



# Business Plan 2017-19

Black Country Chamber of Commerce

Belong

Connect

Communicate

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## Foreward

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I am pleased to present the Black Country Chamber of Commerce (BCCC) Business Plan for 2017 – 2020.

The last 12 months have seen a lot of upheaval in the governance of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce. There have been changes at CEO level which led to me taking up this role last October, Jude Thompson, Shaun Carvill, Ali Allibhai and Simon Bond joined the board and we have a new President and Chair of the Board in Adrian Wright and a new Vice President just announced as Julie Bevan. We have relaunched our Consultative Forum which is chaired by Mike Dell and we have launched a Young Chamber which will meet three times a year and have

representatives from 8 schools from across the area.

Whilst it has been a difficult year with membership numbers falling and a political backdrop of huge change at every level – from Combined Authority and Elected Mayors locally, to Brexit and Trump Internationally – local businesses have continued to behave in a typically entrepreneurial and determined style with the West Midlands economic performance outpacing our national neighbours and confidence remaining high with local businesses despite all the change.

We need to invest to grow and with the launch of this Business Plan, we embark on a programme of change for the chamber, where we aim to become a truly modern, commercial sustainable and business led organisation that is run for our members, by our members. This plan sets out an exciting agenda that will increase membership, establish ourselves as true partners to the wider business and civic community both locally and nationally, develop new products and services that our businesses have asked for and develop a team of officers that are focused on the growth and support of all our members.

The Chamber of Commerce has a long, proud history of campaigning for the issues of local businesses and bringing our members together to show the power of the Black Country Economy. This 3 Year Business Plan sets out how we will build on this legacy and create an organisation that everyone is proud to be a member.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Corin Crane', written in a cursive style.

**Corin Crane**  
Chief Executive  
Black Country Chamber of Commerce

## About the Black Country Chamber of Commerce

We are a local chamber with a long history. Wolverhampton Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1856 and Walsall Chamber was formed in 1892. In 2001, the four areas merged to form the Black Country Chamber and we currently represent around 1250 members. We are also part of a huge global movement. Across the Country there are over 90,000 Chamber of Commerce members employing over 5m people across 52 Chambers. Overseas there are British Chamber in 33 Countries from Chile to Cambodia.

The Chamber now employs 26 members of staff that offer a range of services to businesses – from Export Documents, Trade Support, account management, events, awards, training and lots of networking opportunities. Most of these staff are employed permanently through general funds, but we also have contracts with Department of International Trade (DIT) and ERDF to offer specific services. We work in partnership with the other 5 Chambers of Commerce across the West Midlands to deliver the DIT contract through an LLP and at a policy level we work closely with Greater Birmingham & Solihull and Coventry & Warwickshire Chambers on Combined Authority and Elected Mayoral activity. We are currently in a financially secure position, but we ran at a deficit in 2016/ 17 and we have areas of the business that need developing to avoid any further financial losses in the future.

We are governed by a board of 10 directors who, with the exception of the CEO and President, serve 4 year terms with 2 directors standing for re-election every November at the annual AGM. We have an active Consultation Forum that support the CEO on policy development and key campaigns.

We want a thriving local and national economy so that Black Country Businesses can grow, by selling more goods and services and employing more people. To do this we will actively work as closely as possible with several key partners – from other business support groups in the IOD, Federation of Small Businesses, CBI, Made in Midlands and EEF, with all our Local Authorities, local MPs, Local Enterprise Partnership, the new West Midlands Growth Company, West Midlands Combined Authority and new elected Mayor, Midlands Engine and a wide range of local and regional education providers.



## Strategic Vision and Values

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### Our Strategic Vision is:

***To provide first-class business support to companies across the Black Country, to lobby on their behalf and to create a sense of belonging to the wider chamber movement.***

The BCCC is an authentic voice for Black Country business and helps thousands of companies - of every size and sector - to grow and thrive. We will also work to bridge the gap between the world of education and the world of work, helping businesses find the talent they need, and boosting the career prospects of young people.

Chambers create a network that drives growth by helping businesses to belong, connect and communicate. For over 100 years, our business has been helping Black Country Businesses grow.

