



# UK-wide Supply Chain Roundtables

Summary Report 2021–2024



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# Foreword



**Mike Brown CBE MVO**  
Delivery Authority Board, Chair

The Palace of Westminster – an internationally recognised symbol of the UK, democracy, and part of a UNESCO world heritage site – needs essential restoration to preserve it for future generations. Work on the parliamentary estate is already boosting UK industries, and the Restoration and Renewal Programme will use UK materials wherever possible and create jobs and apprenticeships across the country, from engineering and high-tech design to traditional crafts such as carpentry and stonemasonry.

In 2019, the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act established the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Delivery Authority to deliver the necessary restoration work to the Palace of Westminster. The Act outlined “the need to ensure that opportunities to secure economic or other benefits of the Parliamentary building works are available in all areas of the United Kingdom.” Beyond this commitment, due to the broad range and complexity of the work required, the R&R Delivery Authority will need to stimulate the UK market and bring together one of the most eclectic mixes of specialist skill-sets ever assembled for a major heritage programme of this scale. It is therefore imperative that we pro-actively engage with, and build an understanding of, the industries in which the Programme will operate across the UK to ensure that we build the diverse, specialist supply chain that will be needed.

Since 2021, our team – comprising R&R Delivery Authority officials and parliamentary representatives – has partnered with the Chambers of Commerce from each of the UK nations to arrange 13 roundtable meetings. These meetings focused on how we can collaborate with organisations across the UK to ensure that the opportunities and benefits created by the Programme are accessible nationwide. Through this activity, we have engaged with over 230 representatives from small and medium enterprises (SMEs), training providers, local government, and traditional skills experts. We have been inspired by their stories and received invaluable constructive feedback, which will help shape our procurement and engagement strategies moving forward.

During our visits to the regions and nations, we also took the opportunity to explore heritage sites undergoing restoration, major infrastructure programmes, skills training providers, technology centres and other relevant sites. These visits allowed us to learn from the UK industry’s extensive experience in preserving historic buildings, and to discuss best practice and new technologies that could help the Delivery Authority restore the Palace of Westminster safely, cost-effectively, and to the highest standard. Insights from these visits will be shared with our project teams and integrated into our plans for the R&R Programme.

I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who attended and contributed to our roundtable discussions, to the exceptional teams at the Chambers of Commerce who organised them, and to those who hosted us during our site visits. It is crucial that this activity is not a one-time effort but rather the first step in the R&R Delivery Authority’s ongoing engagement with the UK’s regions and nations. Our goal is to break down any perceived barriers to specialist organisations working with us to restore parliament for the whole of the UK.

## Executive Summary

### Overview of the roundtable series

Since 2021, the R&R Delivery Authority has visited every English region and UK nation to host roundtable meetings aimed at ensuring the benefits and opportunities created by the Programme are accessible across the UK.

The Delivery Authority partnered with the British Chambers of Commerce for the roundtables in the English regions, the Scottish Chambers of Commerce for two meetings in Scotland, the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce for a roundtable in Belfast, Chambers Wales for South Wales, and the West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce for the meeting in North Wales. Across the 13 roundtable meetings, the Delivery Authority engaged with 238 representatives from local businesses, SMEs, training providers and local government.

### What we heard

- **Pride in participation:** Organisations of all sizes across the UK expressed that they would be proud to have the opportunity to work on the restoration of Parliament.
- **Challenges for SMEs:** Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) might be discouraged by complex and time-consuming processes. It is essential for the R&R Delivery Authority to find ways to simplify and demystify these processes to encourage broader participation.
- **Geographical barriers:** The location of the Palace of Westminster in London presents a potential challenge in creating a truly UK-wide supply chain. Businesses closer to the capital have an advantage when bidding for work unless the Delivery Authority can mitigate geographical barriers for those outside of London.
- **Regional impact:** The Delivery Authority must consider how the Programme can positively impact the regions and nations of the UK, ensuring that skills and resources are not drained from these areas.
- **Promoting traditional skills:** The Programme offers a significant opportunity to enhance and promote traditional skills industries. Success in this area will require collaboration with industry bodies and other relevant programmes.
- **Importance of communication:** Transparent and early communication will be crucial in allowing organisations across the UK to prepare for the R&R Programme.



