

Channel 4: an open letter

The government's recent review of Channel 4 and its contribution to the nations and regions has generated significant interest across the country.

Eight out of 10 people who responded to the government's consultation 'strongly agreed' that Channel 4's regional impact would be enhanced if more of its people and activities were located outside London. The public service broadcaster must now decide whether it agrees with the mood of the nation.

Channel 4 has been a pioneer, an innovator, a radical and a voice for diverse communities for a generation. It has pushed the boundaries of television formats and continues to make programmes that attract new audiences. The nation needs this to continue.

As one of the youngest and most diverse populations in Europe, we believe that the West Midlands would provide Channel 4 with an exciting new base to redefine its pioneering spirit, reflecting the face of modern Britain. The impact of basing programme commissioners in the heart of the country cannot be underestimated. This, coupled with a reduced cost base and a vibrant technology ecosystem, would allow Channel 4 to be more responsive to its external environment and further stimulate innovation across its main and digital channels. This would make sound business sense but would also, we believe, better serve the interests of the whole country.

Many others are seeing the commercial, cultural and competitive advantages of making this move. All businesses need to be able to attract the best talent. It's no accident that more inward investors are now choosing the West Midlands than any other region. More young professionals too are relocating to the West Midlands from London, as they see a region able to offer them a career and a better lifestyle than they can currently enjoy in the capital.

Arguably there has never been a more exciting time to live and work in the West Midlands. With the prospect of UK City of Culture in Coventry in 2021 and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022, Channel 4 has the opportunity to be at the heart of a new creative and cultural revolution in our country.

Should it decide to invest here, its impact would be significant. By 2030 the channel's impact could generate an additional £5bn to our economy but, more importantly, it will provide a new generation with the chance to have their voice and make their mark in the world. That is what we want for our region and that's why we would be delighted to welcome Channel 4 here.

That is why we have brought together those in support of this move – 82 signatures to represent the year that Channel 4 was founded.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor

Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council

Cllr George Duggins, Leader of Coventry City Council

Cllr Patrick Harley, Leader of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Cllr Bob Sleigh, Leader of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Jonathan Browning, Chair of Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Tim Pile, Chair of Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

Stewart Towe CBE DL, Chairman of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership

Sarah Middleton, Chief Executive of Black Country Consortium Ltd

Ian Austin, MP for Dudley North

Richard Burden, MP for Birmingham Northfield

Rt Hon Liam Byrne, MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill

Philip Dunne, MP for Ludlow

Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield

Preet Kaur Gill, MP for Birmingham Edgbaston

Eddie Hughes, MP for Walsall North

Marcus Jones, MP for Nuneaton

Julian Knight, MP for Solihull

Jeremy Lefroy, MP for Stafford

Rachel Maclean, MP for Redditch

Steve McCabe, MP for Selly Oak

Pat McFadden, MP for Wolverhampton South East

Andrew Mitchell, MP for Sutton Coldfield

James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis

Mark Pawsey, MP for Rugby

Jess Phillips, MP for Birmingham Yardley

Emma Reynolds, MP for Wolverhampton North East

Caroline Spelman, MP for Meriden,

Craig Tracey, MP for North Warwickshire & Bedworth

Matt Western, MP for Warwick & Leamington

Bill Wiggin, MP for North Herefordshire

Mike Wood, MP for Dudley South

Fiona Allan, Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Birmingham Hippodrome

Judith Armstrong, CEO, Millennium Point

Steve Ball, Associate Director, Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Mark Beardmore, Senior Partner, Eversheds Sutherland

Mike Bradley, Chair, Campaign for Regional Broadcasting Midlands

Paul Bramwell, Managing Director, MediaCom

Robert Bray, Chief Executive, Edgbaston Priory Club

David Burbidge, Chairman, Burbidge & Son Ltd

Professor Alec Cameron, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Aston University

Sajida Carr, Programme Director, Creative Black Country

Andrew Cleaves, Principal & Chief Executive, Birmingham Metropolitan College

James Craig, Founder, Oval Real Estate Limited

Corin Crane, Chief Executive, Black Country Chamber of Commerce

Paul Davies, Producer/Managing Director, VYKA Ltd

Charles de Rohan, CEO, The Binding Site Group

Monique Deletant, Director, Dance Hub Birmingham

Sir David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor, University of Birmingham

Adam Ellis-Morgan, Managing Partner, Rider Levett Bucknall

Paul Faulkner, CEO, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce

Liv Garfield, CEO, Severn Trent

Anisa Haghdadi, Founder and CEO, The Beatfreeks Collective,

Dr David Hardman MBE, CEO, Innovation Birmingham

Richard Hayhow, Director, Open Theatre

Sam Hope, Associate Dean, University of Wolverhampton,

Richard Howle, Director, The Ticket Factory/NEC

Paul James, Chief Commercial Officer, Birmingham Royal Ballet

Debbie Jardine, Interim Chief Executive, DanceXchange

Deborah Kermode, Chief Executive, mac Birmingham

Chris Loughran, Deputy Chair, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

Andrew Lovett, Chief Executive, Black Country Living Museum

Stephen Maddock, Chief Executive, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Lisa Mart, General Manager, The New Alexandra Theatre

Laura McMillan, Director of Operations and Legacy, Coventry City of Culture Trust

Michael Penn, Theatre Director, The Old Rep Theatre

Neil Rami, Chief Executive, West Midlands Growth Company

Nick Reed, CEO, Town Hall Symphony Hall

Marc Reeves, Editor, Trinity Mirror Midlands

Alan Rivett, Director, Warwick Arts Centre

David Roberts, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Birmingham City University

Stuart Rogers, Executive Director, Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Roger Shannon, Executive Producer and Professor of Film, Edge Hill University

Liam Smyth, Creative Producer, Creative Black Country and Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

Professor Robert J Stone, Chair in Interactive Multimedia Systems, University of Birmingham

Paul Thandi, CEO, NEC Group

Gary Topp, CEO, Culture Central

Jonnie Turpie MBE, Founder, Maverick TV

Nathan Wallis, Head of Strategic Communications, Wesleyan

Jonathan Watkins, Director, Ikon Gallery

Michael Whitby, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Birmingham