



BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGIES

All-Party Parliamentary Group

Minutes from the Blockchain Technologies All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Meeting

Date: **Tuesday 16th January** 5:30-7:30pm, Wilson Room, Portcullis House, UK Parliament

In attendance:

- Natalie Elphicke MP OBE (Chair)
- Lord Goddard of Stockport (Vice Chair)
- Sir Stephen Timms MP
- Professor Dr Naseem Naqvi MBE (British Blockchain Association, APPG Secretariat)

Apologies:

- Lord McNicol of West Kilbride
- Lord Vaizey of Didcot
- Alun Cairns MP
- Lord Lucas
- Lisa Cameron MP
- Jo Gideon MP

1. Introduction

- a. Chair of the APPG Natalie Elphicke OBE MP officially opened the meeting and welcomed attendees to the APPG's first roundtable discussion on the future of Blockchain Technologies.
- b. Natalie said that there was growing interest across Parliament in the potential of this new technology and how the UK could harness the benefits of blockchain for public services, industry and society.
- c. Natalie said the purpose of the roundtable was to hear from a range of industry leaders and interested stakeholders in what is currently working and what is not in terms of policy and regulation in the UK.
- d. Natalie said that the APPG would also shortly be issuing a Call for Evidence and encouraged industry and other actors to engage with the APPG and its inquiry.
- e. Natalie welcomed Professor Dr Naseem Naqvi MBE, President of the British Blockchain Association, as the secretariat of the APPG and thanked them for their work in advancing the understanding of blockchain technologies in the UK and their support of the APPG.

2. Speakers & Presentations

- a. The roundtable heard short presentations from a number of industry experts who shared their insights into the key issues and opportunities in terms of blockchain technologies and highlighted the range of potential use cases.



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b. The speakers were:

- i. Doro Unger-Lee, Algorand
- ii. Shehram Khattak, Consensys
- iii. Professor Sarah Green, Law Commission
- iv. Lauren Ingram, Women of Web3
- v. Luke Riley, Quant
- vi. Robby Yung, Animoca Brands
- vii. Nikhil Vadgama, UCL Centre for Blockchain Technologies (CBT)

3. Key questions for speakers and contributors:

- a. The roundtable saw a wide range of issues discussed in terms of how the UK can harness the growth of blockchain technologies which focused on some principal themes, specifically:
 - i. *Whether the UK government currently provides sufficient support for blockchain technology and associated businesses.*
 - ii. *The main challenges to the growth of blockchain technology in the UK and any measures the government could take to overcome barriers to the growth of blockchain technologies;*
 - iii. *The key benefits to the UK of embracing blockchain technology ranging from its potential use in areas such as border control, finance, trade, and digital identity amongst others;*
 - iv. *Examples of other countries around the world that have already adopted regulatory frameworks for blockchain technologies that the UK could learn from.*

4. Issues Discussed including Challenges, Opportunities and Future Considerations:

- a. The roundtable heard contributions on several policy areas including:
 - i. **The UK's Existing Strengths and Leadership on Blockchain:** Attendees highlighted that the UK is already well placed to be a leader in this space highlighting that the UK has a strong and established network of academics and experts in blockchain technology that could be harnessed.
 - ii. **Economic Benefits in Terms of UK Growth and Jobs:** Attendees said that there could be a number of potential benefits to the UK economy from supporting the growth of blockchain technologies that could create skilled jobs and growth to the economy. It was also highlighted that there remained a need to focus on diversity and skills in particular encouraging more women to pursue careers in the industry with attendees highlighting that at present there is a lack of female representation at industry leadership level.
 - iii. **Wider Application of Blockchain Technologies – Use Cases:** Attendees also discussed the need for the UK to explore the potential of blockchain



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technologies beyond financial services and that there were a number of other potential benefits presented by blockchain technology including for example: Blockchain for international and humanitarian aid and transparency in global supply chains, trade, customs and digital borders, tokenising real-world assets, Blockchain for government and public services, convergence of AI and Blockchain, among others.

- iv. **Education and Consumer Protection:** Attendees discussed the need for greater levels of education and awareness of the potential of blockchain technologies to encourage greater adoption and support for this technology and also amongst consumers in terms of consumer protection. Attendees also discussed the need for policymakers to upskill themselves on this new technology.
- v. **Role of UK Regulators and Regulatory Clarity:** Attendees discussed the role of regulators as a key factor in the UK realising the full potential of blockchain technology. Attendees highlighted the importance of ensuring that regulators and Government have the understanding and capacity to be able to support the sector. Attendees discussed the need for regulatory clarity in order to attract investment into the sector and to encourage firms to invest in the UK. It was also raised that there isn't necessarily the need for a complete regulatory overhaul for blockchain technology as there is also some regulation in place which could be easily adapted to support blockchain technologies.
- vi. **Support for SMEs:** Attendees discussed the fact that the UK already has a high number of SMEs in this space and that considered Government support for SMEs could accelerate growth for the UK industry.
- vii. **Public - Private Partnership:** Attendees also discussed the potential of greater public-private partnerships to explore the benefits of blockchain technology in the UK including the creation of potential pilot projects and joint initiatives between Government and Industry.
- viii. **Diversity, Inclusion, and Community building:** The importance of building local communities in Web3, diversity, equity, inclusion, women leadership, and raising awareness of blockchain among stakeholders was discussed.
- ix. **Sustainability and Social Impact:** Participants shed light on the topic of sustainable and eco-friendly distributed ledgers, and the societal impact of blockchain applications, as well as the need for stakeholder accountability.
- x. **Interoperability Standards:** The Pros and cons of Tech-neutrality in Web3, interoperable standards, and inter-disciplinary harmonisation were identified as an important area for future policy consideration.
- xi. **Tokenisation of Real-World Assets and Taxonomy:** The lack for trans-national and trans-disciplinary agreed taxonomy and policy frameworks for



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RWA (real-world assets) was discussed as a potential barrier to building blockchain-based token economies.

5. Closing Remarks:

- a. Chair of the APPG Natalie Elphicke MP thanked everyone for attending the roundtable and for participating in the discussion.
- b. The meeting was closed, and no other business took place.

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