**96% rated the event as 'useful' or 'very useful'**

### Feedback from participants

- Out of **238 participants** in the **13 roundtable meetings**, **143 completed feedback forms**. Of those who provided feedback, **96% rated the event as 'useful' or 'very useful'**.

The overall response to the Delivery Authority's roundtable series on making the opportunities and benefits of the R&R Programme accessible across the UK was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees from all nations and regions expressed a strong interest in participating in this historic programme, viewing it as a significant opportunity to enhance the heritage and construction industries. The extensive feedback and insights gained from these discussions will play a crucial role in shaping our future procurement and engagement strategies. These strategies will inform the development of the Programme Business Case and will be implemented with our Strategic Partners<sup>[1]</sup>, once they have been appointed, during phase two of the Programme.

<sup>[1]</sup> As the Delivery Authority moves towards the delivery phase of the R&R Programme (phase two), it wishes to work with experienced long-term Strategic Partners who share its vision to deliver the restoration and renewal works to the Palace of Westminster. The three strategic partners will be: a Design Services Partner to undertake design services; an Integrator to oversee, manage and integrate the programme; and a Construction Partner to support the development and completion of the design, and to procure, undertake, and manage the works.

# Context and objectives

## Objectives

- **Nationwide accessibility:** To build an understanding of the regional strengths and assess the current state of the heritage, construction and engineering industries, and other industries relevant to the R&R Programme.
- **Regional engagement:** To engage with SMEs, training providers, local government representatives, and skills experts throughout the UK in order to build an understanding of regional strengths and assess the current state of the heritage, construction, engineering, and other industries relevant to the R&R Programme.
- **Identifying challenges:** To gain insights into the challenges and constraints that the UK supply chain might face when considering participation in the R&R Programme.

## Programme context

- The Palace of Westminster is an internationally recognised symbol of the UK and democracy, and part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. Extensive, complex work is needed to restore the Palace. The Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act was passed in 2019 to establish the R&R Programme.
- There is much work being done on a daily basis to keep the building safe and running for its users; however, it is agreed by both Members of Parliament and the public that a greater programme of work is required to preserve the Palace of Westminster for future generations.
- Restoring and renewing the Palace will directly benefit the one million people who visit every year and the thousands who work here every day including MPs and Peers, by delivering a greatly improved building, with better accessibility, more reliable services and enhanced health and safety.
- All options represent a multi-billion-pound, multi-year investment, with no low-cost options. We already spend £1.45m a week to repair and maintain the Palace.
- The size and complexity of the Palace partly explains the costs of the work. It is enormous, covering 34 acres and with 1100 rooms. There are 65 different floor levels and 100+ staircases. The whole building shares the same water, power, heating, and sewage systems, many of which are 50+ years old and have reached the end of their lifespan. Hundreds of miles of pipes and cables need replacing, and interconnecting voids and ventilation shafts add to the complexity of removing services and managing asbestos.
- Additionally, accessibility for people with restricted mobility is poor throughout the Palace; there is only one lift that complies with modern safety standards and no fully-compliant, step-free entrances to the building.
- Work on the parliamentary estate is already boosting UK industries, and the R&R Programme will use UK materials wherever possible and create jobs and apprenticeships across the country, from engineering and high-tech design to traditional crafts such as carpentry and stonemasonry.



# Feedback from the roundtables

01

“Really good debate to help understand the local businesses and how they can support such projects. We need to find a better way to highlight the breadth of our local businesses.”

International infrastructure group representative in the West Midlands

02

“What we found the most interesting was the fact that the client intends to engage directly with skills companies which is very much welcomed; we also identified potential opportunities to use our existing skillset and look at transferring those skills to other trades that are required for the project with a view to growing our portfolio.”

Repair and restoration experts in the East Midlands

03

“A very exciting opportunity to celebrate the level of skills and craftsmanship hidden within small businesses.”

Conservation SME in the West Midlands

04

“Fascinating and worthwhile project. The discussion raised my awareness and confidence in the management of the project.”

Training provider in North Wales

05

“This is a project of significant national importance with potential to focus and to have significant national impact in a positive way.”

Representative of non-profit industry organisation in the Scottish Highlands

06

“It was refreshing to hear how the R&R Programme will be accessible to UK-wide suppliers.”

Energy equipment SME in the North East

07

“Brilliantly managed event which gave the Highlands an opportunity to showcase itself to a very prestigious project that could bring significant opportunity to the Highlands both in terms of commercial gain and tremendous profile of the skills sets and adaptability that we offer.”

Local council representative in the Scottish Highlands

08

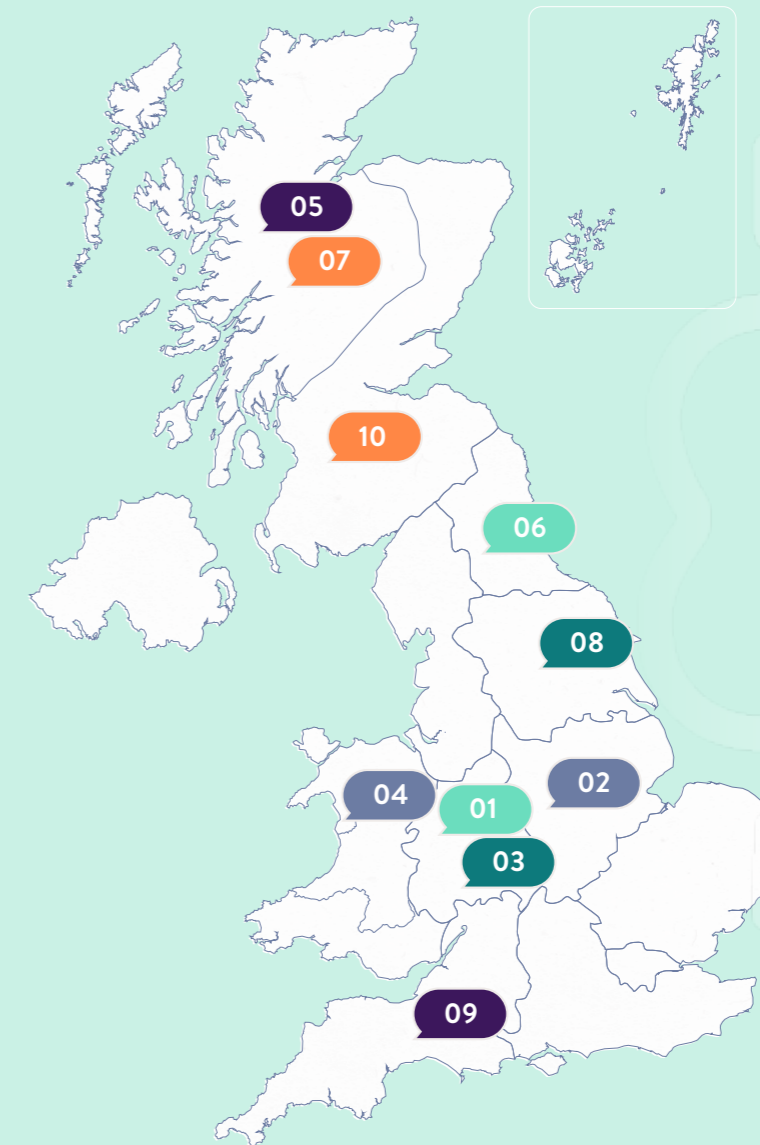
“This has educated me on something I had no idea about. Very interested to see how the upskilling and retraining comes through the system.”

Building and restoration company in Yorkshire and the Humber

09

“Key for me is how to make this project feel and be accessible to SMEs outside London, like ourselves. My only reservation is whether we feel we can't compete with larger tier 1 organisations.”

Property management SME in the South West



10

“Significant opportunity to stimulate demand for apprenticeships.”

Representative from national skills agency in Scottish Lowlands

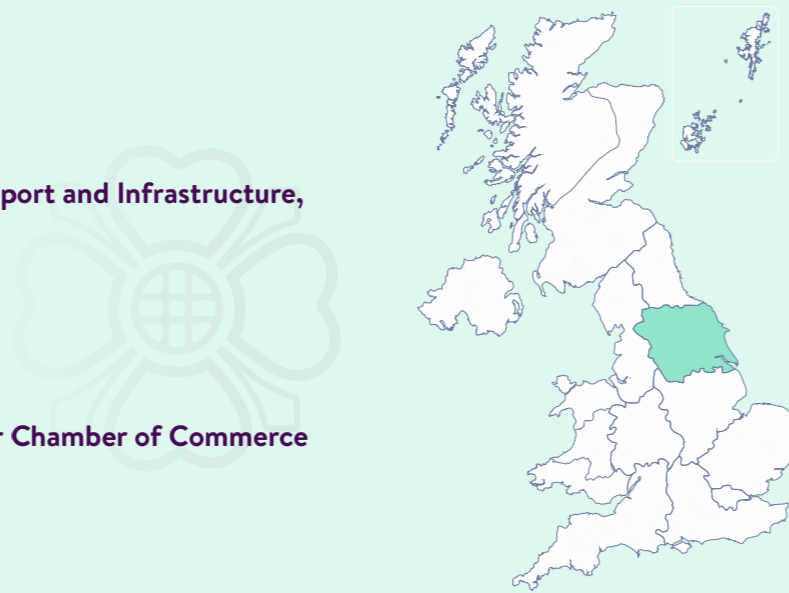
# Yorkshire and the Humber

Date  
**November 2021**

Location  
**National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure,  
Doncaster**

Number of attendees  
**16**

Chair  
**Dan Fell, Chief Executive, Doncaster Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

In November 2021, the R&R Delivery Authority partnered with the British Chambers of Commerce to host the first roundtable with local businesses, training providers and skills experts from across Yorkshire and the Humber. The meeting was chaired by the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce and hosted at the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure. The discussion focused on the challenges of working on a high-profile parliamentary programme and the need to engage people around careers and opportunities [SLB1] within the heritage industry.

## What we heard

- People would undoubtedly feel pride working on the Houses of Parliament due to its significance and history, however it would not be without its challenges such as complex governance and reputational risks.
- The complexity of the processes that companies would be required to work through to bid for work on the Parliamentary Estate is a concern, especially the need for a lengthy security check to receive information required for the bid. The Delivery Authority will need to guide some businesses through these processes to ensure they are accessible. Guidance and instructions should be laid out in plain English and made as simple as possible.
- Inspiring people of all ages, not just young people, into the heritage and construction industries is really important to help fill skills gaps. The Delivery Authority might have success appealing to older generations as long as the messaging is right. It is more about outlining viable career paths rather than the opportunity for a job working on the parliament building.
- There are issues around the availability of training for those who are interested in traditional skills, highlighted by the fact that at the time of the discussion, there were no heritage skills training facilities available to people in Doncaster.



### Doncaster Minster

While in Doncaster, the team visited Doncaster Minster to learn about the large-scale restoration projects that have taken place over the past decade, including the North Transept Restoration project.



### Advanced Transport and Infrastructure National College, Doncaster

Following the roundtable, the team met with Mayor of Doncaster Ros Jones CBE, at the National College for Advanced Technology and Infrastructure to discuss the skills and expertise that Doncaster and South Yorkshire has to offer.



