

North America Area Focussed Association Meeting

Committee Room 3+4, Council House

19th November 2013, 17.30 -18.30

Attendees

Mike Murray	BCC (opening chair)
Heather Law	BCC
Lloyd Broad	BCC
Jo Andrews	BCU
Carl Smith	The Edge Collegiate of Schools
Ant Thomas	Marketing Birmingham
Justin Benson	KPMG
Symon Easton	BCC
Mashuq Ali	BCC
Piali Ray	Sampad
Derek Douglas	Commonwealth Diaspora
Christopher Barron	BRB
Catherine Lemon	UoB
Harpreet Sabbharwal	Former BCU student

Apologies

Andrea Edwards	UoB
Jack Kelly	National Express
Anjum Cave	Bournville College
Paul Noon	UKTI

1. Role / purpose of North America Association

Agreement: Group agreed with the mission statement of the association presented:

The role/purpose of the North America Association is to promote and develop local government, business, education, cultural and other activity of mutual benefit between the people and organisations of Birmingham and North America.

- Sir Albert Bore charged the European and International Affairs team with delivering the European and International strategy and joining up international activity in the city.
- The Chicago sister city 'Area Focussed Association' model has informed the Birmingham area focussed associations.
- The group agreed that Birmingham has several unique selling points and attractors which could be drawn upon to boost trade and investment activity in the city.

ACTION: Group would like to gain a deeper understanding of the value of US trade and investment to Birmingham. **KPMG and Marketing Birmingham** have offered to present at the next meeting and address this request, plus provide an overview of activity they have in the U.S.

2. Membership

- The group expressed a desire to encourage American representation to the association to gain benefit from their perspective.
- Membership on the committee is flexible; people may contribute as much or as little as is appropriate.
- Task and finish groups may emerge dependent on the task in hand.

3. Governance, appointment of Chair/ frequency of meetings

Governance

- The group agreed that rigid governance arrangements would not be appropriate and a more flexible approach would benefit the association.

Chair

- Prof. Jo Andrews was appointed Chair for a 12 month period.

Jo underlined that collaboration is the key to the group's success.

A recent visit to Chicago achieved the following:

- Birmingham's five universities worked together and contributed to *Forum 48*, organised by the Urban Land Institute to discuss the role of universities, local government, business and the arts working together to build a successful 'knowledge' or 'smart city'.
- Learning was also made regarding education/ business partnerships and school exchanges.
- Chipu Nyambuya working at the Chicago Consul General's Office invites us to work more collaboratively with the Consul General to support the work of our Association.

Frequency of meetings

- Group agreed that the frequency of meetings would be dependent upon the task in hand.

4. Updates from members/setting of priorities

ACTION: Group to send summary of their activity to:
Distinctly@birmingham.gov.uk

ACTION: Invite Visit Britain along to next meeting

ACTION: Invite John Morris along to next meeting

- Group agreed that an action plan would be developed for the New Year.
- Group expressed desire for the purpose and activity of the group to be visible. The Distinctly Birmingham portal will help achieve this. Any events/ meetings in relation to North America can be publicised on the website.
- List of activity received from group by Mike Murray was circulated at the meeting.
- The Birmingham Contemporary Music Group will be performing in the Library of Congress on 6-11 April 2014. (see attached note)

- SAMPAD are working with artists and arts organisations in Birmingham and Chicago to develop '*A Tale of Two Inner Cities*'. (see attached note).

5. Date of next meeting/ Venue

- Tuesday 10th December, 17.30 -18.30, Council House, Victoria Sq., Cttee Room 2