



# Business Plan 2025/28

east midlands  
chamber

Derbyshire | Leicestershire | Nottinghamshire



# Our Vision and Values

## Our Vision

To **enhance** East Midlands businesses and communities



**east midlands**  
chamber

Derbyshire | Leicestershire | Nottinghamshire

## Our Values

### Champion

Our members  
Our towns, cities and counties  
Our achievements



### Collaborative

Our partners  
Our stakeholders  
Our networks

### Responsible

Our communities  
Our people  
Our environment

### Innovative

Our thinking  
Our processes  
Our delivery



# Chamber goals

- One

Provide businesses with the resources, knowledge and expertise to succeed and grow
- Two

Strive for inclusive growth for the regional business community
- Three

Support the International Trade ambitions of businesses and develop the East Midlands as a centre of trading excellence
- Four

Be the exemplar and champion responsible business practices
- Five

Support the development of the regional workforce to meet business needs



# Chief Executive's Introduction

The 2025/28 East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire) Business Plan covers a period when there will be significant external change. New political structures, such as The East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA), the deployment of a national Industrial Strategy, supported by Local Growth Plans, the creation of new Government mechanisms such as The Business Growth Service and the impact of the December 2024 Devolution White Paper, will all have an impact on the Chamber and how it supports the business community.

The Chamber needs to deftly navigate all of the above to ensure businesses can continue to access the right support at the right time. This period will include the transformation of the business support landscape in both the short and medium term (from UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2025/26 to a currently unknown specification in 2026/27 and beyond).

These political changes create a new series of stakeholders for the Chamber to engage with (as we have been doing for some time), while maintaining strong relationships with borough, district, city and county councils, as they go through significant change over the course of this Business Plan (as a result of the Devolution White Paper).

It is essential that the Chamber remains at the heart of the debate on these key issues that will affect the economic landscape of the three counties for many years to come.

Following the Chancellor's Budget on 30 October 2024, which introduced a new tax regime for business from 1 April 2025, the crisis in the cost of doing business will continue across the duration of this Business Plan. Borrowing by business for investment purposes remains high and these

factors will affect the East Midlands, and the wider national economic landscape in which the Chamber operates. The Chamber of course is not immune to the above and we will have a larger cost base in 2025/26 which will need to be mitigated with greater commercial focus.

The Chamber is well positioned to curate opportunities these developments present, and we must remain cognisant of the challenges the business community will bring to the Chamber for support.

The Chamber remains well resourced, it is financially robust and continues to demonstrate its ability to be increasingly agile in an evolving landscape where the support needs of members, customers, and the wider business community evolves frequently due to the pace of economic change. We must focus on quality and always undertake a

'customer first' approach in our every engagement- it's what differentiates us from a growing list of local, regional and national competitors.

Quality, quality, quality must be our mantra.

We will continue to offer a broad range of support, constantly evolving, both commercial and subsidised, to meet the needs of our diverse business community across the three cities and three counties.

The continuing legacy of the UK exit from the European Union endures, continuing to affect global trade. Coupled with geo-political instability in several parts of the world, it is difficult for the East Midlands business community to fully optimise their international trade ambitions.

Across the duration of this Business Plan, our international trade offer will evolve to meet new demands from

exporters, and we will diversify our product and service range to replace the loss of export documentation income from the growing volume of free trade deals across the globe.

Paramount to everything we do is Chamber membership and our membership networks of Generation Next, East Midlands Manufacturing Network and Enterprising Women, all of which we have heavily invested in.

We remain a membership, representation and a business support organisation – all of our products and services must commercially contribute to these tenets.

Chamber membership and all three sub-membership networks have significant growth potential, which is yet to be realised, and need to be smartly weaved, organically, into our other services.

All Chamber teams and departments will be tasked with supporting this growth.

Evolving business support needs will continue to be the cornerstones of our support portfolio. These needs will include things such as (not an exhaustive list):

- supporting businesses to meet their environmental, social and

governance (ESG) aspirations and in their journey to net zero and optimising sustainable technologies.

- supporting the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation.
- addressing the growing skills needs of all businesses to survive, thrive and grow in this new landscape.

We will optimise our investment into digital transformation which will create efficiencies across every team and department, automating time consuming administrative burdens to allow higher value engagements with members and customers from our greatest asset, the Chamber team.

The next few years will inevitably be different, perhaps more starkly than the last few years, however this is nothing new for the Chamber and for all of us.

The Chamber evolves frequently, and I know we can all count on each other to maximise the opportunities we create and those identified in our marketplace, to support each other during this journey and be known as the Chamber that gives its members and customers great value and a positive experience.

*Scott Knowles DL, Chief Executive*



# Business Planning Principles

This Business Plan for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028 has been developed with the following methodology and planning principles:

- To meet the aspirations and strategic guidance shared by the Board of Directors at the Board Away Day held on 15-16 October 2024.
- To use the aspirations of the full Chamber team and feedback from the Business Planning Away Day held on 16 December 2024.
- To demonstrate a resilient financial model and continued investment to better serve our members.
- To continue to focus the organisation on sustainable membership growth at the heart of all our activities.
- To optimise all assets to generate the best return possible and to allow future continued investment to meet ever evolving member and customer needs.
- To respond to the changing economic and political landscape impacting businesses in the East Midlands and for the Chamber to maintain its position as the primary provider of business support across the three cities and counties.

**Membership Strategy 2025/28**  
The key objectives for 2025/28 are focused on further evolving the membership offer to ensure it continues to add real value and meets evolving business support needs. For the Chamber to remain an influential voice within the business community, it needs to continue to ensure its membership and customer base is representative of the towns, cities and counties that make up our diverse geography.

The primary objective for 2025/28 is focused on engaging existing members, optimising their use of Chamber services, and the overall growth of Chamber membership by increasing meaningful dialogue and adding value to non-members to stimulate membership interest.

This will be developed by enhancing our knowledge of members and their behaviours through technological developments implemented through the Chamber’s investment into digital transformation in the last two years.

An equally important objective for this three-year period is to continue to gradually grow the average size of Chamber members so that at least 56% of the membership base employs ten or more employees by 31 March 2028 (2,266 out of 4,133 businesses equating to 54.80% as at

1 January 2025).  
This will require targeted new member recruitment sales, stimulated by ever growing internal referrals from all parts of the business.

This drive towards larger businesses will lead to a more sustainable membership base, rather than a quantity-based membership recruitment objective. Smaller businesses will continue to be embraced as our offer will always be fully inclusive. The Chamber’s investment in web development for ease of access to services and improved user experience must now be justified through increased engagement. Autonomy, however, will not replace good customer service, it must enhance it.

Process and system changes via our continuous improvement workstream will continue to be made in 2025/26, including minimising administrative burdens and ensuring maximum resources are deployed to engage productively with members and customers. This includes strengthening our existing key account management as part of a structured engagement strategy to maximise customer retention.

The objectives detailed in the following goals are annual targets.



## Goal one

Provide businesses with the resources, knowledge and expertise to succeed and grow

- 1.1 800 businesses improving performance.
- 1.2 300 businesses adopting new technologies or launching new products to market.
- 1.3 £6m of private sector investment or publicly funded grants secured.
- 1.4 100 businesses engaged in specialist knowledge transfer activities.





## Goal Two

Strive for inclusive growth for the regional business community

- 2.1** Impact national and regional Government policy commitments to reflect the region's priorities through Invest 2035 – UK Modern Industrial Strategy and regional Local Growth Plans.
- 2.2** Influence the Devolution agenda by embedding the Chamber within local and regional political structures.
- 2.3** Engage 1,000 members to deliver a strong Business Insight offering to add demonstrable value to the regional economy.
- 2.4** Achieve public policy recognition with an increased share in public sector investment in the region up from 60% of the UK average.



## Goal Three

Support the International Trade ambitions of businesses and develop the East Midlands as a centre of trading excellence

- 3.1** Increase regional exporting and importing capability by creating £1.3bn economic value.
- 3.2** Increase the knowledge of traders by delivering 3,000 person hours of skills development.



## Goal Four

Be the exemplar and champion responsible business practices

- 4.1 80% of members to implement decarbonisation measures.
- 4.2 Engage 1,200 businesses to develop and increase CSR participation.
- 4.3 Grow Chamber networks by 25% each year.



## Goal Five

Support the development of the regional workforce to meet business needs

- 5.1 500 people into sustained employment.
- 5.2 200 jobs safeguarded or created.
- 5.3 Affecting curriculum change through provision of business insight to regional educators.



#### Strategic Partners



#### Patrons



## Our offices

### Chesterfield

Commerce House, Millennium Way, Dunston Road, Chesterfield, S41 8ND

### Derby

Enterprise Centre, Bridge Street, Derby, DE1 3LD

### Glossop

Unit 4, The Old Co-op Building, Railway Street, Glossop, SK13 7AG

### Mansfield

4 Sylvester Street, Mansfield NG18 5QS

### Nottingham

8 Experian Way, ng2 Business Park, Nottingham, NG2 1EP

### Leicester

Friars Mill, Bath Lane, Leicester, LE3 5BJ

### Leicester Food Park

High View Close, Lewisher Road, Leicester, LE4 9LJ

### The Brian Clough Centre

200-222 Cotton Lane, Derby, DE24 8GJ

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0333 320 0333 [info@emc-dnl.co.uk](mailto:info@emc-dnl.co.uk) [www.emc-dnl.co.uk](http://www.emc-dnl.co.uk)