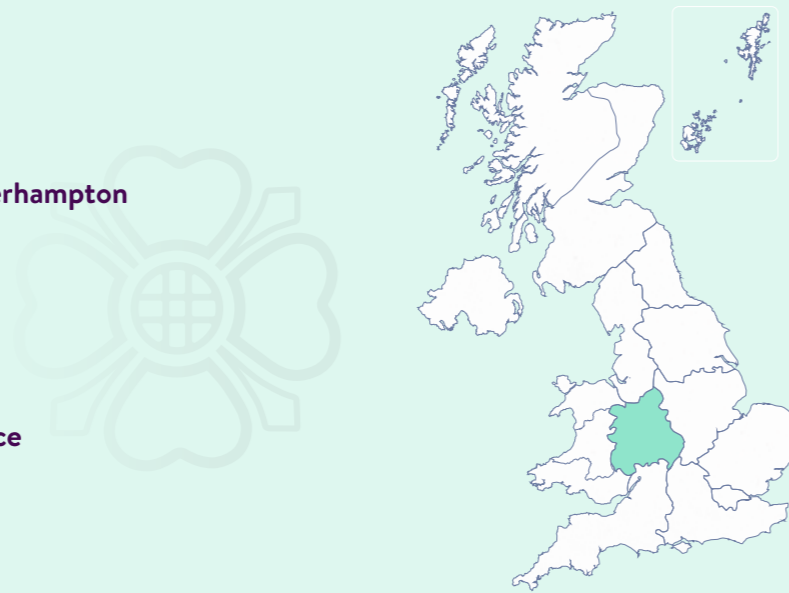
# West Midlands

Date  
**November 2021**

Location  
**University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton**

Number of attendees  
**23**

Chair  
**Corine Crane, Chief Executive,  
Black Country Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

A week after the first roundtable, the Delivery Authority team travelled to Wolverhampton to meet with 23 representatives from around the West Midlands for the second meeting of the series, chaired by the Black Country Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was held at the University of Wolverhampton. The discussion focused largely on how the Delivery Authority can best work with SMEs considering the scale of the R&R Programme.

## What we heard

- Small and medium enterprises often struggle to bid for complex tenders due to a lack of resource. Organisations have previously spent more time working through complex processes than actually delivering work on site.
- There is a risk that specialist, small organisations would not deem it worth bidding for work and would walk away. To avoid this happening, the Delivery Authority should demystify its processes by creating a guide or handbook.
- Organisations of all sizes should be credited and recognised for their part on the Programme.
- It is important to connect the procurement process and skills development. Organisations with a niche skillset are likely to need to grow their workforce to meet the demand needed for the scale of the R&R Programme. These organisations would not be able to invest in growing their workforce and training people in good time without early communication and a commitment of work, so early procurement was considered really important.
- Strengths of the West Midlands include people's 'can-do' attitude, and their drive and desire to get the job done. There was confidence that the area had the people, the businesses and skillset required to contribute to the success of the R&R Programme.



### University of Wolverhampton School of Architecture and the Built Environment

The Delivery Authority team visited the new School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the University of Wolverhampton following the roundtable meeting to talk about heritage and digital construction skills development.



### Black Country Living Museum

The team travelled to the Black Country Living Museum to learn about the £30m project to build a range of new attractions and a new schools facility, covering 26 historic buildings and structures.



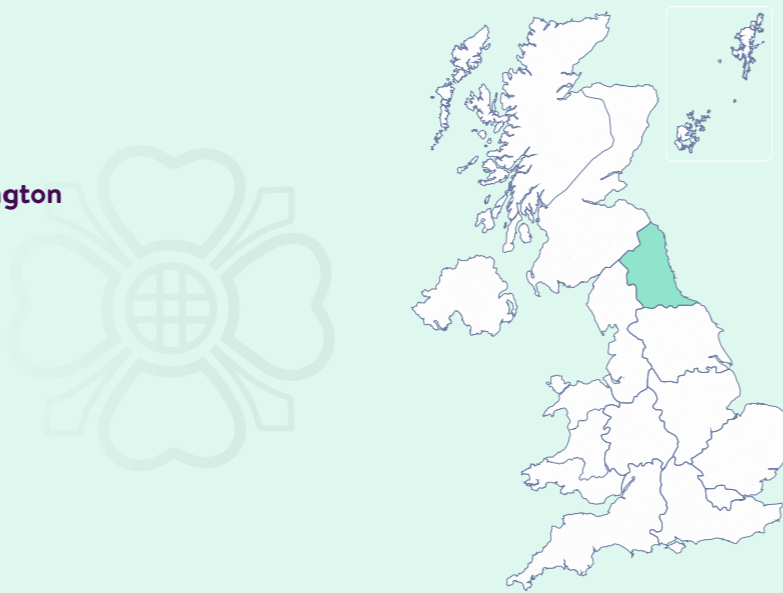
# North East

Date  
**January 2023**

Location  
**Teesside International Airport, Darlington**

Number of attendees  
**18**

Chair  
**John McCabe, Chief Executive,  
North East Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

Following changes to the governance structure of the R&R Programme that saw the sponsorship function move into Parliament<sup>[2]</sup>, the Delivery Authority resumed the UK-wide roundtable engagement activity in January 2023. The third roundtable in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce was hosted in Tees Valley, bringing together organisations and skills professionals from across the North East of England.

