

THE  
*Windsor Debates*  
PROGRAMME



MARCH 2026

INFRASTRUCTURE

Vicars' Hall, St George's  
House, Windsor Castle

In partnership with



Co-Sponsored by **Heathrow**

# INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure acts as a fundamental driver of economic growth by providing essential, foundational systems - such as transportation, utilities, and digital networks - that boost productivity, reduce business costs, promote inclusivity, and stimulate employment. High-quality, strategic infrastructure investment increases economic efficiency; some research indicates that every £1 invested can raise GDP by up to 20% in the long run.

Infrastructure investment impacts nearly every sector, including the eight growth sectors identified in the Government's Industrial Strategy. However, some industries experience particularly transformative effects, including:

- **Transportation and Logistics** – Upgraded roads, railways, and ports improve supply-chain efficiency and reduce transit times, benefiting businesses that depend on timely deliveries.
- **Manufacturing** – Reliable energy grids and transportation systems help manufacturers streamline production and distribution processes, lowering costs and increasing competitiveness.
- **Energy and Utilities** – Investment in renewable energy sources and smart grids promotes sustainability and ensures a reliable power supply for homes and industry.
- **Technology and Telecommunications** – High-tech infrastructure development, such as 5G networks and data centres, fosters innovation and supports the digital economy.
- **Healthcare** – New hospitals, clinics, and telemedicine networks improve access to quality healthcare and enhance patient care.
- **Retail and E-commerce** – Efficient transportation and robust digital infrastructure enable faster deliveries, helping businesses meet growing consumer demand.
- **Tourism and Hospitality** – Improved airports, hotels, and attractions boost tourism, contributing to job creation and local economic growth.



## THE WINDSOR DEBATES

The Windsor Debates importantly provide time for business leaders to discuss, listen carefully and argue cogently; the opportunity for participants to disagree civilly, test each other's intellectual position, find common ground and perhaps even reach consensus.

To facilitate this engagement the Debates operate under the Chatham House Rule so, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

# IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



This year the University of Reading celebrates a defining moment in its history. A century has passed since Reading received its Royal Charter on 17 March 1926, formally becoming a University. By 1926 the institution already had a rich history of serving the region, having evolved from the School of Art and Science, before becoming an extension college of the University of Oxford. The Royal Charter gave the University the power to award its own degrees for the first time.

Today, the University is recognised among the world's leading institutions, ranked in the top 200 globally (QS World University Rankings 2026). Its commitment to tackling global challenges and supporting talent has earned it the title of University of the Year for Scholarships and Bursaries 2026 (The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026) following the launch of its ground breaking Global Sustainability Leaders Scholarship programme.

The University's growing international reputation is shaped by its contribution to global sustainability and responsible leadership. It is ranked 50th in the world for its action in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (THE Global Impact Rankings 2025) and 4th in the UK for environmental and ethical performance (People & Planet League Table 2025/26). These rankings reflect a long-standing commitment to climate action, ethical operations and socially responsible research.

As an engine for skills and economic vitality, Reading continues to deliver strong outcomes for employers and society. Ninety-three percent of graduates are in work or further study within 15 months, demonstrating its ability to equip students with capabilities aligned to a rapidly evolving economy.

Entering its second century, the University aims to deepen its impact: partnering with business, driving innovation and creating the knowledge and talent needed to shape a better world for the century ahead.



CO-SPONSOR

# Heathrow

Heathrow is one of the world's most connected airports and the UK's largest port by value with a network of over 230 destinations worldwide in around 85 countries. It provides hub access to much of the UK's regional airport network and a vital link to London, the Thames Valley and beyond.

Every day, over 200,000 passengers embark on roughly 1,300 flights, making Heathrow a vibrant hub of global trade, tourism, and investment. Heathrow is proud to be a longstanding member of the Thames Valley Chambers of Commerce.



