



APPG for Ethnic Minority Business Owners Annual General Meeting

Date: 13 March 2024 Time: 10.30 – 11.30 am

Location: Room T, Portcullis House

Attendees

Sir Peter Bottomley MP – Chair APPG Ethnic Minority Business Owners	Joshua Olowabi – GK Strategy
Sarah Olney MP – Co-Chair APPG Ethnic Minority Business Owners	David Hall – Lloyds Bank
Abena Oppong-Asare MP – Co-Chair APPG Ethnic Minority Business Owners	Femi Santos – Alchemy Architects
Baroness Verma – Officer APPG Ethnic Minority Business Owners (elected Co-Chair)	Shakeel Ali – Byrom Solicitors
Kate Hollern MP – Officer APPG Ethnic Minority Business Owners	Bernard Idowu – Department of Business and Trade – King’s Awards
Diana Chrouh OBE – Special Advisor APPG Ethnic Minority Business Owners	Nichola Bruno – Department of Business and Trade – King’s Awards
Councillor Leslie Ayoola – Nottingham City Council and B-Global	Emelia Quist – Head of Policy, FSB
Patricia Hamzahee – Extend Ventures	Bayo Igoh - Lewisham Borough Action Group Lead, FSB and Bigoh Coaching
Bola Adesina – Legal & General	Anna Doyles – Sarah Olney MP Office
Irfan Qadir – RQZ Finance	Alexandra Mills – APPG Volunteer Intern
Shah Athar – UK Curry Connect	

Commented [AM1]: Please can you confirm this one? I didn't hear the name properly but wrote down: "Man - Business coach and mentor – FSB lead for Lewisham, southwark, Greenwich, Lambeth".

I found Bayo Igoh from some googling but grateful if you could confirm it is the right person.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS by Sir Peter Bottomley MP from APPG

The Chair and Registered Contact for the APPG is Sir Peter Bottomley MP **Welcomes and thanks attendees**. The APPG for Ethnic Minority Business Owners is now over four years old and has been as impactful as ever working on behalf of business owners from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Sir Peter Bottomley thanks co-chairs Sarah Olney MP and Abena Oppong-Asare MP for kindly supported the group as co-Chairs.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS by Sir Peter Bottomley MP

Sir Peter Bottomley MP: Sets out election requirements. Each APPG must have four officers in accordance with updated APPG rules. Sarah Olney MP and Abena Oppong-Asare agree to continue as co-chairs of the APPG.

Sir Peter Bottomley MP: Invites Baroness Verma to become an officer.

Baroness Verma: Agrees.

The group vote to accept Baroness Verma as an officer of the APPG. The group also vote to accept the retention of current chair Sir Peter Bottomley and co-chairs Abena Oppong-Asare MP and Sarah Olney MP.

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Sir Peter Bottomley MP: *Thanks Diana and congratulates the group on what it has achieved over the past year.*

Commented [AM2]: I have removed the Chair's report item as Sir Peter's section here was very short.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT by Shah Athar – Director of UK Curry Connect and APPG Member

Shah Athar: This report covers the period from March 2023 to March 2024.

Income for the APPG for the period is 12,000 GBP and expenditure is 12,000 GBP. Chrouch Consulting provided secretariat services to the APPG to the value of 12,000 GBP.

Operations are run on a pro bono basis by Diana Chrouch OBE and other volunteers from Sarah Olney MP's office. Costs have been minimal as a result. This is the fourth year that Chrouch Consulting has provided pro bono services. The plan going forward is to hand over to a new company Ethnic Minority Business Network to provide secretariat services. These services will largely be administrative, including arranging meetings. The Secretariat has also recently offered additional pro bono support from law firm, Squire Patton Boggs. The plan is to also set up a bank account in the name of the APPG in compliance with parliamentary rules.

Commented [AM3]: Is this the Construction Industry Council?

Sir Peter Bottomley MP: asks the group to discuss the appointment of the Ethnic Minority Business Network as secretariat for the APPG – The group approved.

Sir Peter thanks Chrouch Consulting for services over the past four years

Attendees introduce themselves

Sarah Olney MP: Provides overview of APPG key achievements 2023 - 2024:

1. Historic APPG collaboration with the Lending Standards Board to create a national approach to improving lending standards to Ethnic Minority Businesses. This led to the report: 'Increasing Access to Banking for Ethnic Minority Led Businesses'.
2. APPG-hosted round table for the Department for Business and Trade's pilot on business investor ethnicity data collection.
3. APPG-hosted consultation on the government's business support helpline which explored how the helpline could be made more accessible to entrepreneurs from a Black, Asian or ethnic minority background.
4. APPG Cabinet Office Briefing about a data collection strategy which explored the pros and cons of devising a national data collection strategy, including the option recommended by the Office for National Statistics in collaboration with the APPG that Companies House collect ethnicity data from entrepreneurs.
5. Launch of a national 'Ethnic Minority Business Finance Review' to review the provision of products and services by the financial services industry to business owners from an ethnic minority background.

