

Adam Marshall: Ambitious growth plan for UK more important to business than Brexit

Addressing the BCC Annual Conference 2018 today (Thursday), Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, will remind the government that the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the UK business community, and country, are not related to exiting the EU, but to the fundamentals in the domestic environment.

In his keynote speech to the Conference in the QEII centre Westminster, Marshall will call on the government not to let Brexit overshadow all the issues in the domestic environment that need urgent attention to boost confidence, improve productivity and create jobs.

To equip the country for future success, Marshall will say the fundamentals must be fixed first, including funding repairs on local roads, improving capacity of railways and airports, building more houses, ridding the UK of mobile phone 'not-spots', stabilising the training and apprenticeship systems, and delivering a clear and easy-to-use immigration system.

Marshall will also call for a bigger, more optimistic vision for the future of the UK, a national sense of mission to unite the efforts of business, government and the public at large with a real sense of purpose.

Marshall will also warn about the importance of a thriving private sector and defending private enterprise and wealth creation.

Dr Adam Marshall, will say:

"I want to talk about the choices that our leaders must make right here in the UK. The choices that are in our own hands. The issues that are currently being overlooked. The practical, pragmatic UK agenda that will unlock investment and a brighter, more prosperous future.

"Business know that success so often depends on getting the basics right first. The same holds true for the UK economy. It's time for Westminster to join us in focusing on the basics. By addressing the less flashy things that always seem to fall between the cracks. We must equip this country for future success – by fixing the fundamentals first.

"Successive governments have acknowledged that more could be done to get the basics right for business. Indeed, the current government's developing Industrial Strategy is up-front about many of these challenges. Yet the leadership and the infrastructure simply aren't there to make change happen."

On the need for a national mission, Marshall will say:

“There is a real hunger coming from businesses across the UK for real leadership and vision. Businesses want to see a radical, optimistic vision for the future of the UK. The reason is simple: they want something to get behind. A national sense of mission that unites the efforts of business, government and the public at large with a real sense of purpose.

“There are those who would argue that Brexit is that mission, but they have entirely missed the point. Brexit is a process, not an outcome. It has been allowed, by government and opposition alike, to cloud over the rudderlessness of recent years; a convenient excuse to plough attention and resources into a process of disconnection, rather than to take the far harder step of re-imagining Britain for the future and then marshalling all available brainpower, management capacity and financial resources into making it happen.”

Marshall will also highlight the importance of a thriving private sector, saying:

“The wave of business investment we all want to see depends, intrinsically, on the level of business confidence in the stability and stance of governments.

“Yet our business communities are worried about the rhetorical assault on capitalism and wealth generation emanating from some quarters of Westminster. Those who seek to divide our business communities by pitting the small against the large, or by demonising some sectors while championing others, must be challenged. Those who suggest that the solution to poor procurement and questionable outsourcing decisions by government is the wholesale nationalisation of entire swathes of the economy must also be challenged.

“Facing down the superficially seductive argument for nationalisation won't be easy – but it's vital to the future success of communities and prosperity all across the UK.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The BCC Annual Conference takes place on Thursday 8 March at the QEII Centre, London. The [full programme](#) can be found online, to register for a press pass please email the [press office](#).

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

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