TVCC CHARITY OF THE YEAR



Scannappeal raises funds to purchase life-saving equipment for Amersham, Stoke Mandeville, Wycombe and Community Hospitals which serve people living in Buckinghamshire and neighbouring parts of Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Oxfordshire.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



IAIN  
ANDERSON

Iain is a founder, non-executive director and investor.

He is a Non-Executive Board Member of the Department for Business and Trade, Non-Executive Director of Innovate Finance and is the independent Non-Executive Director of BIBA.

He is also a Non-Executive Director of the Court of the University of St Andrews.

He is chair of the John Smith Centre which focuses on supporting young people into public life and co-chairs the Great British Energy Aberdeen Taskforce. He sits on the City of London Competitiveness Advisory Board.

Iain was Founder and Executive Chairman of H/Advisors Cicero. He has over 30 years' experience as an entrepreneur, adviser, business journalist and CEO and Board level counsel for some of the world's leading business and not for profit organisations.

In 2024, Iain led an independent review – A New Partnership – exploring a long-term plan for how industry and Government can better collaborate together

Iain served as the UK Government's first LGBT+ Business Champion

FACILITATOR

# TIMINGS

09:00 - 09:30	<b>Arrival and Registration, Vicars' Hall</b>
09:30 - 09:55	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>
09:55 - 10:55	<b>Session One:</b> <b>Fit for the Future</b>
10:55 - 11:25	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11:25 - 12:25	<b>Session Two:</b> <b>Planning and Infrastructure – are we about to get it right?</b>
12:25 - 12:35	<b>University of Reading update</b>
12:35 - 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30 - 14:40	<b>Session Three:</b> <b>Railways as a driver of economic growth</b>
14:40 - 15:00	<b>Coffee Break</b>
15:00 - 16:05	<b>Session Four:</b> <b>Resilient Infrastructure Networks</b>
16:05 - 16:35	<b>Reflections</b>
16:35 - 16:40	<b>Closing Remarks</b>
17:00 - 17:50	<b>Evensong In St George's Chapel (optional)</b>
17:50 - 18:50	<b>Drinks Reception at No.25 The Cloisters</b>
19:00 - 21:15	<b>Evening Dinner With Keynote Speaker</b> <b><u>Dr Wei Yang, OBE</u></b> , Chief Executive Officer, Digital Task Force for Planning
21:15 - 22:00	<b>Private Guided Tour of St George's Chapel (optional)</b>
22:00	<b>Event Close</b>

# FIT FOR THE FUTURE

In the context of a world of changing digital connectivity, Clayton will provide an overview of the telecoms market-place, what has changed and indeed changing, key challenges, and how much economic growth is on the table. He will also cover predictions for the way forward, as well as societal and environmental benefits and opportunities.

Sophie will consider the economic opportunities of Heathrow expansion. This will cover supply chain benefits, careers and skills development and how global connectivity (more routes both domestic and internationally) can most benefit our region and its businesses and UK plc – e.g. driving higher volume/value FDI and greater international trade flows.



## SPEAKERS

**Clayton**  
**Nash,**

*Strategy Director*  
CityFibre

**Sophie**  
**Chapman,**

*Surface Access Director*  
Heathrow Airport



# 2

## SESSION

# PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE – ARE WE ABOUT TO GET IT RIGHT?

Outlining the scrutiny role of the Transport Select Committee of which she holds the position of Chair, Ruth will offer comment on some of the key issues, such as decarbonising transport and delivering networks (EV charging and rail infrastructure), surface access to Heathrow and integrated public transport and modal shift. She will also provide personal comments on how these, and other opportunities, can best benefit business in our region.

As an advocate for infrastructure through the National Infrastructure Planning Association (NIPA), and in the context of a culture shift in planning, Tom will reflect on how infrastructure is now “coming out of the shadows” under the current Labour government. He will consider how we can - and should - rethink the effective and efficient delivery of nationally significant infrastructure projects: what is working well, and how Thames Valley businesses should engage to ensure these projects maximise business benefit.

