

**Birmingham Commonwealth Association
Trade and Business Focus Group**

22.10.14

**Mills and Reeves,
78-84 Colmore Row,
B3 2AB**

Present:

Ammo Talwar MBE, (Punch Records)

Indi Deol, (Aidem Digital)

Mr Prakarsh (Punjab Nat Bank),

Pauline Taylor (Head of Federation of Small Businesses)

Mark Jones (BDO)

Orlando McDonald (Consultant, HESA Networks)

Martin Levermore (MDTI Co Ltd)

Paul Brown (Ernst and Young)

Mandy Haque (Birmingham Airport)

Patrick McCarron (UKTI)

Keith Stokes-Smith (BCA Chairman)

Peter McLintock (Trade and Business Focus Group Chair)

Mike Murray (Birmingham City Council-International Office)

Heather Law (Birmingham City Council-International Office)

Nadine Struempel (Birmingham City Council-International Office)

Apologies were rec'd from 12 'partners' who would have attended save for last minute issues arising.

1. Welcome and introductions- Focus Group Chairman-Mr Peter McLintock

- Chair welcomed group participants

2. Outcome of last meeting-resume

- KSS summarised outcomes of the last meeting and noted that we have been invited by the Royal Commonwealth Society to join them. We have also applied to become part of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London – the outcome of this application will be confirmed early 2015.

3. Guest Speakers:

Patrick McCarron, UKTI

- Please see attached presentation.

- Group expressed interest in finding out more about the business opportunities published on the UKTI website periodically.
- Up and coming trade missions include:
 - 8-15 November, South Africa
 - 27-29 November, Sri Lanka (food sector)
 - 22-28 February, India (automotive)
 - 2-6 February, Singapore
- 4th November, *Doing business in India* workshop
- 28th October, *Doing business in the Caribbean*, workshop
- 12th November, flagship UKTI event at ICC
- There is an afro-Caribbean diversity group, India/Pakistan trade Unit, plus 'Incubate for Export' programme.
- The UKTI Kellogg programme (funding SMEs to participate in a 'Fundamentals for Success in the US Market' business programme in Kellogg School of Management in Illinois) was fairly London-centric – is there anything targeting West Midlands SMEs?

ACTION: HL to organise a closed linked in group with Patrick in order to alert group to up and coming trade delegation missions and funding opportunities.

Mandy Hague-Sales and Travel Trade Relationship Manager, Birmingham Airport

- Please see attached presentation.
- Mandy asked businesses to let her know if there are any routes of specific interest to CW countries so that she can lobby aircraft carriers to initiate new routes.
- Mandy also suggested that when flights to CW countries are cheaper from other airports, it is worth challenging the operators flying out of Birmingham to match competitor prices operating from other airports in order to secure more business for Birmingham
- UKTI raised point that if there are multiple consignments to a particular destination, it is possible to bulk them together to get a better price.

4 Consideration and adoption of Terms of Reference

- Tweaks to the TOR were suggested by the group and these are still being considered and will be circulated shortly.

5 Agree specific objectives with achievable and measurable outcomes

The following were put forward

- Group agreed it would be useful to share experiences and learn from each other's experiences of trading with CW countries.
- Pauline, Federation of Small Businesses, agreed to source useful case studies.
- Med. tec. sector interested in exploring opportunities in overseas markets- particular interest in finding out about venture capital, plus considering potential opportunities engagement with the armed forces may offer.
- Interest in finding out more about dispute resolution and international arbitration with a particular focus on India and Pakistan.
- Interest in global trade rather than just a narrow focus on the CW.
- Interest in pinpointing areas where there are quick entry points to help partners access global markets
- BCC has useful points of contact through Commonwealth Local Government Forum.
- High profile ambassadors need to be engaged e.g. Digby Jones
- Use network opportunities presented by the group to work on collaborative trade projects, plus collaborate to attract CW customers to B'ham.
- Engage Marketing Birmingham

All the above will be reviewed to see what could be achieved.

6 Plans for future meetings to inc:

Guest speakers from different Commonwealth Country Trade Bodies, Business', Commonwealth Secretariat, UK Trade Bodies, Central Gov't funding, European funding etc.

- HS2 and the opportunities/impact this will have for B'ham - an indication of the timescales involved would also be appreciated.
- More time would be appreciated for networking during the meeting

7 Commonwealth Day-9 March 2015

- Lord Lieutenant and Lord Mayor will raise the CW flag in Victoria Square.
- It is hoped there will be a small reception held at the Council House.
- Group exploring the potential to host a meal at the Botanical Gardens.
- Group exploring a Commonwealth Day Service at Birmingham Cathedral on 9th March- Commonwealth Day.
- In 2015, Birmingham Cathedral celebrates its 300th anniversary – group keen to invite a member of the Royal family to mark the occasion.

8. Any other Business and Date of Next Meeting

- 15th January 2015, 8.30 am but a 'gathering' late November/early December will also be aimed for.