

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Responsible Business Minutes for Meeting on Place-Based Partnerships and Long-Term Funding

Tuesday 14 July 2026, 3-4:15pm

Location: Room 3-20, Millbank House

Present:

APPG Officers: Lord Bassam – Chair of the meeting

Business in the Community (Secretariat): Hannah Tankard (Head of Content, Research and Engagement), Polly Dacam (Senior Public Affairs and Media Officer), Diana Abad (Seeing is Believing Engagement Manager), Matilda Macleod (Place Senior Officer)

Speakers: Rob Kurn, Chief Executive, Southampton Voluntary Services; Jack Kidder, Responsible Business Manager, Henry Boot; Amanda Anderson, Director of Place, Operations and Strategy, Business in the Community; Rachel Laver, Managing Director, Rochdale Development Agency

Additional Parliamentary attendees: Baroness Valentine; Parliamentary Assistant of Martin Wrigley MP

Additional non-Parliamentary attendees: Attendees representing the APPG for Responsible Business's Corporate Member companies and others, including Aviva, AWE, Drax, Henry Boot Developments, Orbit Group, and Zurich Insurance.

1. Welcome and opening remarks from Baroness Valentine

Baroness Valentine opened the meeting on behalf of Lord Bassam and introduced the discussion on place-based partnerships and long-term funding.

- Introduced the panel of speakers.
- Highlighted the significant differences in outcomes, opportunities, and access experienced by communities across the UK.
- Emphasised the importance of cross-sector collaboration in addressing complex social and economic challenges.
- Reflected on experience from major regeneration and infrastructure projects, including in London and Blackpool, demonstrating that bringing diverse partners together can deliver transformational change.
- Outlined Business in the Community's Pride of Place programme and its engagement with government on place-based approaches.
- Noted the opportunity to align business-led place partnerships with emerging national and regional growth priorities.

2. Rob Kurn, Chief Executive, Southampton Voluntary Services

- Introduced Southampton Voluntary Services as a local infrastructure organisation with deep roots in the city since 1968.

- Highlighted challenges facing communities in Southampton including deprivation, lower educational attainment, skills shortages, and health inequalities.
- Recognised the strength of Southampton's voluntary and community sector and the value of local assets.
- Shared examples of long-term partnership working, including Community Roots, which supported people recovering from addiction and homelessness through gardening, skills development, and employment opportunities.
- Argued that successful place partnerships require organisations to become genuinely immersed in local communities.
- Emphasised the importance of using evidence and local data to identify priorities and define shared objectives.
- Encouraged organisations to identify their unique contribution while working collaboratively with partners across sectors.
- Stressed that short-term funding cycles are often incompatible with creating long-term change.
- Called for organisations to adopt a long-term vision for place and focus on sustainable impact.

3. Jack Kidder, Responsible Business Manager, Henry Boot

- Described Sheffield as a city of significant opportunity but also stark inequalities.
- Explained how the Sheffield Pride of Place Partnership developed a ten-year strategy focused on economic growth, social mobility, and infrastructure.
- Highlighted Business in the Community's [*See it Be it*](#) and [*Opening Doors*](#) programmes as examples of collaborative programmes tackling barriers to employment and progression, recognising these are systemic national issues not unique to Sheffield.
- Explained that the partnership sought to complement existing activity rather than duplicate it.
- Argued that businesses should take responsibility for supporting the places from which they draw their workforce and talent.
- Highlighted the value of testing new approaches locally before replicating them elsewhere.
- Emphasised the importance of ensuring SMEs are engaged alongside larger businesses.
- Suggested that businesses should aspire to be recognised as place-makers and convenors as well as commercial organisations.

4. Amanda Anderson, Director of Place, Operations and Strategy, Business in the Community

- Explained that Business in the Community currently supports Pride of Place partnerships across multiple locations throughout the UK.
- Argued that no single sector can solve place-based challenges alone.
- Emphasised the importance of dedicated local capacity and leadership in driving change.