## SPEAKERS

**Ruth  
Cadbury,**

*Chair*  
Transport Select  
Committee

**Tom  
Carpen,**

*Board Chair*  
National Infrastructure  
Planning Association

# RAILWAYS AS A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

2025 was the 200th anniversary of our railways. Mark will provide a 'state of play' of GWR, including updates on the transition to GBR and new Oxford to Bristol service. Looking ahead, he will talk about the importance of connectivity and his bold ambitions to kick-start economic growth, closing with a call to arms to business to speak up with regards to helping secure continued investment in our railways.

Reflecting on some of the key projects, being discussed and developed, across the Oxford-Cambridge Growth corridor, e.g. East West Rail, Charlotte will offer some challenge to the current degree of focus placed on the region and ask, are we truly focused on the wider prize/s and maximising returns on investment for wider economic growth and benefit? What is the role of business in holding HMG and other stakeholders to account?



## SPEAKERS

### **Mark Hopwood,**

*Managing Director  
Great Western Railway*

### **Charlotte Horobin,**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Cambridgeshire  
Chamber of Commerce*

### **Kayleigh Spires,**

*Industry Integration  
Director  
East West Railway*

### **Ruth Bagley,**

*Director  
TVCC's Western Rail  
Link to Heathrow  
Working Group*



# 4 SESSION

## RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORKS

As the UK rapidly electrifies heat, transport and industry, and integrates renewables into the grid system, Jacopo will consider the environmental and economic costs and the growing challenges for a net-zero electricity system. He will explore the role of demand-side flexibility and how deployment/data management has the potential to release (£3-4 billion p.a.) in economic benefit.

Nevil will outline how Thames Water's (TW) three core challenges of climate change, population growth and a need to protect the environment are driving water shortages in the region, and how TW are addressing this risk. This includes their investment in the White Horse Reservoir, and action to tackle leakage and helping customers use water wisely. He will comment on HMG's [new vision for water](#) and outline what this means for the Thames Valley, including potential supply chain opportunities.

## SPEAKERS

### Jacopo Torriti,

*Professor of Energy  
Economics and Policy  
University of Reading*

### Nevil Muncaster,

*Strategic Water  
Resources Director  
Thames Water*

### Wei Yang,

*Chief Executive Officer  
Digital Task Force for  
Planning*

# EVENING RECEPTION AND BUSINESS ALLIANCE DINNER

The evening begins with an optional Evensong service in St George's Chapel, followed by a drinks reception in The Dean's Cloister and dinner in the atmospheric Vicars' Hall, where Dr Wei Yang OBE, CEO, Digital Task Force for Planning and Chair, Wei Yang & Partners, will deliver her keynote address. Her insights at the intersection of planning, design, and digital innovation promise to be a highlight of the evening.

The event concludes with an exclusive private guided tour of St George's Chapel, offering guests a rare and memorable experience.



## SPEAKERS

**Wei,**  
**Yang OBE,**

*Chief Executive Officer*  
Digital Task Force  
for Planning

# SPEAKERS



Ruth Bagley,  
Director,  
TVCC's Western Rail Link to Heathrow  
Working Group



Paul Britton,  
CEO,  
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce



Ruth Cadbury MP,  
Chair,  
Transport Select Committee



Tom Carpen,  
Board Chair,  
National Infrastructure Planning Association



Sophie Chapman,  
Surface Access Director  
Heathrow Airport



Bill Gornall-King,  
Group President,  
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce



Mark Hopwood,  
Managing Director  
Great Western Railway



Charlotte Horobin,  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce



Nevil Muncaster,  
Strategic Water Resources Director  
Thames Water



Clayton Nash,  
Strategy Director  
CityFibre



Kayleigh Spires,  
Industry Integration Director  
East West Rail



Jacopo Torriti,  
Professor of Energy Economics and Policy  
University of Reading



