



## Minutes from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Black Country

<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	2:00pm – 3:00pm 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
<b>Location:</b>	Room Q, Portcullis House, Westminster
<b>Speakers:</b>	N/A
<b>Chair:</b>	Mike Wood MP
<b>Contact:</b>	Matthew Lowe, Policy & Lobbying Manager, Black Country Chamber of Commerce

### In Attendance

#### Parliamentarians/Representatives:

Dan Horrocks (DH)	Senior Parliamentary Assistant for Mike Wood MP
Julie Gur (JG)	Parliamentary Assistant for Stuart Anderson MP
Marco Longhi MP (MLon)	Member of Parliament for Dudley North
Mike Wood MP (Chair) (MW)	Member of Parliament for Dudley South
Rt. Hon. Pat McFadden MP (Deputy Chair) (PM)	Member of Parliament Wolverhampton South East
Sarah Atherton MP (SA)	Member of Parliament for Wrexham
Shaun Bailey MP (SB)	Member of Parliament for West Bromwich West
Stuart Anderson MP (SAn)	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South West

#### Invited Guests/Secretariat:

Parv Gandham (PG)	Senior Public Affairs Officer Midlands Connect
Corin Crane (CC)	Chief Executive Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Matthew Lowe (ML)	Policy & Lobbying Manager Black Country Chamber of Commerce

#### Apologies:

Rt. Hon. John Spellar MP	Member of Parliament for Warley
James Morris MP	Member of Parliament for Halesowen & Rowley Regis
Rt. Hon. Valerie Vaz MP	Member of Parliament for Walsall South
Nicola Richards	Member of Parliament for West Bromwich East
Suzanne Webb MP	Member of Parliament for Stourbridge
Jane Stevenson MP	Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton North East

NO.	KEY DISCUSSION POINTS/ ACTION POINTS/ DECISIONS	By whom?	By when?
	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>		

1.01	<b>Mike Wood (MW)</b> opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to Portcullis House and to the inaugural meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Black Country.	MW	Closed
	<b>Election of the Officers and Secretariat</b>		
1.02	<b>MW</b> motioned for the election of the Chair of the APPG Black Country and that he be elected as Chair, proposed by <b>Corin Crane (CC)</b> and approved unanimously.	MW	Closed
1.03	<b>MW</b> motioned for the election of the Deputy Chair of the APPG and that <b>Pat McFadden (PM)</b> to be elected. Proposed by <b>MW</b> seconded by <b>Shaun Bailey (SB)</b> and approved unanimously.	MW	Closed
1.04	<b>MW</b> motioned for the election of other officers. The results were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marco Longhi MP                      Conservative                      Vice Chair</li> <li>• Stuart Anderson MP                      Conservative                      Vice Chair</li> <li>• Shaun Bailey MP                      Conservative                      Vice Chair</li> </ul>	MW	Closed
1.05	<b>MW</b> motioned for the election of the Secretariat. The Black Country Chamber was chosen to provide secretariat services to the Black Country APPG. This was proposed by <b>PM</b> and seconded by <b>Stuart Anderson (San)</b> and <b>Sarah Atherton (SA)</b> and approved unanimously.	MW	Closed
	<b>Role, Remit and Purpose of the APPG Black Country</b>		
1.06	<b>CC</b> provided a presentation regarding the remit of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce and the purpose of creating the APPG Black Country. Key discussion points included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Black Country is a significant economic sub-region housing over 1.19 million people, hosting 463,000 jobs and generating £21.7bn GVA per annum.</li> <li>• The Black Country is at the heart of the Midlands Engine. The economy is an important component of the wider West Midlands economy and the region has a significant contribution to make to enabling economic growth across the region.</li> <li>• In 2019 GVA reached a record high and the output gap with the country as whole has stabilised. Across the sub-region the number of enterprises reached just over 38,500 with the average GVA per head continues to increase around £18,294 (3.5% vs 2.9% across England).</li> <li>• The region still faces major challenges, however. Regional productivity is low, more needs to be done to raise skills levels and the costs involved in bringing forward land of employment and housing use are significant.</li> <li>• As a distinct and unique area, the region faces considerable pressures from its neighbours towards Greater Birmingham and Staffordshire to be absorbed into a large urban sprawl with no unique economic character or history.</li> <li>• Establishing an APPG for the Black Country firmly sets out a commitment by Members of both Houses and key partners to ensuring that the region continues to thrive. It raises the profile of the sub-region within Westminster and wider political circles and provides a platform for key stakeholder organisations to engage more productively with</li> </ul>	CC/ML	Closed

