



**2020 AND BEYOND:  
BUSINESS PRIORITIES FOR  
THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT**



# ABOUT US

The British Chambers of Commerce represent and campaign for business, championing and supporting our members all across the UK and in countries and markets around the world.

National coverage from  
**53**  
Accredited UK Chambers operating out of  
**110** offices

**670k**  
export documents processed supporting  
**30,000**  
exporters

**2,600+**  
apprenticeships delivered  
(direct and indirect)

**55**  
overseas affiliated Chambers

**5.8m+**  
employees represented by our members

**4,000+**  
business courses offered and attended by over  
**30,000**  
delegates

**5,400**  
events attended by over  
**200,000**  
people

**150+**  
inward trade missions involving over  
**1,500**  
businesses

**75+**  
overseas trade missions involving over  
**650**  
businesses

# FOREWORD



**DR. ADAM MARSHALL**  
Director General, British  
Chambers of Commerce

**This election is a pivotal moment for the UK. Regardless of the Brexit outcome, the action required to make the UK the best place to invest and do business is substantial.**

It has been just two-and-a-half years since the previous election, but the political environment has shifted from bad to worse.

Everything and nothing has happened in politics. Despite the hard work and success of many businesses, our economy is locked on a low growth trajectory.

Businesses are holding back on investment, concerned about cash flow and, in many cases, unable to plan ahead or push forward with growth.

Business communities are frustrated – and exhausted.

Economic performance depends on business confidence – and the next UK government must bring back that confidence.

Countries with the best growth rates and highest levels of investment and exporting success are those whose leadership has backed businesses to the hilt.

No political party can rebuild and transform the economy without a partnership with businesses – small, medium and large.

**In the UK, many businesses have lost trust in the ability of politicians to resolve challenges – and many have a real sense that they are not being heard.**

The next UK government must renew the partnership between government and businesses by delivering an ambitious programme of reform aimed at boosting business growth.

From Brexit, people and infrastructure to international trade, business investment and costs, the next UK government must refocus on business priorities.

These priorities must be acted on as we work together to achieve the transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Some will only be achieved through more decentralised decision-making, with choices made together by local government and business, closer to home. >

Together,  
we can  
create  
positive  
solutions  
to collective  
challenges.

## FOREWORD CONTINUED

Businesses of all sizes create jobs and boost receipts to the Exchequer.

Millions of people across the UK hold shares in businesses, whether directly or through their pensions.

Millions of businesspeople pay their taxes diligently every quarter and care deeply about people, places and the environment.

The contribution of businesses to our communities and prosperity must be recognised.

They will lead the way in helping the UK rise to new challenges, seize new opportunities and shape what comes next.

But, if we want businesses to thrive and take on the risks needed to help solve these challenges, we need the right conditions in place.

For 2020 and beyond, these are the key priorities of our Chamber business communities for the next UK government.



**Adam Marshall**

Director General, British Chambers of Commerce

**When  
businesses  
thrive,  
people and  
communities  
thrive too.**

### **NET-ZERO EMISSIONS**

Chamber business communities understand and support the need for the UK to transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

We also strongly support the evidenced process of the UK's Committee on Climate Change that led to this target.

We all have a responsibility to address climate change.

The business community has a central role to play – not only in improving its own environmental performance, but also in developing the technologies and creating the new markets needed to achieve the net-zero emissions target.

### **DEVOLUTION**

This election is for the next UK parliament. Therefore, our priority actions focus on measures that are within the scope of the UK government.

Businesses across the UK – whether in the devolved nations or the regions of England – share common aspirations. This document includes these shared aspirations.

But, we will continue to campaign for decisions to be made at the right level – with input from our business communities.

The devolution agenda in England has stalled – and must be reignited. Coordination between UK-wide policies and those in Scotland and Wales must improve. And in Northern Ireland, the restoration of the devolved institutions is essential to business success.

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# BREXIT

Whether by design or disarray, the UK government must avoid a messy and disorderly Brexit.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For more than three years, UK businesses have faced unprecedented levels of uncertainty.

As a result, investment decisions have been put on hold, expensive contingency plans have been activated, competitiveness and confidence has been sapped, money has been moved to other countries, contracts and supply chains have been affected and so too has cross-border trade.

One in two internationally active UK businesses cite uncertainty around Brexit as a barrier to growing their exports.<sup>1</sup> Tariffs and exchange rate volatility – both which relate to Brexit – are considered a barrier for 35 and 33 per cent of internationally active businesses respectively.<sup>2</sup>

These are the real-world issues for businesses today.

