

UNLOCKING THE NORTH EAST ECONOMY

A CONFERENCE MINI-SERIES



**WE ARE
NORTH EAST
BUSINESS**



BACKGROUND

One year on from the launch of the Chamber's policy plan, Unlocking the North East Economy, this three-part conference series will explore how its ambitions are being translated into action.

Across three focused events, the programme will examine how key policy themes connect to real-world business activity, moving beyond strategy to showcase practical delivery, regional insight and examples of organisations already driving change.

Running throughout the series is a focus on the North East's identity, culture and creativity, and the role they play in shaping the region's future.

From the way businesses innovate and collaborate to how places grow and attract investment, the series will explore how economic success is driven not only by infrastructure and capital, but by people, ideas, creativity and a strong sense of place.

Each event will bring together business leaders, policymakers, partners and stakeholders to share insight, challenge thinking and highlight opportunities for growth.

Delegates will leave with a clearer understanding of the region's direction of travel, the practical steps already being taken and the role they can play in helping unlock the North East's future potential.

TICKETS:

The ticketed series is open to Chamber members and non-members, with discounted rates available for members:

SINGLE EVENT:
£40 MEMBERS, £70 NON-MEMBERS

FULL SERIES:
£100 MEMBERS, £180 NON-MEMBERS



EVENT 1

KEY INFORMATION:

Date:
Friday 18 September 2026

Time:
08:45 Arrival, continental breakfast and networking
09:15 Event start
11:00 Event close

Venue:
Teesside University Digital Life Centre, Middlesbrough

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Technology

POWERING PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH: PEOPLE, JOBS AND AI

This session focuses on how the North East can build a workforce that is ready for the future.

As technology continues to change the nature of work, there is a growing need to balance technical capability with adaptability, creativity and strong workplace cultures. This is not just about skills provision, but about how organisations attract, develop and retain people in a way that supports long-term productivity.

The discussion will explore how businesses are responding to these challenges in practice. This includes approaches to skills development, inclusive recruitment and employee wellbeing, alongside the role AI is beginning to play across different sectors.

AI will be considered in a practical sense. Not just as a tool to improve efficiency, but as something that is changing how people work, solve problems and make decisions.



EVENT 2

KEY INFORMATION:

Date:

Thursday 1 October 2026

Time:

08:45 Arrival, continental breakfast and networking

09:15 Event start

11:00 Event close

Venue:

The Culture House, Sunderland

TRADE, DEVOLUTION AND THE NORTH EAST'S GLOBAL FUTURE

This session looks at how the North East can strengthen its position on a national and international stage.

As competition for investment and talent increases, there is a need for the region to present a clear and confident offer. This goes beyond individual sectors and looks at how the North East is understood as a place to do business.

The session will explore how trade, connectivity and devolution can support this. There will be a focus on how businesses can access new markets, build relationships and navigate an increasingly complex global environment.

It will also consider how the region tells its story. This includes how its strengths, heritage and ambitions are communicated in a way that resonates with investors and partners.

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EVENT 3

KEY INFORMATION:

Date:

Thursday 15 October 2026

Time:

08:45 Arrival, continental breakfast and networking

09:15 Event start

11:00 Event close

Venue:

The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, Gateshead

PLACE TO PROSPERITY: CULTURE, INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

This session focuses on how the North East can translate its strengths into places that attract investment and support long-term growth.

This includes the role of infrastructure, development and regeneration, but also how places are designed and experienced by the people who live and work in them.

The discussion will explore how different elements come together to create investable locations. This includes transport and digital connectivity, sustainability, town centres and wider community identity.

There will be a focus on practical examples, including how organisations are approaching development and how projects are being shaped to deliver both economic and social value.

The session will also introduce the Social Value Framework and how it can support a more joined-up approach to investment across the region.

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