4. DISCUSSION: DIVERSE HIGH STREETS – Key to Economic Growth and Urban Regeneration? presentation by Emelia Quist – Head of Policy Research from FSB

Sarah hands over to Emelia Quist from FSB to talk to the group about the FSB's research into Diverse High Streets.

Emelia Quist: Currently conducting policy research on super diverse high streets to explore the challenges that the entrepreneurs that inhabit them and their surrounding communities face. These high street spaces are an essential source of jobs, goods and services for local communities.

Super diverse high streets are characterized by the migration patterns in urban communities and are typically predominantly made up of retail and hospitality outlets owned by diverse ethnic minority entrepreneurs. These

enterprises also frequently adopt a range of diverse business models and practices that are reflective of the diverse diaspora heritages of the owners.

We need a better access to data about businesses led by ethnic minorities. Some local authorities have conducted good research on diverse business communities. An example is Lewisham Council which has undertaken a useful work study of diverse business owners in the local areas.

Going forward the challenge is for policy makers to shape policies which do not disregard and hamper this type of entrepreneurial diversity but instead, works to understand it and to design or retain spaces to accommodate and empower these businesses so that they are able to thrive and scale up their economic contribution.

A key ask is to provide a local forum for EMBs voices to ensure that strategic development and policy changes are done in consultation and that options for finding business support is made more accessible.

Sarah Olney MP asks group to join the discussion and share their views on diverse high streets.

Bola Adesina: explains she is based in Lewisham, and is keen to find out how grants will be distributed to businesses post covid, including street traders and service businesses. Officers and volunteers walked the streets with a survey. The community is dependent on the Lewisham business community and so it is important to ensure its survival.

Baroness Verma: we have lost a lot of the banks on our high streets and there are communities that still rely on cash and a physical structure to find information and advice. Need to think about the role the banks have to play. The way high streets are going to look will be very different. Diversity must mean a safe space for everyone. This includes the elderly. How do we recreate the high street for the 21st century that meets the needs of diverse local communities?

David Hall: talks about his experiences from a commercial banking perspective. Lloyds bank have been running programmes to support black entrepreneurs for three years. Reports were conducted in 2020, 2021 and 2022 looking at the community perspective. Very open to being part of a discussion as to how we can continue to play that role, including from the broader ethnic minority perspective. David mentions that there is an information hub for black founders on the Lloyds bank website

Patricia Hamzahee: The focus of funding has been largely on tech, but we know that ethnic minority businesses are also highly represented on the high streets. Concerted efforts are needed to understand the diversity of the ethnic minority ecosystem of business and to channel funding where the businesses actually exist. Not sure how wide the APPG membership is with all the different communities but there are many more advocates that could also be included in this room. As representatives we all need to recognise how diverse the ethnic minority business community really is.

Diana Chrouh OBE: What would be a useful next step?

Leslie Ayoola: we need to continue to map out the variety of businesses across the country and use that information to build a strategy. Access to finance is the issue that always comes through. Banks are playing their part, but looking at the growth of ethnic minority communities across the country and both the positive and negative impacts of Brexit, there are a lot more opportunities abroad, for instance in commonwealth countries. Lost opportunities if we do not get structured work to channel finance to ethnic minority businesses across the country. Need a finance network to kickstart this movement.

Kate Hollern MP: we know that access to support has been a problem and that Black and ethnic minority businesses were hit much harder by covid. There seems to be a lot of research out there. Would it be possible to organize the sharing of this research with MPs to raise greater awareness about the challenges that ethnic minority led businesses face? Covid has had a major impact on high streets and as a result many have totally changed. In Blackburn some major stores were lost – Debenhams, TK Maxx and now we are about to lose M&S. This is a major concern for the local council because it recognises that high streets are a place to socialise and bring communities together. It would

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be good to see data about ethnic minority led businesses and to share this with my colleagues. Keen to support this group and support businesses from the ethnic minority community.

Diana Chrouch OBE: Seconds the call for more data and sharing of research.

The APPG for Ethnic Minority Business Owners is currently undertaking a review of access to finance and have looked back at research over the past thirty years. The Bank of England, and other key government, policy and academic institutions have been doing this research for decades. As a result we have compiled a list of the key recommendations and found that many of these have been repeated multiple times over this period. The key issue has been the lack of concrete and sustainable action in response to the recommendations.

