

BCC comments on the Queen's Speech

Commenting on the Queen's Speech today, Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said:

"The government's legislative plans will give businesses some encouragement that Westminster is finally starting to think about growth and investment again, but the real test will be in the detail that follows.

"From now on, soundbites can be no substitute for the daily grind of good government. Attention must return to the details that matter, and the government must work hand-in-glove with our business communities if it wants to translate electoral success into economic success."

On Brexit

"Campaign slogans need to give way to real detail on our future relationship with our largest and nearest trading partner. Companies across the UK want clear answers to their many unanswered questions, and a guarantee that costly 'cliff edges' will be avoided.

On trade

"The forthcoming Trade Bill must deliver an ambitious international trading framework that supports prosperity post-Brexit.

"Businesses need clarity on global trading relationships and the time to implement the practical changes necessary to thrive under an independent trading policy.

"We need to see substantial investment in trade promotion activity that connects businesses with new markets to drive export growth. This will help kickstart a sluggish economy and boost business confidence."

On people and skills

"At a time of critical recruitment shortages, an Immigration Bill that allows businesses throughout the UK to recruit staff at all skill levels cannot be delivered soon enough. Government should waste no time in providing detail on the proposed points-based system, and must not lumber firms with costly delays or red tape.

"As the world of work continues to change it is encouraging to hear the government championing flexible working. Any legal changes should only come after extensive consultation with firms of all sizes to ensure new measures work for employers and employees alike."

On infrastructure

"Businesses want to see a fully integrated and modern infrastructure network. The government now needs to get on and deliver. This must include completing all phases of HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Lower Thames Crossing as well as ensuring local areas have the funding they need to address their priorities."

On business investments and costs

"UK business investment has fallen for the longest period in almost two decades. Many will welcome the short-term relief provided by further discounts to business rates, but the government should waste no time in setting up a comprehensive review of this outdated system.

"Looking ahead to the Budget, businesses of all sizes need to see a package of fiscal measures to alleviate the burden of high up-front costs and stimulate investment. This should be accompanied by a moratorium on all new up-front costs for businesses for the duration of this Parliament."

On the environment

"Together with business communities, the government and devolved administrations should build a plan for how we will work across the four nations to reach net-zero by 2050, while also maintaining security of energy supply and stable prices for businesses and consumers."