

Mayoral Combined Authority Board

12 September 2023

Appointments to SY Business Advisory Board

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Governance
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

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Executive Summary

This paper seeks approval from the MCA Board to appoint private sector representatives to the MCA Business Advisory Board. The recommendation to appoint is based upon an open and transparent process to seek out a new diverse range of business representation alongside representatives drawn from the Business Representative Organisations in South Yorkshire.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The new Business Advisory Board will help shape South Yorkshire's thinking on short and long-term issues of importance to businesses and the region's economic future, and to ensure these are heard and considered by the MCA.

A strong business voice will support informed decision-making and enable wider advocacy of the work of the MCA to improve the conditions for business growth in South Yorkshire.

Recommendations

Board are asked to:

1. Approve the appointment of members to the South Yorkshire Business Advisory Board as set out in section 2 of this report.
2. Note that the Trades Union Congress will also be represented on the Business Advisory Board.
3. Note that the MCA Board will agree recommendations to appoint the final members at its November meeting.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

n/a

1. Background

1.1

The annex to the paper that was agreed at MCA Board (11.ii. Appendix B MCA Review) set the outline structure below for establishing the new Business Advisory Board. This guided the process of establishing the board and the appointment of its members:

- The Business Advisory Board will be made up of 12 members including the Chair and will meet on an 8-weekly basis.
- Membership will have some individuals drawn from either the senior leadership of, or direct business representation drawn from, Business Representative Organisations in South Yorkshire, including the Chambers of Commerce.
- The Chair of the MCA Regional Skills Advisory Board (RSAB) will be invited to sit on the Board to support joined up working and communication between these groups.
- Appointments to the Board will include a number of openly recruited roles for business leaders that reflect the diversity of South Yorkshire's business base. These will span existing and growth sector strengths and capabilities, businesses at different stages of the life cycle from IP intensive spinouts to mature businesses, those with different operating and ownership models, alongside inward investors and businesses trading globally.
- Appointments will represent a balance of businesses within the profile set out above that demonstrate a strong commitment to Responsible Business practices. They will also have an ability to be effective advocates and a track record of engaging with their sector counterparts or are able to access or convene wider networks within the business community.
- Consideration will be given to the composition of the Board to ensure appropriate balance across geography, gender, age and ethnicity.

The term length for board members will be 2-years, with a possible extension of up to 2-years. The expected commitment for members will be 1-2 days per month. Although these positions do not come with a salary, their expenses will be reimbursed.

1.2

Recruiting to the Board

The process went live on 6 July. The opportunities were widely publicised shortly after with a press release, social media and direct email communications. The region's business bodies, local authority business teams and various networks were used to promote the opportunity.

The process for applications was designed to be as straightforward as possible. Candidates were asked to submit a CV, a statement of suitability and an equalities form.

In addition to the nominations put forward by business groups in the region 35 applications were submitted. Applications were assessed against the following essential criteria:

- Evidence of leadership experience.
- Proven ability to work effectively with partnerships.
- Strong communication and teamworking skills.
- Ability to attend Business Advisory Board meetings and give the role the time and effort it requires.
- Understanding of and a commitment to public policy requirements associated with holding public office (Nolan Principles).
- Demonstrable passion for and attachment to South Yorkshire through business or residency.
- A strong commitment to Responsible Business practices such as investing in their workforce and reducing their carbon footprint.
- The ability to be effective advocates with a track record of engaging with people in their sector and the ability to access or convene networks within the wider business community.

Applications were sifted with a long list brought forward for interviews in August.

2. Key Issues

2.1

Following the recruitment process and nominations from business groups it is recommended that the following individuals be appointed to the Business Advisory Board.

1. Louisa Harrison Walker representing the three South Yorkshire Chambers (Barnsley & Rotherham, Doncaster and Sheffield)
2. Rachel Abbott representing the Cutlers, South Yorkshire International Trade Forum, Manufacturers Forum and Made In Sheffield
3. Dawn Huntrod representing MakeUK
4. Paula Gouldthorpe representing the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
5. Angela Foulkes representing the South Yorkshire Skills Advisory Board (SYSAB)
6. Liz Blackshaw representing the Northern Trade Union Congress.

The Board will appoint a Chair from within the membership.

There remains one more place on the Board to be filled from within the business representative organisation base.

3. Consultation on Proposal

- 3.1 The MCA Board approved the programme of work at its June meeting. Subsequent to that the Executive Team has engaged with Local Authority business teams, business groups and key stakeholders to attract a diverse board.

4. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 4.1 Appointments will come into effect immediately.

5. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with the appointments other than Board Member expenses which will be reimbursed to members for attending the meeting. The positions are non-remunerated - they do not come with a salary.

6. Legal Implications and Advice

- 6.1 No specific legal implications arising from this report. The Business Advisory Board is not a legally required Board of the MCA.

7. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 7.1 Although there are no human resources implications relating to these appointments, the MCA Human Resources Team were engaged in the process.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 8.1 The Business Advisory Board will be made up of 12 members, broadly representing the South Yorkshire geography.

In all cases, SYMCA endeavoured to ensure that the new boards reflect the communities across the region, including a commitment to achieve a gender balance.

Diversity on the Board in relation to business sectors, geography, demographics, and ethnicity was prioritised to ensure the business voice is representative of interests throughout South Yorkshire. Achieving a representative mix on the Board was a key determinative factor in the selection of Board members.

Where two or more appointable candidates were considered to offer similar value in terms of achieving a diverse representation, then selection decisions will be made

on the individual merits of the two candidates based on the “essential criteria” for Board members set out above.

9. Climate Change Implications and Advice

9.1 An Impact Assessment is not required for this activity.

10. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

10.1 There are no information and communication technology implications relating to this activity.

11. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

11.1 The Business Advisory Board will be established as advisory board to the formal MCA decision-making process. On that basis the meetings will not be held in public.

However, it is important that the public and the business community understand who, how and on what issues the private sector voice is being engaged – as well as having the opportunity to inform that work.

To support this objective, the MCA will ensure that information relating to both the MEAC and BAB is published online, including:

- Meeting dates, board composition as well as information on board recruitment processes.
- Members Declarations of Interest
- An agreed forward plan of activity the MCA Board has asked both the MEAC and BAB to consider and an annual report setting out an update on the key areas of work undertaken.
- A summary of the key topics discussed at each meeting.
- Contact details of the MCA lead officer.

List of Appendices Included

None.