



# ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR THE SOUTH EAST

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

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Wednesday 5th<sup>th</sup> July 2023 @ 10.30am in Room T, Portcullis House

### Present:

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Sally-Ann Hart MP (Chair)</b><br>Conservative | Hastings and Rye    |
| <b>Caroline Lucas MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Green   | Brighton, Pavilion  |
| <b>Rt Hon Damian Green MP</b><br>Conservative    | Ashford             |
| <b>Flick Drummond MP</b><br>Conservative         | Meon Valley         |
| <b>John Howell MP</b><br>Conservative            | Henley              |
| <b>Matt Rodda MP</b><br>Labour                   | Reading East        |
| <b>Sean McKee</b><br>Secretariat                 | South East Councils |
| <b>Harry Cavill</b><br>Secretariat               | South East Councils |

### Apologies:

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>James Sunderland MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Conservative      | Bracknell                    |
| <b>Stephen Morgan MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Labour              | Portsmouth South             |
| <b>Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Conservative | Romsey and Southampton North |
| <b>Dame Maria Miller MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Conservative     | Basingstoke                  |
| <b>Henry Smith MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Conservative           | Crawley                      |
| <b>Tan Dhesi MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Labour                   | Slough                       |
| <b>Paul Holmes MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Conservative           | Eastleigh                    |
| <b>Mr Jonathan Lord MP (Vice Chair)</b><br>Conservative      | Woking                       |
| <b>Sir Peter Bottomley</b><br>Conservative                   | Worthing West                |
| <b>Dr Alan Whitehead MP</b><br>Labour                        | Southampton, Test            |
| <b>Natalie Elphicke MP</b><br>Conservative                   | Dover                        |

## 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 six MPs present:

- Sally-Ann Hart MP (Chair)
- Caroline Lucas MP (Vice Chair)
- Flick Drummond MP
- John Howell MP
- Matt Rodda MP
- Rt Hon Damian Green MP

### 2.2 The Chair took note of apologies from:

- Dame Maria Miller MP (Vice Chair)
- Henry Smith MP (Vice Chair)
- James Sunderland MP (Vice Chair)
- Jonathan Lord MP (Vice Chair)
- Paul Holmes MP (Vice Chair)
- Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP (Vice Chair)
- Stephen Morgan MP (Vice Chair)
- Tan Dhesi MP (Vice Chair)
- Dr Alan Whitehead MP
- Natalie Elphicke MP
- Sir Peter Bottomley MP

## 3. Confirmation of Purpose and Chair's remarks:

The Chair remarked that APPG for the South East was established on Thursday, 22 April 2021 and stated that the initial focus was on what levelling up means for the South East. The first inquiry of APPG SE: "*Financing the future – what does levelling up mean for South East England?*" received 28 written submissions, in response to its 10 December 2021 Call for Evidence, she told attendees, adding that two panel discussions were held on January 26, 2022, and February 23, 2022 and the report was published on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The Chair explained that the current inquiry: "*The South East and 'Global Britain': what role for transport infrastructure in underpinning Britain's plan to trade and grow?*" was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, and has received written submissions from over 45 organisations. The report is being produced and is due to be published shortly, she said. The Chair shared her view that it is important to continue to lobby the Government to designate Transport for the South East (TfSE) a statutory body.

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.**

## 4. Confirmation of Officers for APPG:

### Chair & Registered Contact:

Sally-Ann Hart MP (Conservative) was proposed by Damian Green MP (Conservative) and seconded by Caroline Lucas MP (Green), Flick Drummond MP (Conservative), John Howell MP (Conservative) and Matt Rodda MP (Labour).

#### 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:

- Dame Maria Miller MP (Vice Chair)
- Henry Smith MP (Vice Chair)
- James Sunderland MP (Vice Chair)
- Jonathan Lord MP (Vice Chair)
- Paul Holmes MP (Vice Chair)
- Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP (Vice Chair)
- Stephen Morgan MP (Vice Chair)
- Tan Dhesi MP (Vice Chair)
- Dr Alan Whitehead MP
- Sir Peter Bottomley MP

**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.

- **Flick Drummond MP** (Conservative) shared her view that devolution remains an important subject, mentioning ongoing devolution deal negotiations in Hampshire and Kent.
- **Matt Rodda MP** (Labour) suggested the APPG looks further into the Net Zero transition – particularly in the context of infrastructure and decarbonisation.
- **Damian Green MP** (Conservative) asked how the group followed up on the publication of its first report on levelling up in the South East.
- Secretariat officer and Director of SEC **Sean McKee** mentioned that the report was sent to all regional MPs as well as relevant Ministers as part of lobbying efforts, with its launch being picked up by major media outlets including BBC News.
- Chair **Sally-Ann Hart MP** suggested that the APPG could work on the issue of social care and health in the South East, adding that the group could consider a backbench business debate on future published works.
- Secretariat officer and SEC Director **Sean McKee** thanked the MPs in attendance for giving up time in their busy schedule and contributing to the South East APPG.
- **Flick Drummond MP** reiterated her support for the APPG and emphasised that the South East region is stronger and more influential when working cooperatively together to achieve shared goals.

#### 7. **Any other business.**

There being no other business, the Chair Sally-Ann Hart MP brought the meeting to an end at 11.00.