- Highlighted Blackpool as an example of how a shared vision and Prospectus helped unlock significant inward investment.
- Presented Sheffield's *See it Be it* programme as an example of a successful model that has been adapted in other locations.
- Stressed the importance of working **with** communities rather than delivering solutions **to** communities.
- Highlighted the role of businesses in providing skills, resources, networks, and influence alongside financial investment.
- Highlighted Business in the Community's work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure alignment and avoid duplication between the Pride of Place and Pride in Place programmes, and reinforce the idea that businesses is a key part of any place-based partnership.
- Supported greater recognition of business as a strategic partner in place-based policy and regeneration.

5. Rachel Laver, Managing Director, Rochdale Development Agency

- Highlighted the complexity of the current business support landscape, noting that businesses can face an overwhelming number of programmes and funding opportunities.
- Argued that support should be simplified and focused on proven interventions.
- Emphasised the importance of innovation, peer learning, and business growth support.
- Raised concerns about the impact of short-term funding arrangements on long-term delivery.
- Called for longer funding support of three, five, or ten years.
- Highlighted challenges facing women entrepreneurs and underrepresented groups in accessing investment.
- Stressed the importance of retaining local talent and creating pathways for progression within communities.
- Advocated for greater support to enable local businesses to access public procurement opportunities.

6. Questions and reflections

Chris Burley, Zurich Insurance – How do we encourage more businesses to engage in place-based partnerships and community investment?

Chris Burley: Explained that Zurich has worked alongside Swindon Borough Council on the redevelopment of an office site. Highlighted the business benefits of investment in place, including increased employee satisfaction and improved perceptions of safety. Described the role of Zurich Community Trust in supporting wider community engagement activities. Outlined how Zurich colleagues participate in careers events and school engagement initiatives to raise awareness of career opportunities.

Baroness Valentine: Asked whether effective place-based partnerships require a broader network of community partners alongside local authorities.

Shona King, Drax – How can businesses develop more intentional place-based approaches?

Shona King: Explained that Drax has brought together businesses, local authorities, and voluntary sector organisations around shared priorities in North Yorkshire. Identified education, employment pathways, and support for local communities as key areas of focus. Highlighted the importance of working directly with schools to help address skills challenges. Emphasised that businesses cannot complain about skills shortages if they do not actively engage with young people.

Jack Kidder: Argued that businesses should consider whether existing activity is delivering meaningful outcomes rather than simply increasing levels of activity. Emphasised the importance of understanding the appropriate role of individual businesses within broader partnerships. Highlighted the need to engage SMEs, which comprise the majority of businesses in Sheffield.

Amanda Anderson: Explained that BITC convenes partnerships both locally and nationally. Encouraged businesses to share learning and adapt successful place-based models to local contexts.

Baroness Valentine – How can organisations collaborate more effectively around education and skills?

Shona King: Explained that Drax works through a combination of direct engagement and partnerships with educational organisations. Highlighted the value of maintaining long-term relationships with schools.

Jack Kidder: Explained that *See it Be it* has streamlined engagement between employers and schools. Highlighted the benefits of coordinating business involvement through a single partnership structure.

Elgan Jones (Henry Boot Developments): Reflected on the value of hearing directly from young people about their aspirations and expectations. Highlighted how these insights have informed programme development.

Baroness Valentine – Does competition between organisations undermine place-based working?

Rob Kurn: Reported limited experience of direct competition affecting partnership delivery. Emphasised the importance of focusing on outcomes for beneficiaries through collaboration.

Rachel Laver: Encouraged organisations to prioritise collaboration where shared goals exist.

Jack Kidder: Highlighted examples of multiple organisations pursuing similar objectives around young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). Encouraged organisations seeking grant funding to demonstrate collaboration and partnership working by working together rather than duplicating work.

Rob Kurn: Suggested that funding insecurity can unintentionally discourage collaboration. Argued that longer-term funding would enable organisations to work more openly together.

Amanda Anderson, Business in the Community – How can apprenticeship levy sharing support place-based partnerships?

