms as a good alternative model to third party sponsorship. The AB would be representative of business, community, voluntary sectors, academia, infrastructure projects and any other key areas of interest. This AB will provide expert contributions to further enhance the APPG outlook. CalComms will open applications to the Advisory Board and the Board, once assembled, would identify a Chair to spearhead the work.

1.2. The Advisory Board sits under the APPG membership, which, for the purpose of this document, is sovereign.

1.3 CalComms, as Secretariat, will manage the selection of Chair of the AB, in consultation with the Chair of the APPG. If there is more than one candidate amongst the properly appointed members of the AB then an election for Chair will take place.

2. Review Point

2.1. The terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Board may be reviewed at any time by APPG Members, in consultation with the Advisory Board Chair, to ensure they remain appropriate for the requirements of delivering the West Midlands APPG's work programme.

3. Rules of Participation

3.1. Members of the Advisory Board may recommend topics or issues for consideration by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) within its subject area. It must be explicitly understood that such recommendations do not constitute any form of privileged access or influence over APPG members or officers.

3.1.2 While the Advisory Board can present suggestions, proposals, or insights to the APPG, the authority to determine the group's policy, priorities, and strategic direction rests solely with the officers and members of the APPG.

3.2. Advisory Board members should endeavour to provide resources to assist in the work and deliverables associated with the workstreams, unless expenditure is authorised by the APPG from any fundraising or donations.

3.3. Any discussion in meetings and views expressed or implied in such discussion or associated documents are without prejudice to and shall not limit the discretion of the Advisory Board and/or APPG with regard to decisions. Equally, views expressed by participants during meetings will not be treated as the formal position of the organisation they are representing.

3.4. Given the potentially sensitive nature of some issues that might be discussed in the Advisory Board documentation could be assigned an information sharing level of GREEN, AMBER or RED.

- **Green:** Documentation will be made available to all APPG and Advisory Board Members and form the public record of the work of the APPG. All meeting notes will be GREEN.
- **Amber:** This will cover any documentation of a sensitive nature that Advisory Board members may wish to share at the working group meetings. These documents will only be accessed by Advisory Board members, the Advisory Board chair and secretariat. These documents cannot be shared or used by anyone other than the Advisory Board members, the Advisory Board chair and secretariat unless permission is given. Information contained in such documents will not be directly quoted or attributed in publicly available meeting notes. Amber documents cannot be shared by working group members with anyone, including people in their own organisation, unless permission is given by the work stream lead.
- **Red:** Non-disclosable documentation/information is restricted to participants present at the meeting themselves only. Participants must not disseminate the information outside of the meeting. RED information should not be discussed with any other Advisory Board member or any other person from the same organisation who is not present at the meeting in which the information is discussed. Red information will not be recorded within meeting minutes or supporting documentation. It may be possible for RED information to become AMBER or GREEN if it is appropriately redacted.

3.4. Verbal contributions at Advisory Board meetings can also be assigned an information sharing level. Members who wish their contributions to be considered AMBER or RED should clearly state this before making their point, otherwise information will be considered to be GREEN. Such contributions will not be recorded in the meeting notes.

3.6. As a member of the Advisory Board, each participant will be asked to undertake in writing to abide by the confidentiality and disclosure provisions set out above in relation to each information sharing level as described above, by signing the Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement at Annex A to these Terms of Reference.

3.7. Advisory Board participants and Advisory Board members who breach the rules of the confidentiality and disclosure provisions under any information sharing level may have their

membership or attendance terminated, at the discretion of the APPG Chair, or from the AB Chair (unless a conflict of interest).

4. Scope of Activities and Deliverables

4.1. The key activities and deliverables are likely to include, but are not limited to:

- Develop investigation terms of reference including purpose of the investigation, structure and reporting format;
- Undertake activities within the parameters of the agreed work programme (see Appendix B).
- Evidence analysis and draft reporting;
- Publication of investigation reports and other resourced materials.

4.2. Workstreams will be established with KPI's for each. This will break a wide remit into smaller, more manageable, and focused sections to improve project clarity, efficiency, and accountability.

4.2.1 Leads for these Workstreams will be nominated by the Advisory Board Chair and officers, who will also have a dual role as Vice Chairs. These Leads will be confirmed by the Advisory Board members and officially adopted by the APPG officers.

4.2.2 Workstreams will meet as and when required. Leads will then feedback and provide updates on KPI progress to the wider Advisory Board when it convenes.

4.3. Any changes or proposed deviations to the agreed scope and/or deliverables must be presented to the full Advisory Board for discussion and agreed by APPG members prior to being implemented.