### The Chambers Values are:

- **To always support belonging and gathering: We will bring businesses together to help them grow through new commercial opportunities and to create a common voice on local issues.**
- **To communicate clearly and effectively to our members, partners and each other: To help us adapt and grow in a fast changing social environment we will embrace new ways of communication to allow effective feedback from businesses and to help us customise new support products.**
- **To be creative, risk takers and brilliant problem solvers: We will embrace a 'can-do' attitude and lead local partnerships with a positive approach to working together.**
- **To be leaders in diversity: We will proactively aim to work with members that reflect the ethnic and cultural communities that drive the local economy and develop programmes to engage with young entrepreneurs and enterprises.**
- **To put our people first: Our staff are our greatest asset and wherever possible we will help them develop and drive the business forward. When we recruit, we will aim to employ the best candidates through first class recruitment processes.**
- **To take pride in achievements: Of our local businesses and members, of our local partners and of our team members.**

## Business Planning Principles

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This business plan is for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and will be refreshed annually.

All the Chamber's activity will be based on the delivery of three main objectives:

- i) To increase the value to existing members**
- ii) Raise the profile and engagement with non-members**
- iii) Raise the profile of the BCCC regionally and nationally**

It has been developed following some key planning principles:

- **Using staff input at its core – from planning days, 1:1's and discussion sessions.**
- **By following the ideal of becoming a 'modern Chamber', with our structure, digital presence, demography of membership, partnerships, use of evidence and building a wide network of expertise.**
- **Putting first class communications at the heart of everything we do – through consultation and the focus on Your Chamber/Your Views, closer working with local and national press and greater use of digital communication.**
- **To operate to best practice in openness and transparency, from decision making, member involvement at every level, best use of funds and ensuring Value for Money, business, finance and Communications Plans available on line every April and an Annual Review of performance for every AGM.**
- **Doing fewer things, better – through focused campaigns, a clearer membership model and a focus on quality rather than quantity with our membership approach.**
- **Being a leader in business partnerships – whether they are local, national or international. Taking a fresh approach to local partnership working, aligning ourselves where possible to British Chamber of Commerce activity and taking a proactive and leading role in regional initiatives such as Midlands Engine and the Combined Authority.**
- **To optimise Chamber assets – Human Resources, Capital and Financial Assets.**

## Black Country Chamber Goals

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Over the next three years, the Chamber will aim to achieve six high level goals that will increase membership, profile and commercial revenue. These are:

- **To grow Chamber numbers year on year in both paid and digital memberships.**
- **To develop and deliver a range of products, services and commercial opportunities based on clear market intelligence of local business needs.**
- **To put local businesses at the heart of policy and campaign development and to represent these businesses at a local, regional, national and international level.**
- **To become a 'modern Chamber'. With a comprehensive review of staff Structure and Governance and digital and ICT needs.**
- **Raise the profile and value of the Chamber and its members to wider business and stakeholder communities.**
- **Bridge the gap between the world of education and the world of work, helping businesses find the talent they need, and boosting the career prospects of young people.**

## Business Objectives 2017-20

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To achieve the goals set out above, SMART business objectives have been developed covering a three-year period from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020.

### **Goal 1: To grow Chamber numbers year on year in both paid and digital memberships.**

- G1.1 From a baseline of 1222, increase the number of paid chamber members to a minimum of 1650 by 2020. This will be 4% of local businesses.
- G1.2 To procure and develop a new CRM system, website and Digital Membership by the end of year 1.
- G1.3 To develop an active and intelligent database of 7500 members by the end of Year 3. This will be 20% of local businesses.
- G1.4 Review all price levels bi-annually with an aim to increase overall membership revenue by 10% by the end of Year 3.