Amanda Anderson: Asked whether more could be done to support apprenticeship levy sharing within place-based partnerships. Highlighted examples in Coventry and Hounslow where organisations have used levy transfer arrangements to create opportunities for local people.

Rachel Laver: Explained that Rochdale is exploring ways to facilitate apprenticeship levy matching between businesses and local organisations. Suggested that a brokerage or matchmaking service could help ensure unused levy funding is directed towards local needs. Highlighted plans to support businesses in understanding how levy transfer arrangements can be utilised more effectively.

Amanda Anderson: Encouraged further learning between areas already operating successful levy-sharing models and those seeking to establish similar approaches.

Rachel Laver: Proposed establishing a register through which businesses could pledge skills, expertise, mentoring, and other forms of support to local communities.

Jack Kidder: Supported the proposal and highlighted the value of making it easier for communities to communicate local needs to businesses.

Chris Daniels, AWE – What is the best way for businesses to understand community need?

Rob Kurn: Recommended engaging with local infrastructure organisations and community networks. Highlighted their role in connecting businesses with local groups and residents.

Jack Kidder: Argued that data alone cannot provide a complete picture of local need. Encouraged businesses to combine evidence with conversations and local engagement.

Amanda Anderson: Explained that Business in the Community combines quantitative data with community engagement when developing place-based partnerships.

Emphasised the importance of understanding the lived experience behind local statistics.

Sian Morgan, Aviva – Reflection on embedding place within corporate strategy

Sian Morgan: Explained that Aviva employs dedicated Community Impact Leads to understand local needs and build relationships within communities. Highlighted the role of Aviva Foundation funding programmes, including the Financial Futures Fund and Community Fund. Noted that employees are provided with funding to support community organisations of their choice. Described place as a fundamental part of Aviva's approach to responsible business. Highlighted examples of place-based activity in locations including Norwich, Bristol, York, and Scotland. Emphasised the value of maintaining dedicated colleagues on the ground to understand community priorities and opportunities.

Chris Daniels, AWE – How can organisations ensure social value creates meaningful impact rather than becoming a compliance exercise?

Jack Kidder: Argued that social value reporting can become overly focused on metrics and data collection. Encouraged organisations to focus on impact and community outcomes rather than activity measures. Suggested that strong partnerships and local relationships are often more valuable than high-volume reporting.

Elgan Jones: Highlighted a gap between social value commitments made during procurement processes and the delivery of those commitments in practice. Encouraged organisations to remain engaged beyond contract award and ensure promised outcomes are achieved.

Shona King: Emphasised the importance of defining intended outcomes from the outset. Encouraged organisations to focus on measuring impact rather than outputs.

Amanda Anderson: Suggested that social value activity can be strengthened when aligned to a wider place-based strategy and shared local priorities.

Jack Kidder: Argued that commissioning organisations often do not require additional social value commitments, but rather more targeted and locally relevant interventions.

Rachel Laver: Emphasised the responsibility of commissioners and contracting bodies to ensure social value requirements are proportionate, targeted, and linked to local need.

Nicola Cale, Orbit Group – Reflection on Orbit Group's place-based model

Nicola Cale: Explained that Orbit has adopted a neighbourhood model with place-based teams working directly within communities. Highlighted work to connect residents with health, wellbeing, hardship, and grant support. Described efforts to align

supplier and contractor social value commitments with identified community needs. Explained that Orbit is working with a Social Value Manager to improve oversight of commitments and ensure delivery reflects local priorities. Highlighted a growing network of community hubs that provide residents with access to support and services. Encouraged organisations to understand local needs before committing social value activity and to allow priorities to evolve over time.

Baroness Valentine: Highlighted Orbit's support for practical community projects, including repairs to the roof of a community organisation in Coventry. Emphasised the value of tangible interventions that respond directly to locally identified need.

Elgan Jones, Henry Boot Developments – How can organisations design social value approaches when they may only be present in a community for a limited period?

Elgan Jones: Explained that developers and construction businesses may operate in a community for several years but are not permanent local institutions. Asked how organisations can establish social value programmes that continue to benefit communities after a project has concluded. Highlighted the importance of considering long-term stewardship and community ownership from the outset.