5. Resources

5.1. The organisation and facilitation of Advisory Board meetings will be carried out by the group secretariat, in collaboration with the Advisory Board Chair.

5.2. Meetings to be arranged with a clear 14 days notice unless a special urgent meeting is required at the discretion of the Advisory Board Chair.

5.3. Meeting invitations should be sent via the secretariat and circulated to Advisory Board members, and where necessary, pre invited patrons, donors and sponsors.

5.4. Advisory Board meeting agendas should be uploaded to the shared drive 5 working days prior to the meeting taking place.

5.5. All papers and documentation produced by the Advisory Board should be sent to the secretariat within 5 days of the meeting.

5.6. CalComms will provide secretariat support to the Advisory Board in terms of meeting organisation, minute taking, and recording.

5.7. Meetings will be held online until further government guidance is issued.

6. Membership

6.1. Advisory Board membership is restricted to those approved of by the Chair of the Advisory Board and Chair of the APPG. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the APPG, the Advisory Board Chair and secretariat will be formally invited to Advisory Board meetings as permanent officers.

6.2. Advisory Board members must be domiciled within the UK.

6.3. Applicants meeting the criteria of the Advisory Board will be initially assessed by the Chair of the Advisory Board who will make recommendations to the APPG Chair and will together determine their application.

6.4. Should an Advisory Board member not be able attend an Advisory Board meeting they are welcome to nominate an alternate person from within their organisation to attend in their place. This must be agreed by the Advisory Board Chair prior to the meeting.

6.5. Guests, expert contributors and other participants may be invited to attend Advisory Board meetings on an ad-hoc basis to contribute to specific discussions or to share information with the group. Invitations of this nature will be made solely by the Advisory Board Chair. Guests will not have any voting or decision-making rights within the meeting.

6.6. Invited guests may be required to sign a Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement prior to attending.

6.7. Advisory Board members who breach any rules set out in these Terms of Reference or elsewhere by the APPG may have their membership terminated, at the discretion of the AB Chair.

6.8. Advisory Board members may also be asked to abide by the West Midlands APPG's own code of conduct as set out by the Commissioner for Standards.

7. Reporting to the APPG

7.1. The Advisory Board and any working groups established through the AB will be required to provide progress updates to APPG members. It is anticipated that this will be at least every two months or whenever formal meetings of the APPG take place. This will be at the discretion of the Chair of the APPG and officers.

7.2. Progress reports should include:

- Recorded progress against the agreed actions within the work programme;
- Areas of concern and/or issues which could impact on delivering the agreed outcomes;
- Requests to changes/deviations to the agreed Advisory Board work programme.

7.3. Documentation requiring APPG members review, comment and/or approval must be sent to the secretariat and Advisory Board chair 5 days prior to an APPG meeting.

7.4. Any additional reporting to the APPG outside of the above should be discretionary upon the Advisory Board Chair.

8. Publications and External Communications

8.1. The Advisory Board exists to develop and put together advice and materials for the APPG. It is the responsibility of the APPG to prepare Publications and External Communications.

8.2. All publications, briefing papers or external facing documents related to the Advisory Board must be presented to the APPG for review, comment and sign off before being formally published.

8.3. Advisory Board members must not externally publish any documents, reports, summaries or briefing papers without the approval of the APPG and in consultation with the secretariat and Advisory Board Chair.

8.4. Advisory Board members must not publish anything not already in the public domain relating to the work of the APPG and/or Advisory Board in the media, whether this is social or mainstream, without the approval of APPG members and/or the Advisory Board Chair.

8.5. Advisory Board members will have the ability to engage through the APPG official social media output. Any comments/policy discussions should be in line with APPG policy.

9. Transparency

9.1. All agendas, accompanying papers for workshop sessions, and meeting notes, must be sent to the secretariat within 5 days of each meeting. These will be stored on a secure shared drive and accessible by all Advisory Board Members and any other invited persons/organisations.

9.2. Any issues raised in Advisory Board meetings which may potentially impact on the delivery of the work programmes must be reported to the chair of the Advisory Board and secretariat. The final arbiter to any dispute will be the Chair of the APPG.

Appendix A – Confidentiality and Disclosure Agreement

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the Advisory Board Terms of Reference

I understand that I am required to comply with the confidentiality and disclosure obligations in respect of each of the three information sharing levels (green, amber and red), as set out in the Terms of Reference.

I understand that should I, or my parent company/organisation, fail to abide by the information sharing levels I and/or my parent company/organisation may be excluded from the West Midlands APPG and Advisory Board.

I therefore agree to abide by the Terms of Reference in my engagement with this group.

Name:

Company/Organisation:

Signature:

APPG – West Midlands

Date: