

Distinctly Birmingham

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION STEERING GROUP MEETING

NOTES

Practical details:

Time: 13:00-14:30
Date: Friday 12 December

Venue: Committee Room 2
The Council House
Victoria Square
Birmingham

Present:

Steve Harding (Chair)	Birmingham City University
Jennifer Crisp	Birmingham City Council
Neena Gill MEP	European Parliament
Joseph Priestley	European Parliament
Sunny Claire	Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Heather Law	Birmingham City Council
Lloyd Broad	Birmingham City Council
Anthea McIntryre MEP	European Parliament
Karen Grinsell	European Parliament
Andrew Roadnight	University of Warwick
Peter Laybourn	International Synergies Ltd
Andrew Roadnight	University of Warwick
Stuart Russon	Birmingham City Council
Abdul Qadir	Birmingham City Council
Siôn Simon MEP	European Parliament
Jan Arkwright	European Parliament
Xavier Rodde	University of Birmingham

Apologies:

Val Birchall	Birmingham City Council
Stephen Maddock	CBSO
Pam Waddell	Birmingham Science City
Paul Knobbs	Aston University
Sadie Newman	BE Festival
Linda Saunders	DanceXchange
Liz Baines	CBSO

Jonathan Webber	Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Keith Stokes-Smith	Honorary Consul – Lithuania
Katherine Fuller	Innovation Birmingham Ltd & Climate KIC

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

- Attendees introduced themselves.
- Apologies were received were noted.

2. Notes of previous meeting

- The [notes](#) of the previous meeting, held on 19 September, were agreed.

Thematic part of meeting

3. Our MEPs: Understanding their work and how we can work better with them

The Chair welcomed the three MEPs who were present: Neena Gill, Anthea McIntyre and Siôn Simon and invited them to give an overview of the matters they were working on and any observations about how we could work with them

Neena Gill

- Attended the reception on the EU Urban Agenda that the Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels office had hosted during Open Days.
- Is a member of the EP's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee. Issues it is currently looking at include the Eurozone, the approval of the new Commissioner for financial services and financial stability, the Capital Markets Union and the Juncker EU Investment Plan.
- Neena is rapporteur on a report on Money Market Funds. This is an issue that is important to UK and the WM as this relates to access to finance for SMEs.
- She chaired seminar last week by London Stock Exchange and Bourse Italia on their Elite Programme (not an EU programme) for SME sector; they would like to hold a similar event in Birmingham. Neena could facilitate links on this.
- Other issues Neena is engaged with include: TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) and the recommencement of talks for an India Free Trade Agreement. These trade discussions are important to the WM economy.
- Email is the best way of getting in contact with Neena neenagillmep@gmail.com and neena.gill@ep.europa.eu.
- She would welcome discussions to encourage visits / events to Brussels / EP or to support opportunities to bring over Commissioners / senior Commission officials. Perhaps an event in the EP to promote Birmingham and the city's economic strengths? All 3 MEPs confirmed their willingness to support with sponsoring events or helping to approach Commission speakers on their areas of expertise.

Anthea McIntyre

- Anthea sits on the European Parliament's Employment Committee and the Rural Development Committee.
- She has a particular interest in issues relating to investment, innovation, SMEs and apprenticeships
- In the last European Parliament Anthea was the author of an own initiative "Opinion" on how the EU can create a more hospitable environment for businesses and jobs.

Siôn Simon

- Siôn believes that European and international links are important to develop the city region, the export agenda etc. He is keen to further explore what the added value of the European Parliament / the role of MEPs is in this.

- He is a member of the EP's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
- The 3 MEPs said that they would welcome more advance information about events in the Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels office. Jennifer said that a forward calendar would be put together and circulated to MEPs and other partners.

Core part of meeting

4. Update on Priority 1 of our Action Plan – Deepening exchange, exposure and partnerships

a. Update on Erasmus Plus workshop held on 25 November

- Abdul Qadir reported that this workshop organised by Birmingham City Council was well attended particularly by schools and colleges, and included a speaker from the National Contact Point. It was timed to take place well in advance so that organisations had sufficient time to develop their project proposals and find partners.

b. Partner city connection with Milan and BCU link to the Design for Europe project

- Steve Harding reported that Birmingham City University is working with Birmingham City Council's partner city connections with Milan to organise an event to promote Birmingham's design-led economy. This will also tie in with BCU's Design for Europe project.

c. Partner cities of Frankfurt and Birmingham marking the centenary of the unofficial ceasefire in WW1

- Jennifer Crisp informed the group that Birmingham and Frankfurt Cathedral choirs will perform together accompanied by a visual arts performance by Imagineer Productions to mark the unofficial Christmas ceasefire during WW1. This took place on Saturday 20 December at 18:30 and 20:00 on Birmingham Cathedral Green.

5. Update on Priority 2 of our action plan – Maximising large-scale, pan-European initiatives to support the development of Birmingham's key growth sectors

a. Climate KIC

- Jon Bloomfield reported that it had been a good year for Climate KIC with more activities being led by local partners. For example, International Synergies Ltd is working on educational and B2B related work and Birmingham City Council is leading the Transition Cities project.

b. Healthy Living and Active Ageing KIC

- Andy Roadnight reported that the consortium which the West Midlands was part of bidding to become the EU's new Healthy Living and Active Ageing KIC was told this week it had been successful in being selected.
- A range of West Midlands partners including universities, the NHS and local authorities are represented by WMAHSN (West Midlands Academic Health Sciences Network). The WM is a unique partner in that it is the only one that comes to the consortium as a joined up health economy.
- The KIC will develop research and innovation that promotes healthy living, develops and brings new products and services to market, exploits big data etc.
- Targets (taken from the bid) include 20 new products and services by 2016, 90 annually by 2018, 40 start-ups by 2016, various others.
- A local steering group meeting will take place next week. One of the things that will be discussed is the possibility of the West Midlands proposing to the UK node that the UK headquarters could be in Birmingham.

- Andy highlighted the collaborative and collegiate nature of work by local partners. There was no RDA to perform a local co-ordinating function, as it had done for the Climate KIC so the goodwill and contributions from partners has been vital in making WM involvement in this consortium happen.

6. Update on Priority 3 of our action plan – Supporting the city’s competitiveness and innovation agenda through European working

a. Plans for Horizon 2020 workshop aimed at SMEs

- The Europe Association will hold a workshop to promote opportunities for SMEs in the Horizon 2020 programme, including opportunities in the SME instrument, early in 2015 (date tbc).
- It will probably be a targeted, surgery style session, rather than following in general presentation format of the previous Erasmus Plus and Creative Europe seminars.
- Stuart Russon will be in contact with the universities about their input into this.

b. University of Birmingham collaboration agreement with the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre

- The University of Birmingham has signed an agreement to develop activities with the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) activities will include joint research projects, exchange of staff, exchange of data, joint publications etc. The co-operation will be focussed on 9 thematic areas which include urban change.
- Xavier is happy to share info on how they did this as JRC are open to further collaboration.

c. Event at University of Birmingham on Marie Curie Actions: Bridging Business and Research, 18 February

- UoB will host this European Commission event on Marie Curie Actions on 18 Feb. H2020 schemes to involve academia. This is one of two of these events in UK and is aimed at business and SMEs.
- There will be case study speakers at the event including International Synergies Ltd
- Xavier will circulate more information on this when it is available.

d. Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) update

- Sunny Claire reminded the group that EEN is based at Birmingham Chamber and various other sites in the region also covering the Derbyshire, Coventry and Warwickshire area.
- From January – Innovate UK will manage the EEN network
- There is potential for EEN to hold joint events with the Europe Association. He would welcome exploring this further.
- It was agreed that at our next meeting, the thematic presentation and discussion will be on EEN so the Europe Association can find out more and explore opportunities for collaboration.

7. Update on Priority 4 of our action plan – Develop greater joined up working with our ambassadors in Europe to further enhance Birmingham’s reputation and influence

a. Working with our MEPs and the European Parliament.

- This was covered in the discussion with MEPs under agenda item 3.

b. Update on ‘Benefits to Birmingham of being the EU’ publication

- The Benefits of Being in the EU document is being finalised with a view to going to print in the New Year.

- It will focus on the benefits that EU membership has had to Birmingham and the West Midlands with a particular focus on how EU funding has been used, there are also sections the benefits of the single market such as in inward investment, and business import and export.

c. Update on Birmingham and the EUROCITIES network

- Birmingham City Council was recently re-elected to the Executive Committee of EUROCITIES (the European association of 130 major cities across Europe).
- Birmingham has also been elected Vice Chair Mobility Forum which focuses on transportation matters – this is particularly relevant given that Birmingham has recently launched its transportation Strategy, Birmingham Connected.

8. Any other business

- Peter Laybourn reported that International Synergies Ltd has been the focus of a recent article in Pan European Network on industrial symbiosis in Birmingham.
- The date of the next meeting will be circulated in the New Year. It will be hosted by the Enterprise Europe Network at the Chamber.