

**Westminster Business Forum policy conference:  
Next steps for the UK professional and business services sector plan**

Timing: Morning, Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**\*\*\*Taking Place Online\*\*\***



**WESTMINSTER  
BUSINESS  
FORUM**

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Key developments in the professional and business services sector and considerations going forward**  
**Iain Wright**, Chief Policy and Communications Officer, ICAEW; and Business Co-Chair, Professional and Business Services Council  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **The Professional and Business Services Sector Plan - priorities, governance, and early implementation**  
*immediate priorities for delivery and early milestones | governance, transparency, and measuring effectiveness | oversight and accountability mechanisms | regional support and the role of PBS hubs | place-based interventions and strategic approaches to local growth | local authority roles and capacity for delivery | supporting business productivity | access to support for non-hub regions and mid-tier firms | interaction with wider SME support measures | cross-sector coordination | priorities for the proposed Office for PBS and interaction with the Industrial Strategy Council*  
**Piers Burroughs**, Managing Director, Burroughs; and Chair, SME Council, Association for Consultancy and Engineering  
**David McNeill**, Director, Public Affairs and Campaigns, The Law Society  
**Anna Purchas**, Vice Chair and Head, UK Professional Services Sector, KPMG  
**Phil Kilburn**, Development Lead, Finance and Professional Services Sector, The Growth Company  
Senior representative, investment  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Strengthening the UK's international position - export growth, trade access, and global competitiveness**  
**Gareth Waterhouse**, Head, Policy and Products, UK Export Finance  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.50 Break
- 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 **'Future of the Professional Partnership in the Age of AI and Private Equity'**  
**Professor Laura Empson**, Professor in the Management of Professional Service Firms, Bayes Business School, University of London  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.30 **Support for the PBS workforce - attracting talent, upskilling, and impact of technology**  
**Mark Goldstone**, Head, Industrial Strategy Policy, Confederation of British Industry
- 11.40 **Next steps for technology adoption, AI integration, and future operating models for PBS firms**  
*ways to support productivity | deployment of £150m in five AI and technology adoption programmes | priorities for the AI champion | procurement, cost barriers, and digital infrastructure | regulatory clarity and professional standards | equitable access to technology support | implications for pricing models, including outcome-based and subscription approaches | targeted support for tech adoption in emerging business models | developing the Made Smarter PBS delivery model | impact on workforce roles | liability, ethics, and professional judgement | interoperability with existing digital infrastructure*  
**Hilary Smyth-Allen**, CEO, SuperTech WM  
**Professor Martin Spring**, Professor, Operations Management, Lancaster University Management School; and Principal Investigator, Technology in Professional Services (TIPS), Innovation Adoption Accelerator  
**Tom Quoroll**, Chair, GenAI Programme, Linklaters  
**Stephen Ward**, Director, Strategy and External Relations, Council for Licensed Conveyancers
- 12.05 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Progress and next steps for delivery of the Professional and Business Services Sector Plan**  
**David Riches**, Deputy Director, Financial, Professional and Business Services, Department for Business and Trade  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Business Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Thomas Howard**, Westminster Business Forum