Without action to avoid a messy and disorderly Brexit, they will only get worse.

## WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

- **Avoiding a messy and disorderly Brexit on 31 January 2020 – with a negotiated settlement that avoids further cliff edges thereafter.**
- **Delivering a future UK-European Union trading relationship that minimises frictions and maximises the potential for trade.**
- **Maintaining smooth trading relationships with countries where UK businesses could lose existing market access.**

Delivering the smoothest possible future trading relationship with our nearest and biggest trading partner – the European Union – needs to be priority number one.

Priority number two needs to be maintaining smooth trading relationships with countries where UK businesses could lose existing market access, such as Canada and Turkey, because they will not have access to European Union trade agreements.

Some believe that leaving the European Union without a deal means certainty for businesses – but, the truth is very different. It would mean uncertainty would reign supreme – and it must be averted. >

## 1 in 2

internationally active UK businesses consider uncertainty around Brexit a barrier to export.

## 24%

of businesses say they would revise investment plans down in the event of a no-deal Brexit, while just

## 4%

would revise plans up.<sup>3</sup>

## 1 in 5

businesses say that they would move some or all of their business overseas in the event of a no-deal Brexit.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> BCC Trade Survey 2019

# BREXIT CONTINUED

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### Priority actions for the next UK government

- Do not leave the European Union without a deal.
- Close remaining information gaps for all Brexit scenarios.
- Ensure the smoothest possible shift from a transition period to the future UK-European Union relationship, allowing enough time for businesses to plan.
- Clarify the future direction of devolution to the nations and regions, as each stand to be affected as powers and regional development funding return to the UK.

### On people

Introduce a simple, fast, flexible and affordable immigration system that minimises the administrative burden on businesses.

Allow access within the immigration system to all skill levels – including temporary, seasonal and permanent roles – with recognition of professional qualifications.

### On infrastructure

Clarify the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – and how it will deliver a UK regional funding system that has maximum local autonomy when European structural and investment funds cease in the UK.

### On international trade

Secure the future of the UK-European Union trading relationship, minimising cross-border trade frictions and avoiding a hard border with Ireland.

Ensure continuity of trading conditions with third countries so that businesses can continue to benefit from the levels of market access that they have had under European Union free trade agreements.

### On business investment and costs

Introduce a temporary SME Brexit tax credit to support businesses that need to undertake specific activity to adjust to changes in trading conditions.

Upscale HMRC Time To Pay arrangements to deal with the expected increase in applications.

# PEOPLE

Businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit, retain and develop people.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**The share of the UK's workforce currently in employment is very high by historic standards. But, this has left businesses with a shrinking pool of available skills.**

Seventy-one per cent of small and medium-sized businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties.<sup>5</sup> More than half of businesses say that it takes more than three months to fill skilled and professional roles.<sup>6</sup>

The consequence for businesses is that they do not have access to the people that they need to develop and grow.

Businesses are also concerned that this tight labour market could be exacerbated by future restrictions on EU migrant workers.

Two out of every three people working in the UK today will still be in the workforce come 2040.<sup>7</sup> Yet in England, the cut in the adult education budget and the focus of spending on whole qualifications has contributed to a decrease in adult learning.

Instability in the training system and an overly restrictive Apprenticeship Levy have also created barriers for businesses seeking to improve efficiency by investing in training. According to the OECD, the annual incidence of job-related training in the UK among all adults is 49 per cent – compared to 58 per cent in Denmark<sup>8</sup>.

## WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

- **Incentivising and supporting employers to provide access to high-quality, job-related training – at all skill levels.**
- **Achieving parity of esteem and funding for technical, vocational and academic routes to employment.**
- **Recruiting and retaining migrant workers – at all skills levels – via a simple, fast, flexible and affordable immigration system from 2021.**
- **Leveraging flexibility, diversity and inclusivity as a means to productivity, innovation and access in the workplace.**

People are the most important part of any business. Businesses need access to people – when and where they need them.

Businesses also need a simple, stable and coherent skills system that encourages them to invest in training.

If the UK's labour force was as productive as other G7 countries, our economy would be £338 billion bigger than it is today.<sup>9</sup>

Undoubtedly, realising this potential would be transformational for communities right across the UK. >

# 71%

of SMEs are experiencing recruitment difficulties.

# 51%

of businesses attempting to recruit higher skilled positions say it took more than three months.

# 49%

The annual incidence of job-related training in the UK among all adults.

<sup>5</sup>BCC Quarterly Recruitment Outlook Q2 2019. <sup>6</sup>BCC workforce survey 2019. <sup>7</sup>Union Learn Training Trends in Britain June 2019. <sup>8</sup>OECD 2019. <sup>9</sup>Based on latest available ONS data: UK versus G7 output per worker productivity gap of 16.6 per cent.



## PEOPLE CONTINUED

Education and skills policy is decentralised within the UK, with the devolved nations (and to a lesser extent the devolved regions of England) setting priorities and allocating funding.

The UK government's remit is largely limited to England, but increases in education and skills funding in England would lead to changes in available resources to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through the Barnett Formula.

### HOW DO WE GET THERE?

#### Priority actions for the next UK government

- Increase funding for apprenticeships to ensure SMEs can access training, at all skill levels, in their local area.
- Ensure businesses have access to relevant apprenticeship qualifications and reform the Apprenticeship Levy in England to allow businesses to use all forms of accredited training.
- Raise the base rate of funding for further education among 16 to 18 year olds in England, commit long-term funding for T Levels and increase flexibility and financial support for businesses delivering high-quality T Level work placements.
- Increase the budget for adult education in England to fully fund economically valuable entry-level courses.
- Set out a long-term strategy and funding for lifelong learning, enabling people to upskill, retrain and adapt to technological changes in the workplace.
- Deliver career advice services for all ages and incentivise schools to promote vocational and technical routes.
- Reform and simplify family policies to reduce complexity and help businesses manage the costs, without compromising the support provided.
- Help bridge the gap between parental leave and children starting school by simplifying access to childcare funding and providing a flexible and universal childcare entitlement.
- Fund workplace adaptations to help employers retain and support employees experiencing ill health.

#### On net-zero emissions

- Fund the upskilling and reskilling of employees impacted by changes to supply chains.
- Ensure the education and skills system prepares people for work in a net-zero emissions economy.

#### On devolution

- Ensure clarity and transparency on skills devolution and future access to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Allow greater flexibility for communities to focus skills and training funding on local needs.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## Inadequate infrastructure is increasing the cost of doing business in the UK

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**Last year, the UK was ranked 16th in the world for utility infrastructure by the World Economic Forum.**<sup>10</sup>

We ranked 11th for transport infrastructure behind countries against which we compete, including France, Spain and the United States.<sup>11</sup>

Only 34 per cent of businesses agree that the UK rail network is meeting their needs.<sup>12</sup>

Worse, 68 per cent feel that our road network has become less reliable over the last five years.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of inadequate transport infrastructure, businesses are facing:

- increased travel costs,
- restricted access to customers and increased costs of buying and selling products and services.<sup>14</sup>

While businesses are more likely to agree that UK digital infrastructure is meeting their needs compared to rail and road, only 53 per cent believe that mobile networks are more reliable than five years ago.<sup>15</sup>

Businesses consider the level of public sector capital investment – and the planning system – to be the biggest barriers to improved infrastructure.

### WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

- **Ranking top 10 in the world for both transport and utility infrastructure by 2025.**
- **Raising public investment in infrastructure to at least 1.4 per cent of GDP per year – exceeding the funding guideline of 1.2 per cent, recommended by the National Infrastructure Commission.**
- **Working together – government, businesses and communities – as we transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**

Infrastructure connects people to jobs and businesses to markets both nationally and around the world.

It is no coincidence that the best-performing economies are those ranked at the top for transport, energy and digital infrastructure.

High and sustained investment in infrastructure would send a strong message that the UK remains a great place to do business – particularly in light of the current political uncertainty. >

As a result of travel delays...

**52%**

of businesses are facing increased travel costs.

**33%**

of businesses are facing restricted access to customers.

**30%**

of businesses are facing increased costs of buying and selling products and services.

<sup>10</sup> World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2018. <sup>11</sup> World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2018. <sup>12,13,14,15</sup> BCC Infrastructure survey 2018.

## INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUED

Investment in new transport technologies, digital connectivity, a comprehensive energy strategy and major rail projects that take freight traffic off roads would also complement efforts to reach the net-zero emissions target.

### HOW DO WE GET THERE?

#### Priority actions for the next UK government

- Complete the legal frameworks for all phases of HS2, deliver promised investment in Northern Powerhouse Rail and proceed to deliver a UK-wide high-speed rail network as soon as possible.
- Reaffirm support for private investment in the third runway at Heathrow Airport and other important major transport projects.
- Commit funding to bring local roads back up to scratch – quickly.
- Reform planning rules to support the deployment of 5G mobile signal infrastructure.
- Attract more private investment into public infrastructure by introducing a replacement for the Private Finance Initiative.
- Strengthen national planning guidelines in England to protect land for business and employment.

#### On net-zero emissions

- Commit to an energy strategy that helps us achieve this target, while maintaining affordable and reliable energy for businesses.

#### On devolution

- Ensure more devolved decision-making on infrastructure schemes of regional importance in England.
- Provide a real say for businesses in local decision-making on infrastructure, not tick-box consultation.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

UK businesses are facing the biggest changes in a generation to the way they trade around the world.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**The UK is facing a large and persistent current account deficit. In other words, we are spending more than we are earning.**

In part, the deficit is due to our ongoing trade deficit – we spend far more on imports than we earn from exports.

In the second quarter of 2019, the current account deficit was equivalent to 4.6 per cent of GDP – more than three times its historical average. This leaves us exposed to sudden shifts in global economic conditions.

Concerningly, global economic conditions are weakening and there is a growing trend of protectionism. The World Trade Organisation is forecasting world trade growth of just 1.2 per cent this year, less than half that recorded last year.

Internationally active UK businesses are not only facing these weakening conditions, but also uncertainty around Brexit, with one in two considering it a barrier to export.<sup>16</sup>

The decline in the proportion of manufacturers reporting improved export sales and orders is alarming.<sup>17</sup> In the services sector, the picture is also weakening.<sup>18</sup>

### WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

- **Ranking top five in the world for total export value.**
- **Increasing exports beyond 35 per cent of GDP.**
- **Balancing our economy more effectively, with trade accounting for a larger share of growth.**

Growth in exports drives growth in jobs, boosts productivity and raises living standards.

But, to grow overseas sales, exporters need the right conditions.

Trade agreements are important, but so too is investing in trade promotion – helping businesses explore new markets and secure new customers.

When asked how to best encourage trade:

- 34 per cent of internationally active UK businesses said introductions to business partners or distributors overseas,
- 24 per cent said subsidised access to trade shows, and
- 18 per cent said subsidised access to trade missions.<sup>19</sup> >

<sup>16, 19</sup> BCC Trade Survey 2019. <sup>17, 18</sup> BCC Quarterly Economic Survey Q3 2019.

Our current account deficit as a share of GDP is

**more than 3 times**  
its historical average.

The proportion of manufacturers reporting increased export orders is at its

**weakest level in 10 years.**

**1 in 2**  
internationally active UK businesses consider uncertainty around Brexit a barrier to export.

# INTERNATIONAL TRADE CONTINUED

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### Priority actions for the next UK government

- Commit to working with Chambers to link UK businesses to customers and opportunities worldwide, leveraging the BCC's rapidly growing Global Business Network.
- Revitalise trade support programmes, develop an expanded trade mission and trade show programme and fund long-term frontline, practical and face-to-face support for exporters.
- Introduce a tax credit for exporters to help them manage the costs and risks of entering new markets, covering a limited range of activities including research, setup, trade missions and shows.
- Establish a true partnership between government and business for the development of future trade policy, including a 'room-next-door' mechanism in trade negotiations to ensure the immediate inclusion of high-quality business expertise.

### On net-zero emissions

- Commit to negotiating tariff reductions for environmental goods and services in future trade agreements.

### On devolution

- Commit to keeping trade support regional and not moving towards a one-size-fits-all, national approach in England – and to delivering better coordination between trade support programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in markets both here in the UK and around the world.

# BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND COSTS

We are facing the longest period of sustained annual decline in business investment for 17 years.<sup>20</sup>

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**Among G7 countries, the UK has averaged lowest for total investment as a percentage of GDP for 30 years.**

Further, in five out of the last six quarters, business investment has fallen.

UK businesses are investing less in product development, improving processes or adopting new technologies than their overseas competitors.

In recent years, relentless Brexit uncertainty has taken its toll, but rising costs have also negatively impacted on business cash flow and investment.

We have some of the highest recurrent property taxes in the world – as a share of the economy, more than twice the OECD average.

Lack of access to external finance is also a barrier to investment, with 21 per cent of businesses citing this as an issue when funding new and innovative activities.<sup>21</sup>

As a result of the lack of action when it comes to costs, taxes, finance and uncertainty around Brexit, cash flow has weakened and many businesses have had to reduce or cancel investment.<sup>22</sup>

## WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

- **Exceeding the research and development investment target of 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027.**
- **Lowering recurrent property taxes as a proportion of GDP to below the OECD average – with a particular emphasis on business rates.**
- **Attracting record flows of foreign direct investment into the real economy.**
- **Exceeding G7 average of total investment – both public and private investment – as a share of GDP by 2027.**

For any business to compete globally, they need a competitive footing at home on which to stand – and the confidence to push ahead.

In the UK, action is required to stimulate the economy and send a strong message that we remain a great place to do business.

Similarly, easing the cost of doing business would help UK businesses to invest, recruit and grow – particularly during this time of uncertainty. >

# 35%

of businesses said they were likely to reduce or cancel investment as a result of business rates increasing this year.

The proportion of manufacturers increasing investment in training fell to its

# lowest level in 9 years.<sup>23</sup>

# 27%

of manufacturers reported worsening cash flow in Q3 2019, compared to just 21% reporting an improvement.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> BCC Economic Forecast Q3 2019. <sup>21</sup> BCC innovation survey 2018. <sup>22</sup> BCC business taxation survey 2019. <sup>23,24</sup> BCC Quarterly Economic Survey Q3 2019.

# BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND COSTS CONTINUED

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### Priority actions for the next UK government

- Extend the £1 million Annual Investment Allowance for a further two years and widen its scope.
- Commit to protecting tax relief schemes that incentivise investment – the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) and the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS).
- Reverse the 2017 reduction in the dividend allowance, which is hurting small businesses and sole traders.
- Launch a business-led review of the business rates system in England – and, in the meantime, introduce a business rates investment incentive for England and Wales, providing a 12-month delay before rates are applied to a new build property, or before rates are increased when an existing property is expanded or improved.
- Introduce a moratorium on measures that increase business costs for the next term of parliament, excluding only evidence-based changes to the National Living Wage.
- Enable the British Business Bank to play a greater role in the provision of patient capital by upscaling the British Patient Capital programme to enable long-term investment in businesses across the UK.

### On net-zero emissions

- Commit to keeping the VAT rate for items considered to be 'energy-saving materials' at five per cent or lower post-Brexit.

### On devolution

- Expand the British Business Bank to play a greater role in improving the quality and reach of early-stage finance to high-growth businesses beyond London and the South East.

# SUMMARY

## PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT

### ON BREXIT

- Do not leave the European Union without a deal.
- Close remaining information gaps for all Brexit scenarios.
- Ensure the smoothest possible shift from a transition period to the future UK-European Union relationship, allowing enough time for businesses to plan.
- Clarify the future direction of devolution to the nations and regions, as each stand to be affected as powers and regional development funding return to the UK.
- Introduce a simple, fast, flexible and affordable immigration system that minimises the administrative burden on businesses.
- Allow access within the immigration system to all skill levels - including temporary, seasonal and permanent roles - with recognition of professional qualifications.
- Clarify the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - and how it will deliver a UK regional funding system that has maximum local autonomy when European structural and investment funds cease in the UK.
- Secure the future of the UK-European Union trading relationship, minimising cross-border trade frictions and avoiding a hard border with Ireland.
- Ensure continuity of trading conditions with third countries so that businesses can continue to benefit from the levels of market access that they have had under European Union free trade agreements.
- Introduce a temporary SME Brexit tax credit to support businesses that need to undertake specific activity to adjust to changes in trading conditions.
- Upscale HMRC Time To Pay arrangements to deal with the expected increase in applications. >



## SUMMARY CONTINUED

# PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT

### ON PEOPLE

- Increase funding for apprenticeships to ensure SMEs can access training, at all skill levels, in their local area.
- Ensure businesses have access to relevant apprenticeship qualifications and reform the Apprenticeship Levy in England to allow businesses to use all forms of accredited training.
- Raise the base rate of funding for further education among 16 to 18 year olds in England, commit long-term funding for T Levels and increase flexibility and financial support for businesses delivering high-quality T Level work placements.
- Increase the budget for adult education in England to fully fund economically valuable entry-level courses.
- Set out a long-term strategy and funding for lifelong learning, enabling people to upskill, retrain and adapt to technological changes in the workplace.
- Deliver career advice services for all ages and incentivise schools to promote vocational and technical routes.
- Reform and simplify family policies to reduce complexity and help businesses manage the costs, without compromising the support provided.
- Help bridge the gap between parental leave and children starting school by simplifying access to childcare funding and providing a flexible and universal childcare entitlement.
- Fund workplace adaptations to help employers retain and support employees experiencing ill health.

### ON INFRASTRUCTURE

- Complete the legal frameworks for all phases of HS2, deliver promised investment in Northern Powerhouse Rail and proceed to deliver a UK-wide high-speed rail network as soon as possible.
- Reaffirm support for private investment in the third runway at Heathrow Airport and other important major transport projects.
- Commit funding to bring local roads back up to scratch – quickly.
- Reform planning rules to support the deployment of 5G mobile signal infrastructure.
- Attract more private investment into public infrastructure by introducing a replacement for the Private Finance Initiative.
- Strengthen national planning guidelines in England to protect land for business and employment. >

## SUMMARY CONTINUED

# PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT

### ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- Commit to working with Chambers to link UK businesses to customers and opportunities worldwide, leveraging the BCC's rapidly growing Global Business Network.
- Revitalise trade support programmes, develop an expanded trade mission and trade show programme and fund long-term frontline, practical and face-to-face support for exporters.
- Introduce a tax credit for exporters to help them manage the costs and risks of entering new markets, covering a limited range of activities including research, setup, trade missions and shows.
- Establish a true partnership between government and business for the development of future trade policy, including a 'room-next-door' mechanism in trade negotiations to ensure the immediate inclusion of high-quality business expertise.

### ON BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND COSTS

- Extend the £1 million Annual Investment Allowance for a further two years and widen its scope.
- Commit to protecting tax relief schemes that incentivise investment – the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) and the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS).
- Reverse the 2017 reduction in the dividend allowance, which is hurting small businesses and sole traders.
- Launch a business-led review of the business rates system in England – and, in the meantime, introduce a business rates investment incentive for England and Wales, providing a 12-month delay before rates are applied to a new build property or before rates are increased when an existing property is expanded or improved.
- Introduce a moratorium on measures that increase business costs for the next term of parliament, excluding only evidence-based changes to the National Living Wage.
- Enable the British Business Bank to play a greater role in the provision of patient capital by upscaling the British Patient Capital programme to enable long-term investment in businesses across the UK. >

## SUMMARY CONTINUED

# PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT UK GOVERNMENT

### ON NET-ZERO EMISSIONS:

- Fund the upskilling and reskilling of employees impacted by changes to supply chains.
- Ensure the education and skills system prepares people for work in a net-zero emissions economy.
- Commit to an energy strategy that helps us achieve this target, while maintaining affordable and reliable energy for businesses.
- Commit to negotiating tariff reductions for environmental goods and services in future trade agreements.
- Commit to keeping the VAT rate for items considered to be 'energy-saving materials' at five per cent or lower post-Brexit.

### ON DEVOLUTION

- Ensure clarity and transparency on skills devolution and future access to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Allow greater flexibility for communities to focus skills and training funding on local needs.
- Ensure more devolved decision-making on infrastructure schemes of regional importance in England.
- Provide a real say for businesses in local decision-making on infrastructure, not tick-box consultation.
- Commit to keeping trade support regional and not moving towards a one-size-fits-all, national approach in England – and to delivering better coordination between trade support programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in markets both here in the UK and around the world.
- Expand the British Business Bank to play a greater role in improving the quality and reach of early-stage finance to high-growth businesses beyond London and the South East.

# UK CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

## UNITED KINGDOM

**Aberdeen and Grampian** Chamber of Commerce

**Ayrshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Barnsley & Rotherham** Chamber of Commerce

**Bedfordshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Black Country** Chamber of Commerce

**Business West** Chamber of Commerce

**Cambridgeshire** Chambers of Commerce

**Cornwall** Chamber of Commerce

**Coventry & Warwickshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Cumbria** Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Devon & Plymouth** Chamber of Commerce

**Doncaster** Chamber of Commerce

**Dorset** Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Dundee and Angus** Chamber of Commerce

**East Lancashire** Chamber of Commerce

**East Midlands** Chamber - Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire

**Edinburgh** Chamber of Commerce

**Essex** Chambers of Commerce

**Fife** Chamber of Commerce

**Glasgow** Chamber of Commerce

**Greater Birmingham** Chambers of Commerce Group

**Greater Manchester** Chamber of Commerce

**Hampshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Herefordshire and Worcestershire** Chamber of Commerce

**Hertfordshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Hull & Humber** Chamber of Commerce

**Inverness** Chamber of Commerce

**Isle of Wight** Chamber of Commerce

**Kent Invicta** Chamber of Commerce

**Lincolnshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Liverpool** Chambers of Commerce

**London** Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Mid Yorkshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Norfolk** Chamber of Commerce

**North & Western Lancashire** Chamber of Commerce

**North East England** Chamber of Commerce

**Northamptonshire** Chamber of Commerce  
(incorporating Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce)

**Northern Ireland** Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Renfrewshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Sheffield** Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Shropshire** Chamber of Commerce

**Somerset** Chamber of Commerce

**South Cheshire** Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**South Wales** Chamber of Commerce

**St Helens** Chamber

**Staffordshire** Chambers of Commerce

**Suffolk** Chamber of Commerce

**Surrey** Chambers of Commerce

**Sussex** Chamber of Commerce

**Thames Valley** Chamber of Commerce Group

**West & North Yorkshire** Chamber of Commerce

**West Cheshire & North Wales** Chamber of Commerce

**Wirral** Chamber of Commerce



**53** Accredited  
Chambers  
in the UK

**5.8m**

Employees represented  
by our members

# GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK

## AFRICA

- Ghana** UK-Ghana Chamber of Commerce
- Nigeria** Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce
- Kenya** British Chamber of Commerce Kenya
- South Africa** British Chamber of Business in Southern Africa

## AMERICAS

- Argentina** British Chamber of Commerce in Argentina
- Chile** British Chamber of Commerce in Chile
- Costa Rica** British Chamber of Commerce Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic** British Chamber of Commerce in the Dominican Republic

## EUROPE

- Belgium** British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium
- Bulgaria** British Bulgarian Business Association
- Cyprus** Cyprus UK Business Association
- Czech Republic** British Chamber of Commerce in Czech Republic
- Denmark** British Chamber of Commerce in Denmark
- Finland** British Commonwealth Chamber of Commerce in Finland and Finnish British Trade Association
- Franco** Franco British Chamber of Commerce
- Germany** British Chamber of Commerce in Germany
- Greece** British Hellenic Chamber of Commerce
- Iceland** British Icelandic Chamber of Commerce
- Ireland** British Irish Chamber of Commerce
- Israel** Israel British Chamber of Commerce
- Italy** British Chamber of Commerce for Italy
- Latvia** British Chamber of Commerce in Latvia
- Lithuania** British Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania
- Luxembourg** British Chamber of Commerce in Luxembourg
- Netherlands** Netherlands British Chamber of Commerce
- Norway** British Norwegian Chamber of Commerce
- Poland** British Polish Chamber of Commerce
- Romania** British Romanian Chamber of Commerce
- Russia** Russo-British Chamber of Commerce
- Slovakia** British Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia
- Slovenia** British-Slovenian Chamber of Commerce
- Spain** British Chamber of Commerce in Spain
- Switzerland** British Swiss Chamber of Commerce
- Sweden** British Swedish Chamber of Commerce
- Ukraine** British Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce



55

Chambers  
Worldwide

100+

Chambers by 2023

## MIDDLE EAST

- Abu Dhabi** British Business Group in Abu Dhabi
- Dubai & N Emirates** British Business Group in Dubai & N Emirates
- Iraq** Iraq Britain Business Council
- Qatar** Qatar British Business Forum
- Saudi Arabia** British-Saudi Joint Business Council
- Turkey** British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey

## SOUTH EAST ASIA/PACIFIC

- Australia** Australian-British Chamber of Commerce
- Cambodia** British Chamber of Commerce Cambodia
- China** British Chambers of Commerce in China
- Hong Kong** British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
- Indonesia** British Chamber of Commerce Indonesia
- Malaysia** British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce
- Myanmar** British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar
- New Zealand** British New Zealand Business Association
- Philippines** British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines
- Singapore** British Chamber of Commerce Singapore
- Korea** British Chamber of Commerce Korea
- Thailand** British Chamber of Commerce Thailand
- Vietnam** British Business Group Vietnam



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