



**PRCA Public Affairs Board Executive Committee Elections 2020
Scotland
Candidate Statements**

Matt Revett MPRCA, Head of Devolved Government, Grayling

I am a public affairs director with over 15 years' experience split between Edinburgh and Westminster. At Grayling I'm responsible for leading public affairs teams in Edinburgh, Cardiff and London.

Prior to the merger with the PRCA, I provided secretarial functions to the APPC Scotland committee supporting Peter Duncan. This included supporting the APPC through the legislative journey with the Scotland Lobbying Act, including ministerial and MSP engagement. This engagement helped to ensure the Lobbying Register applied to all lobbying activity in Scotland, not just the activity of the commercial consultancy sector. I have also trained several generations on new recruits into the sector on the public affairs code of conduct.

Further to this, in 2016 I was appointed by the Scottish Parliament to advise on the development of public guidance for the Lobbying Register. This included several meetings to design the guidance working with academics, third sector reps and anti-lobbying organisations to represent the large consultancy sector. Through this experience I have gained insights from MSPs, ministers and our detractors.

As we begin the post-legislative scrutiny stage it's vital the Executive Committee takes a strong leadership position as the Lobbying Register is reviewed. This is an opportunity to improve the regulations as they stand, but more importantly, to prevent more stringent measures from being introduced. Although this remains unlikely, it's important the PRCA engages with the Scottish Government and opposition parties as we near the 2021 elections. To achieve this we need to ensure MSPs understand that the Register is achieving its original objectives and there isn't a need to include broader communications, such as emails or telephone calls.

If appointed to the Executive Committee I will:

- Ensure Scottish member views are expressed and considered at Exec Committee meetings through regular engagement with member firms
- Coordinate and be the public spokesperson during the Public Audit and Post Legislative Scrutiny Committee's hearings on the inquiry
- Push to ensure the PRCA can provide oral evidence to the Committee
- Ensure relevant media understand the PRCA's position on the Lobbying Act and act as spokesperson
- Stand up for the commercial lobbying community and uphold the virtues of the PRCA Public Affairs code of conduct.

John Morrison MPRCA, Managing Director, Morrison Media

I have been immersed in politics for 30 years. Before becoming a Public Affairs consultant, I spent two decades reporting for the BBC from the European Parliament, Westminster and Holyrood.

After leaving the BBC, I set up Morrison Media and am fully committed to achieving the highest standards for our industry.

The Public Affairs Board (PAB) has achieved a lot in its short existence, since the amalgamation with the Association of Professional Political Consultants. I was elected as its Scottish member last year, and have since gained a lot of experience.

I was involved in the amalgamation's bedding down period, which produced a robust Code of Conduct drawing on the best ethical traditions of the two bodies. The Code has to be as relevant in Edinburgh as it is in London, Cardiff and Belfast. This was achieved, but new challenges will emerge, and the code will evolve.

Earlier this year, a situation arose which meant the Code needed to be tightened. I served on the subcommittee that drew up the new, incorporated amendment. In an ever-changing industry, it is important to be ethical, consistent and relevant.

Now increasingly seen as the voice of the lobbying industry, the PAB has to be prepared to speak truth to power. A good example is when Tulchan Communications announced that Ruth Davidson was joining them as a consultant. The Board asked me to conduct media interviews in Scotland to explain why it is unacceptable and unethical to be a serving parliamentarian and a paid lobbyist at the same time. You cannot be paid to influence law makers and vote on new laws.

The PAB also has a role in publicising the important work that members do every day. Efforts should be stepped up to widen membership to increase the PAB's voice with politicians and the media.

Public gatherings have been severely restricted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but it is important that the PRCA's tradition of holding events where members can meet, and parliamentarians are invited to attend, is continued in a way that is safe. This will be by video conference, until life returns to normal.

As the managing director of a small Scottish consultancy, I know the importance of attracting new, diverse talent into our sector. To maintain standards, these recruits have to be trained to fully understand the Code. I was on the PAB subcommittee that updated and enhanced the training provision, which has now been professionalised and is accessible to all companies, regardless of their size or geographical location.

In the Scottish Parliament, post-legislative scrutiny of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act is now underway. This looks likely to be the biggest workload for the coming year, and if elected as the Scotland representative I will ensure the PAB's views and submissions reflect the views of its members. At a pivotal time for the industry north of the border, it is vital that Scotland has a strong, clear and experienced voice at the table to help set ethical standards for members.