It is difficult to identify and access local research because it tends to be commissioned locally in an ad hoc manner and reports are not shared in a systematised or centralised manner. The APPG is calling for a better national system of data collection about the ethnicity of entrepreneurs and as a part of that we would welcome a strategy for systematic collection and collation of data from local authorities.

Barnes Verma: This is an action *for the Department for Business and Trade to take on in order develop a national strategy for the collection of data and the coordination of local research that would then be accessible countrywide.*

Patricia Hamzahee: many local authorities have written reports about research that they have commissioned to provide evidence or to support requests to central government and so the government may have some of the information in its archives.

Baroness Verma: Action needed, not just conversation.

Kate Hollern MP: this is why it is important for MPs to understand so that they can support the requests for more data.

Sarah Olney MP: To pick up on what Kate was saying about the change in high streets as we can see through the shift in traditional retail to sectors such as beauty businesses and salons. Retail spaces are also being used differently so for example in Richmond there is a new gym and soft play centre where retail used to be. Online shopping has been propelled by the pandemic, but high streets still have a lot to offer. It is clear that high streets are not just used for shopping anymore and I am not sure if the DBT or anyone is looking into this? The hospitality and beauty sectors are huge and ethnic minority business owners have had success in driving this forward in the past.

Nichola Bruno: responsibility for this type of data falls between government departments that focus on levelling up and cities and local growth. We have joint teams. Growth hubs will have masses of data and information on what is making things work locally. For instance, with transport links – are there enough routes? *Action for DBT to take this away and try and track down who has the data.*

Diana Chrouch OBE: it is definitely worth pursuing to identify who is responsible for collecting and collating this data. There is also the important issue about urban regeneration and how this may not always be inclusive of ethnic minority businesses.

Bayo Igoh: Monday morning I was with newly elected Mayor of Lewisham Brenda Dacres to discuss the changes that are required to local high streets and its local market to enable them to accommodate new usage demands - for instance, to include evening facilities.

Abena Oppong-Asare MP: explains her family background in business and that as with many ethnic minority led businesses which adopt a family business model, it can make it more difficult to access funding.

Commented [AM4]: Name needs confirming

Emelia Quist: Research by Suzy Hall from LSE looked at diverse high streets in areas such as Manchester and London and explored how they often develop in communities with higher levels of ethnic minority residents. FSB is exploring how it can support super diverse high streets and address the fact that these business communities are often disconnected from local authorities and so do not have a voice.

Patricia Hamzahee: Part of the agenda of community wealth-building is how to move assets from wider communities into local communities – for instance, supporting young people to build their own business. How do we ensure property and assets are in the hands of local communities and are not being sold off to developers? In other words, to maximise the economic potential of local communities, community assets need to be retained and reinvested in local people.

Name: Universities have initiatives to help local communities and young people invest.

Commented [AM5]: As above

Diana Chrouch OBE: asks the group what specific response they would like as a next step to address the challenges that diverse high streets face. Also reiterates the need to follow up DBT to explore a data collection strategy.

Kate Hollern MP: *proposed that it would be of benefit for DBT to seek examples of good practice across the UK and share these with local authorities in order to provide sample strategies of how best to address the needs of super diverse high streets and ethnic minority business communities.*

Diana Chrouch OBE: Suggests the launch of a specific campaign

Abena Oppong-Asare MP: There is the Local Government Association (LGA) which should have its own research department. *Suggested action for APPG to seek LGA input on this campaign.* Also suggests that the APPG seek the support of stakeholders such as Lloyds Bank who are supporting BME businesses and have data that would be useful

David Hall: Lloyds bank have commissioned a couple of reports which are available on Lloyds bank's website.

Patricia Hamzahee: In America CDFIs have made a huge difference in supporting ethnic minority businesses. 62 million GBP has been invested into CDFIs led by Lloyds Bank which is commendable. Hopefully the other banks will follow Lloyds' lead.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS by Diana Chrouch OBE from APPG

Diana Chrouch OBE: New APPG rules have been brought in this year to maintain parliamentary standards. This means that after the 31st March all APPGs must meet stricter requirements. This includes gaining support from a total of twenty parliamentarians. We are delighted to have already received a positive response from MPs and Peers and now have a total of 23 parliamentarians who have agreed to join the group as a member. We continue to call on parliamentarians to support the APPG and would like to ask attendees to *write to their local MPs to ask for continued support.*

Abena Oppong-Asare MP: suggests writing to Lords and Baronesses too.

Bernard Idowu: Expresses thanks for the invitation to the AGM and tells the group about the King's Awards and invites the business owners to share information about the awards with their networks