Nicola Cale: Suggested identifying organisations and institutions that will remain in the community over the long term, including housing providers, local authorities, and community organisations. Highlighted the importance of collaboration between anchor institutions to maintain momentum after individual projects have ended. Described Orbit's community hub model as one approach to creating sustainable local infrastructure.

Baroness Valentine: Reflected on the challenges associated with short-term investment and delivery programmes. Encouraged organisations to consider how legacy and long-term impact can be built into project design from the beginning.

Shona King, Drax - Called for greater opportunities to convene senior business leaders around place-based partnerships

Shona King: Suggested creating dedicated forums for chief executives and business leaders to discuss the business case for place, such as roundtable events. Encouraged stronger leadership engagement in driving long-term place-based change.

Amanda Anderson: Highlighted existing opportunities within BITC's programmes, such as [The King's Seeing is Believing programme](#), to bring leaders together and share learning across different locations. Encouraged businesses to make use of existing networks and partnerships to accelerate progress.

Lord Bassam: Highlighted the importance of convening spaces such as Business in the Community's Place Summit in bringing together organisations working towards shared

objectives. Emphasised the value of helping participants recognise that they form part of a wider movement for responsible business and thriving places. Encouraged continued collaboration between business, government, civil society, and local communities.

6. Final speaker reflections

Rob Kurn:

- Emphasised the moral imperative for businesses to invest in the communities in which they operate.
- Highlighted that place-based approaches also deliver tangible business benefits alongside social outcomes.
- Argued that supporting thriving communities is both the right thing to do and good business practice.

Rachel Laver:

- Highlighted changing expectations within the workforce, particularly among younger employees.
- Suggested that employees increasingly want to work for organisations that make a positive contribution to society.
- Argued that responsible business practices can support recruitment, retention, and employee engagement.

Jack Kidder:

- Emphasised that place-based working should be embedded within organisational culture rather than treated as a standalone initiative.
- Encouraged organisations to measure the impact of their interventions rather than focusing solely on inputs or volunteering hours.
- Argued that demonstrating meaningful outcomes is essential to sustaining long-term commitment.

Amanda Anderson:

- Reinforced the business case for place-based partnerships alongside their social impact.
- Highlighted evidence that engagement in communities can improve employee morale, increase retention, and strengthen organisational reputation.
- Suggested that place-based working can also support workforce diversification and stronger community relationships.

- Encouraged businesses to view themselves as long-term partners in local growth and development.

7. Closing remarks – Lord Bassam

- Thanked speakers and attendees for their contributions to the discussion.
- Welcomed the breadth of examples shared from across the UK.
- Encouraged participants to continue sharing learning and best practice between places.
- Confirmed that meeting minutes will be circulated to all attendees and a letter would be sent to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and to the Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister reflecting the key discussion points and recommendations arising from the meeting.

Appendix

Members of the APPG for Responsible Business

The APPG for Responsible Business currently has 21 Parliamentary members:

- Dame Harriett Baldwin MP
- Lord Bassam
- Chirs Bloore MP
- Elsie Blundell MP
- Lord Blunkett
- Lord Bourne
- Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted
- Lord Brennan
- Wendy Chamberlain MP
- Baroness Coussins
- Alison Griffiths MP
- John Milne MP
- Iqbal Mohamed MP
- Lord Newby
- Baroness Sater
- Greg Smith MP
- Jamie Stone MP
- Baroness Valentine
- Valerie Vaz MP
- Martin Wrigley MP
- Viscount Younger of Leckie

The APPG for Responsible Business currently has 20 corporate members:

- AB InBev
- Associated British Foods
- AWE
- Cemex
- CMS Cameron McKenna
- Consilient Health
- Convatec
- Coventry Building Society
- Drax
- Henry Boot
- Home Instead
- Minority Supplier Development UK
- Novus Solutions
- Orbit Group
- Pool Reinsurance
- Thales UK
- The Learning Nuggets Company
- Watches of Switzerland
- White & Case
- Zurich Insurance