### **Goal 2: To develop and deliver a range of products, services and commercial opportunities based on clear market intelligence of local business needs.**

- G2.1 To increase our Net Promoter Score (NPS) from our Member Satisfaction Survey year-on-year.
- G2.2 To conduct a review of all chamber products and membership packages by the end of Year 1.
- G2.2 To increase the number of Patron Members to a minimum of 16 by the end of Year 3.
- G2.3 To increase the number of Platinum Groups to 4 by the end of Year 3 and increase the number of Platinum Members to 65 by the end of the same year.
- G2.4 To run 2 Strategic Leadership Programmes each year with a minimum of 15 attendees on each course.
- G2.5 To develop and run 2 Leadership Programmes for smaller businesses each year.
- G2.6 To develop and launch 'International Trade Package' including documentation, DIT Contract, International Chamber links and affinity products around currency exchange, insurance, legal and translation services by the end of Year 1. From a baseline of £274,000 increase business take up of trade support by 100% by the end of year 3.



- G2.7 From a baseline of 49% develop an Engagement Strategy to increase the number of members using at least 1 service year-on-year. (Baseline data from Dec. 2015 – 1380 members and 678 companies engaged).
- G2.8 From a baseline of 38%, develop an events programme that at least 50% of members use at least once a year by the end of Year 3.
- G2.9 Seek funding to deliver start up support to local entrepreneurs and digital capabilities funding for SME's.

**Goal 3: To put local businesses at the heart of policy and campaign development and to represent these business at a local, regional, national and international level.**

- G3.1 Develop and deliver 4 major policy campaigns around transport, manufacturing, International Trade by the end of Year 2.
- G3.2 Undertake review of Prosper magazine to focus each issue on policy campaigns with articles that have a national as well as local interest and to maximise commercial value of contract.
- G3.3 To revitalise the Consultation Forum to act as sounding board for policy development and to meet regularly between each board meeting.
- G3.4 To work with Midlands Economic Forum to produce at least 2 first class local reports on key local issues each year and respond to essential consultations when needed.

**Goal 4: To become a 'modern chamber'. With a comprehensive review of staff structure, governance and digital and ICT needs.**

- G4.1 Complete review of board Chair, President, VP and Directors roles.
- G4.2 Complete and implement a review of staff structure, skills, wages and performance management against business plan delivery by the end of Year 1.
- G4.3 Achieve Investors in People to 'Developed' in year 1, 'Established' in Year 2 and Advanced in Year 3.
- G4.4 Procure and embed a new CRM System and Website by the end of Year 1.
- G4.5 Establish flexible working opportunities for staff by the end of Year 2.
- G4.6 Achieve BCC accreditation and ISO9001 each year and refresh all risk management paperwork by the end of Year 1.
- G4.7 To launch a simplified and modern payment system for membership payments by the end of Year 1.

**Goal 5: Raise the profile and value of the Chamber and its members to national and international business and stakeholder communities.**

- G5.1 Develop and establish a commercially successful Business Festival by the end of Year 3.
- G5.2 Develop links with BCCs Overseas Business Network and secure relationships with 2 International Chambers each year.
- G5.3 Produce and start to deliver a Communication Strategy by the end of Year 1.
- G5.4 Win a national award for both the Chamber and a member at the annual BCC Awards Ceremony and enter other relevant awards as a Chamber of Commerce.
- G5.5 Produce a short Events Strategy to increase revenue to make the events offer at the Chamber a commercially sustainable operation by the end of Year 2.

**Goal 6: Bridge the gap between the world of education and the world of work, helping businesses find the talent they need, and boosting the career prospects of young people.**

- G6.1 Establish a Young Chamber and accompanying package of activity that is built into the governance structures of the Chamber.
- G6.2 Secure funding to develop and run a chamber school's engagement package in partnership with the Careers Enterprise Partnership and increase school membership to 50% of all secondary schools by end of Year 3.
- G6.3 Run annual event to bring all agencies working between schools and chambers together and brief them on schools and business needs.

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**5 of these will become Team Objectives that all staff will be set to jointly achieve. These are:**

**G1.1 Increase the number of paid chamber members to a minimum of 1650 by 2020.**

**G2.1 Increase our Net Promoter Score (NPS) from our Member Satisfaction Survey year-on-year.**

**G2.7 Increase the number of members using at least 1 service year on year.**

**G4.3 Achieve Investors in People to 'Developed' in year 1, 'Established' in Year 2 and Advanced in Year 3.**

**G5.4 Win a national award for both the Chamber and a member at the annual BCC Awards Ceremony and enter other relevant awards as a Chamber of Commerce.**

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