Wei Yang OBE,  
Chief Executive Officer  
Digital Task Force for Planning

# GUEST LIST

**Activate Learning** - Jon Adams , Chief Strategy Officer

**Activate Learning Education Trust** - Jo Harper, Chief Executive Officer

**Advanced Fibreoptic Engineering Ltd** - Nick Martin, Managing Director

**Aletheia Real Estate Limited** - Polly Plunket , Co-Founder

**Ardynt Consulting** - Ruth Bagley, Chair Western Rail Link to Heathrow Working Group

**AtkinsRéalis** - Warwick Lowe, Rail Planning Director

**B P Collins LLP** - Gina Connell, Chief Marketing Officer

**Blake Morgan** - Kath Shimmin, Partner

**Blake Morgan** - Angela Mildenhall, Partner

**Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd** - Becca Veale, Senior Government Affairs Manager

**Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd** - Hannah Higginson , Corporate Affairs Intern

**Boyes Turner LLP** - Barry Stanton, Managing Partner

**British Chambers of Commerce** - Ellis Shelton, Policy Manager

**Buckinghamshire New University** - Russel Stone, Dean of College, Creative Arts, Technology and Engineering

**Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce** - Charlotte Horobin, Chief Executive

**Transport Select Committee** - Ruth Cadbury MP, Chair

**Cityfibre** - Stacey King, Regional Partnership Director

**Cityfibre** - Clayton Nash, Strategy Director

**Digital Task Force for Planning** - Wei Yang, Chief Executive Officer

**East West Rail** - Kayleigh Spire, Industry Integration Director

**Go-Ahead Group** - Phil Southall, Managing Director Strategy and Performance

**Great Western Railway** - Mark Hopwood, Managing Director

**Heathrow** - Sophie Chapman, Surface Access Director

**James Cowper Kreston** - Sue Staunton, Managing Partner

**James Cowper Kreston** - Alan Poole, Partner

**Jansons Property** - Andy Jansons, Managing Director

**Knights** - Ben Denton, Partner

**Knights and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce** - Jane Masih, Partner and TVCC Board Director

**Lonza Biologics** - Nic Murrell, E2E Leader UK Business Transformation

**National Infrastructure Planning Association** - Tom Carpen, Chair

**Oxford Brookes University** - Christina Godiksen, Head of School of Architecture

**Oxfordshire County Council** - Pete Brunskill, Rail Development Lead

**Philip Benton Photography** - Philip Benton, Photographer

**PwC** - Hassan Ahmed, Director

**Reading Buses** - Robert Williams, Chief Executive Officer

**Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust** - Andrew Barrett, Head of Commercial

**SEGRO** - Anna Bond, Head of Western Corridor

**SEGRO** - Jo Jackson, Director

**Solventum** - Tony Bellis, Head of Government Affairs, EMEA

**Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, BDO** - Ros Payne, Board Director

**Thames Water** - Nevil Muncaster, Strategic Water Resources Director

**Transport for the South East** - Keir Wilkins, Head of Programme and Policy

**Turley** - Sara Dutfield, Director, Head of Planning East and South East

**Ultra Cyber** - Juliette Wilcox, President

**University of Reading** - Robert Van de Noort CBE DL, Vice Chancellor

**University of Reading** - Jacopo Torriti, Professor of Energy Economics and Policy

**University of the Built Environment** - Mike Speight, Executive Director, Strategic Enterprise

**Windsor Debates Facilitator** - Iain Anderson, Facilitator

# STAFF

Paul Britton, Chief Executive, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Bill Gornall-King, Group President, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Gareth Ralphs, Head of Business Representation and Policy, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Sarah Irving, Head of Business Engagement & Communications, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Pamela Farries, Skills and Policy Manager, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

David Saab, Business Alliance Manager & Mental Wellbeing Champion, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Jess Harrison, Policy and Project Executive, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

Freya Thomson, Policy & Inward Investment Administrator, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce