

Vaccines Taskforce Ministerial Panel

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context

1. The overarching programme business case for the COVID-19 Vaccines Taskforce (VTF) set out a series of investments totalling £5.23bn to support the VTF's overall objective to vaccinate the [appropriate] UK population against COVID-19 as soon as practicable to prevent further serious illness and death from COVID-19 and help restore and protect the UK's economic growth.

Purpose

2. The Ministerial Panel will provide commercial and financial approvals for vaccine procurement contracts over £150m. It will bring together Ministers from relevant departments to support responsive, robust decision-making on investments made by the programme, at the pace required for the ongoing commercial negotiations.
3. The Ministerial Panel will:
 - a. Take all decisions on VTF business cases and contracts with a whole life cost above £150m.
 - b. Any contracts or grants for manufacturing or clinical trials linked to the vaccine deal will be considered part of the deal costs.
 - c. Any amendments made to deals after the panel has made an initial decision, will need to come back to the panel for approval, for example if a deal is amended to purchase additional doses of the vaccine.
 - d. Decide whether to:
 - a. give full approval. The Panel might also identify minor areas for the SRO to strengthen;
 - b. give approval with conditions, including whether any conditions are to be addressed ahead of or following signature and whether an updated version would need to be seen by the Panel again before full approval is given; or
 - c. reconsider the contract at a later date and within an agreed timescale, e.g. if a plan or business case requires serious further work or needs to be delayed.

Roles and Responsibilities

4. The Ministerial Panel will comprise of Ministers from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS); the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC); HM Treasury (HMT); and Cabinet Office (CO), representing each Department's specific responsibilities as set out below:
 - a. As the SofS responsible for the Vaccines Taskforce, the BEIS SofS chairs the Panel
 - b. DHSC has responsibility for vaccine trials and deployment
 - c. HMT has sole responsibility for spending approval and approval of novel / contentious / repercussive activity
 - d. CO are solely responsible for commercial approval.