	<p>Members of Parliament both locally and within Westminster. An APPG for the Black Country provides a platform for Members of Commons to commission research with stakeholders and to produce reports on the region to be used to influence and secure future investment.</p> <p><b>MW/CC</b> ran through the objectives and mission statement for the APPG Black Country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The APPG for the Black Country (APPG-BC) will exist to raise awareness -in Parliament and beyond- of the significance and importance of the Black Country sub-region.</li> <li>• The All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Black Country is a cross-party coalition of Parliamentarians, businesses and industry organisations working together in order to develop new policy ideas, critique existing government decision-making around regional growth whilst enhancing and facilitating better business engagement with the policy process.</li> <li>• The APPG will work to keep the Black Country sub-region high on the political agenda. It will raise awareness of the issues the sub-region faces amongst parliamentarians and encourage them to promote the importance of the sub-region and its economic potential in their constituencies and other spheres of influence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Statement</b>  <i>"The APPG for the Black Country will recognise and address the socio-economic issues the region faces, promoting its significance as a sub-region and raising its importance to key stakeholders"</i></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To raise awareness of the Black Country sub-region by providing a parliamentary forum for debate and dialogue, communicating key evidence on policy issues to parliament, government, and other policymakers.</li> <li>2. To ensure that the issues raised are supported by appropriate evidence, research and analysis and disseminating the evidence and information so that parliamentarians are well informed about the issues.</li> <li>3. To produce reports on evidence produced, disseminating that to key stakeholders and lobbying to policy change to improve the sub-region.</li> <li>4. To create a point of reference for any parliamentarian wishing to understand the sub-region, its economy, demographics, cultural and socio-economic significance.</li> <li>5. To promote the Black Country as a thriving, outward looking region that is the place to live, work and visit to other parliamentarians, policymakers, stakeholders</li> </ol> <p>Discussion point was raised around promoting the sub-region as a place to live and work and that the APPG Black Country should look to work with the West Midlands Growth Company as they are developing a sub-regional tourism strategy.</p> <p><b>AP: ML to investigate opportunities for the WM Growth Company to feedback tourism strategy to APPG</b></p>	ML	On-going
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	<b>Discussion: Future activities for the APPG</b>		
1.07	<p><b>CC</b> raised the discussion point around the future workstream/activities of the APPG opening it to Parliamentarians present to shape the work.</p> <p>Members agreed to hold 2/3 meetings per year and the APPG Black Country should seek to link with other APPGs where interests align.</p> <p><b>AP: ML to investigate opportunities for joint APPG collaboration.</b></p> <p>MLon raised the discussion point around the role of the 2022 Commonwealth Games and that the Black Country sub-region and the work of the APPG should be to focus on legacy building of the games – driving benefits from Birmingham through sensible procurement opportunities for business. Raising awareness for the games can be done sooner and work with the voluntary and support group to extend the beneficial reach of the games to the sub-region.</p> <p>CC raised that the Commonwealth Games team is developing a legacy framework and that the APPG could focus activities around this.</p> <p><b>AP: ML/CC to develop relationships with Commonwealth Games team to promote opportunities and link their Public Affairs team to the APPG.</b></p> <p>Discussion point was raised around the role of transport infrastructure for the sub-region. PG was asked to provide a short summary of Midlands Connect. It's role is to act as the regional transport body focusing on East-West connectivity. Midlands Connect lobbies central government for financial support from budgetary announcements and works with delivery partners and key stakeholders across the region.</p> <p><b>AP: ML to invite Midlands Connect to speak at a future meeting about Transport lobbying priorities.</b></p>	<p>CC</p> <p>ML</p> <p>MLon</p> <p>CC</p> <p>ML/CC</p> <p>All/PG</p> <p>ML/PG</p>	On-going
	<b>Any other business</b>		
1.08	None		Closed
	<b>Date of next Meeting</b>		
1.09	10.06.20	All	10/06