



ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR THE SOUTH EAST

Chair: Sally-Ann Hart MP *Hastings & Rye*

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Wednesday 22nd June 2022 @ 15.00 in Room W3, Westminster Hall

Present:

Sally-Ann Hart MP (Chair) Conservative	Hastings and Rye
Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP Labour	Slough
Huw Merriman MP Conservative	Bexhill and Battle
Paul Holmes MP Conservative	Eastleigh
Mr Jonathan Lord MP Conservative	Woking
Sean McKee Secretariat	South East Councils
Harry Cavill Secretariat	South East Councils

Apologies:

Caroline Lucas MP (Vice-Chair) Green	Brighton, Pavilion
James Sunderland MP (Vice-Chair) Conservative	Bracknell
Stephen Morgan MP (Vice-Chair) Labour	Portsmouth South
Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP Conservative	Romsey and Southampton North
Dame Maria Miller MP Conservative	Basingstoke
Henry Smith MP Conservative	Crawley
Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP Conservative	South West Surrey

1. Welcome

South East APPG Chair Sally-Ann Hart MP opened with housekeeping saying that voting will be done by a show of hands and prospective officers will be allowed to be elected in absentia.

2. Attendance and Apologies

The Chair took note of attendance and that the meeting was quorate with five MPs present:

- Sally-Ann Hart MP (Chair)
- Huw Merriman MP
- Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP
- Jonathan Lord MP
- Paul Holmes MP

2.2 The Chair took note of apologies from:

- Caroline Lucas MP
- James Sunderland MP
- Stephen Morgan MP
- Dame Maria Miller MP
- Henry Smith MP
- Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
- Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

3. Confirmation of Purpose and Chair's remarks:

The Chair remarked that the APPG for the South East was established on Thursday, 22 April, 2021 in its first formal set-up meeting with Sally-Ann Hart MP (Conservative) as Chair, and Stephen Morgan (Labour), Caroline Lucas (Green) and James Sunderland (Conservative) as Vice Chairs.

The Chair thanked South East Councils (SEC) for acting as secretariat to the APPG.

The Chair asked if the meeting agreed with the founding purpose of the APPG; that:

"The All-Party Group for the South East will provide a forum for Parliamentarians to discuss, with others, how to maintain the South East region as a great place to live, work and do business."

This was agreed.

The Chair noted that the first topical meeting, on Migration, took place on 20 September 2021 with the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration – that is hosted by SEC – giving a presentation to MPs.

The chair explained that this was followed by the launch of an inquiry: *"Financing the future – what does levelling up mean for South East England?"*. Twenty-eight written submissions were made to the APPG in response to its 10 December 2021 call for evidence. Two panel discussions were held on January 26, 2022, and February 23, 2022, respectively. A report has been produced and will be published shortly.

4. Confirmation of Officers for APPG:

Chair & Registered Contact:

Sally-Ann Hart MP (Conservative) was proposed by Huw Merriman MP (Conservative) and seconded by Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP (Labour), Paul Holmes MP (Conservative), and Jonathan Lord MP (Conservative).

4.2. Vice Chairs:

The Chair asked the if the meeting was content to take the following MPs, read out by the secretariat, to become Vice Chairs for the year ahead:

- Caroline Lucas MP (Green)
- Dame Maria Miller MP (Conservative)
- Henry Smith MP (Conservative)
- Huw Merriman MP (Conservative)
- James Sunderland MP (Conservative)
- Jonathan Lord MP (Conservative)
- Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP (Labour)
- Paul Holmes MP (Conservative)
- Stephen Morgan MP (Labour)
- Caroline Nokes MP (Conservative)
- Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservative)

This was agreed.

5. Confirmation of Secretariat:

The Chair asked if the meeting was content for South East Councils (SEC) to continue to be the secretariat for the year ahead. <http://www.secouncils.gov.uk/>

This was agreed.

6. Member views on topics of potential interest:

The Chair invited members to offer suggestions for topics the APPG may explore in the year ahead.

- **Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP** (Labour) suggested the APPG look into the proposed Western Rail Link and the proposed Southern Rail Link to Heathrow Airport.
- **Paul Holmes MP** (Conservative) voiced his view that parts of the South East including Southampton have been left behind. This has included underinvestment in transport infrastructure – with more progress to be made on freeports, South West Trains, and the inclusion of smaller towns in Hampshire on rail services to London Waterloo.
- **Huw Merriman MP** (Conservative) shared his view that the APPG should explore work on transport infrastructure including the Port of Southampton, Port of Dover, and Gatwick and Heathrow airports.
- **The Chair** noted the importance of the knock-on effects the state of transport infrastructure has on the South East region including rail, shipping, air, and the various forms of freight.
- **Huw Merriman MP** (Conservative) noted that the Government's Integrated Rail Plan is all about the North. He followed that a greater emphasis on shipping freight would free up the roads in the South East from traffic congestion.
- **Paul Holmes MP** (Conservative) noted that attempts to increase shipping freight to free up traffic congestion on roads could be backed up by private investment.
- **The Chair** emphasised that greater cross-border working, and integration would assist effectiveness in the South East.
- **Jonathan Lord MP** (Conservative) raised the issue of councils putting in a lot of effort for bids to Government funding pots but getting nowhere, as a subject for exploration by the APPG.
- **Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP** (Labour) said the role of Transport for the South East (TfSE) on addressing transport infrastructure issues in the South East could be examined by the APPG.

The Chair suggested the APPG launch an inquiry into Transport later in the year, with November the target month. The members present unanimously agreed.

7. Any other business.

There being no other business, the Chair Sally-Ann Hart MP brought the meeting to an end at 15.20.