



All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group

Minutes: Inaugural General Meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group

Tuesday 17 December 2024, 5pm-6pm

Portcullis House, Meeting Room O

Present:

APPG members: Dame Harriett Baldwin MP (Chair), Lord Aberdare (Co-Chair), Alison Griffiths MP, Baroness Sater, Baroness Wheatcroft, Viscount Younger of Leckie.

Business in the Community (Secretariat): Mary Macleod (CEO), Gail Greengross (External Affairs Director), Laura Dunn (Head of Media and Public Affairs), Jamie Titterrell (Senior Public Affairs and Research Officer), Polly Dacam (Press Officer), Yasminca Wilson (South West Regional Lead).

Costain (presentation): James York (Group Corporate Responsibility Director), Neil Durran (Consents and Stakeholder Engagement Lead), Solo Malemo (Senior Community Relations and Stakeholder Manager), Tolu Joshua (Community Investment and Social Value Manager).

Apologies: Baroness Wilcox of Newport

1. Welcome from the Co-Chairs and Inaugural General Meeting

- Dame Harriett Baldwin MP welcomed attendees to the Inaugural General Meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Corporate Responsibility and introduced the agenda for the meeting.
- Dame Harriett Baldwin MP proposed the motion to re-elect Lord Aberdare as Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion to elect Dame Harriett Baldwin MP as Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion for Baroness Wilcox of Newport to be elected Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion for Alison Griffiths MP to be elected as the fourth Officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion that Business in the Community be reappointed to provide the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion to elect Dame Harriett Baldwin MP to the role of Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group for the purpose of the bank account. The motion was approved.



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- Dame Harriet Baldwin MP proposed the motion to elect Lord Aberdare to the role of Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group for the purpose of the bank account. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed a resolution to agree that Lord Aberdare and Dame Harriett Baldwin MP be added as the sole signatories to the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group's bank account and that the Bank is authorised to act on the agreements/instructions entered into or given by them as set out in the HSBC "Mandate for General Organisations". The resolution was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion for the name of the All-Party Parliamentary Corporate Responsibility Group to be changed to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Responsible Business. The motion was approved.
- Lord Aberdare proposed the motion for the description and purpose of the Group to change from "To promote debate and understanding of corporate responsibility" to "To promote debate and understanding of responsible business." The motion was approved.

2. Update from Mary Macleod, CEO, Business in the Community on the importance of the APPG and the future of responsible business

- Mary Macleod provided an introduction on the work of Business in the Community (BITC) and the impact it is having across the UK through its missions of:
 - Ensuring that every young person and job seeker feels supported and has a clear pathway into work.
 - Ensuring that every employer invests in the skills needed today and in the future, to create workplaces where everyone can grow and reach their potential, regardless of background.
 - Ensuring that every community has a shared sense of pride and hope with the support needed to build a strong collective vision to deliver a greener future.
- Mary provided an overview of BITC's Seeing is Believing programme and the roles of businesses. Mary stressed her belief that the APPG can be a venue for many more businesses to get involved and drive change by opening up opportunities and jobs for those who might face barriers to employment, promoting inclusion in the workplace and promoting a just and fair transition to net zero.
- Mary emphasised that it is parliamentarians who are at the centre of the responsible business journey and they have the influence to shape what businesses do.
- Mary spoke about the importance of creating impact and the fact that, through BITC's work with businesses across the UK, 1.2 million jobs have become more accessible to job seekers facing barriers to employment. She stressed that solutions already exist, but we need to find them and ensure that businesses, government and community organisations work together to action them.
- Mary gave an outline of the previous APPG meetings on Race in the Workplace and the rise in the cost of living and spoke about the importance of the APPG and its influence through its 40 parliamentary members and 60 associate members in

promoting and celebrating responsible business practices.

3. Forward Programme Planning for the APPG for Responsible Business

- Dame Harriett Baldwin MP asked attendees for potential topics to be discussed at future meetings of the APPG in the coming year.
- Baroness Wheatcroft suggested a meeting on what businesses can do to get prisoners and ex-offenders into employment.
- Lord Aberdare suggested a meeting on skills for today and for the future and how businesses and the government can help to equip the UK workforce with the skills they will need.
- Viscount Younger of Leckie (Shadow Minister for the DWP) suggested a meeting on how the government can help job centres support people with long-term sickness or disability, with regards to hybrid working and options for flexible working. Mary Macleod suggested this could be linked to BITC's Job Coaching programme.
- Baroness Sater suggested a meeting on community engagement and volunteering and the positive effects of volunteering on employee wellbeing and organisational productivity.
- Lord Aberdare suggested a meeting on creating a diverse UK through breaking down supply chain barriers and ensuring diversity and inclusion throughout the supply chain.
- *Action:* Lord Aberdare called on BITC to arrange a discussion on topics for 2025 meetings to create a final plan for 2025.
- *Action:* Mary Macleod and Lord Aberdare proposed reinstating the Responsible Business Champions Awards Scheme with award categories that cover all areas of responsible business. This will be part of the planning discussion above.

4. Costain – presentation about what Costain is doing on their responsible business journey

- James York introduced Costain and the work it does in the UK and how social value is embedded into how Costain delivers projects. He spoke about how Costain's business purpose is to improve people's lives and social and environmental sustainability is at the heart of everything they do, He spoke about Costain's partnerships with local and national organisations to help get their work done, including its 'Get Into Construction' programme, which helps those who are unemployed undertake classroom and practical learning, and has led to 120 people getting jobs. He stressed the importance of using digital technology to understand the community.
- Neil Durran spoke about Costain's delivery of the HS2 London tunnels between Euston and Ruislip, which covers the London borough of Brent.
- Tolu Joshua highlighted how social value has been delivered in Brent through giving people access to training and skills opportunities and supporting people to gain meaningful, long-term employment in the borough. She also spoke about Costain's Get Ahead Work Experience programme and how Costain target job seekers who face barriers to employment including young people not in education, employment, or training through job fairs.



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- Solo Malemo outlined how social value has been delivered in Brent through the introduction and delivery of the HS2 project, including 114 workless job starts (9% of the Greater London total workless job starts on the project) coming from the borough, and 26 apprenticeship starts (7% of the Greater London total apprenticeship starts on the project) coming from the borough.
- Finally, Neil discussed Costain's partnership with Buses4Homeless, helping people experiencing homelessness to gain soft and vocational skills.

5. Dame Harriett Baldwin MP – closing remarks and next steps

- Dame Harriett Baldwin MP thanked the speakers and attendees.
- She highlighted the figures and statistics she was struck by in the meeting and stressed that whilst the numbers are important, there is always more to be done.
- She concluded by saying how this meeting was a great way to relaunch the APPG and that she is excited to hear more and see the Group progress.

The date of the next APPG meeting will be communicated shortly.