## What we heard

- One of the best social value outcomes from the R&R Programme would be to help young people to understand the importance of Parliament and democracy.
- The Delivery Authority must ensure that any larger suppliers they partner with do not simply revert to using their own existing networks to deliver the works and must ensure that opportunities are open to all.
- One of the major barriers to organisations in the North East considering work on the Palace of Westminster is geography and the cost of travel, leading to businesses in the North East not being able to compete with those physically closer to the building. The Delivery Authority should consider how it could break down the geographical barriers to organisations outside of London bidding for work. There have been other projects that have benefited from off-site working as it reduces the strain of on-site logistics and health and safety.
- Strengths of the North East of England include passion and work ethic, as well as the ability to collaborate. Other projects had benefited from businesses in the North East grouping together to deliver large pieces of work that individual businesses would not have been able to deliver.

<sup>[2]</sup> Until 1 January 2023, the Delivery Authority reported to Parliament via the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body (the Sponsor Body) which was established under the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019. On 1 January 2023, following direction from the two Houses in July 2022, the Sponsor Body was abolished, with the sponsor function being transferred into Parliament, as a parliamentary in-house Client Team in a new Joint Department of the two Houses.



### Durham Cathedral

Following the North East roundtable, the Delivery Authority team visited Durham Cathedral. Mary Kelly Foy MP for Durham joined the team on the tour where the group learnt about the recent work to restore the Central Tower and the conservation of the North Door.



### Florence Jackson, Quality Practitioner Apprentice

Florence (above) attended the North East roundtable meeting to talk to attendees about the experience she has gained working as a Quality Practitioner Apprentice on the R&R Programme. Florence led the implementation of the Integrated Management System and Process Manager across the R&R Delivery Authority and has since taken a role as a Project Officer in the Programme's Client Team.



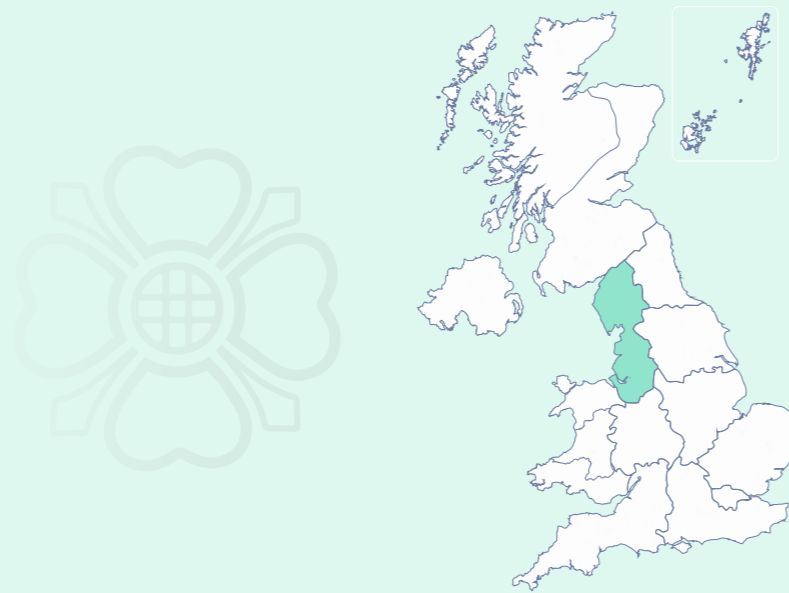
# North West

Date  
**February 2023**

Location  
**Museum of Liverpool, Liverpool**

Number of attendees  
**16**

Chair  
**Paul Cherpeau, Chief Executive,  
Liverpool Chamber of Commerce**

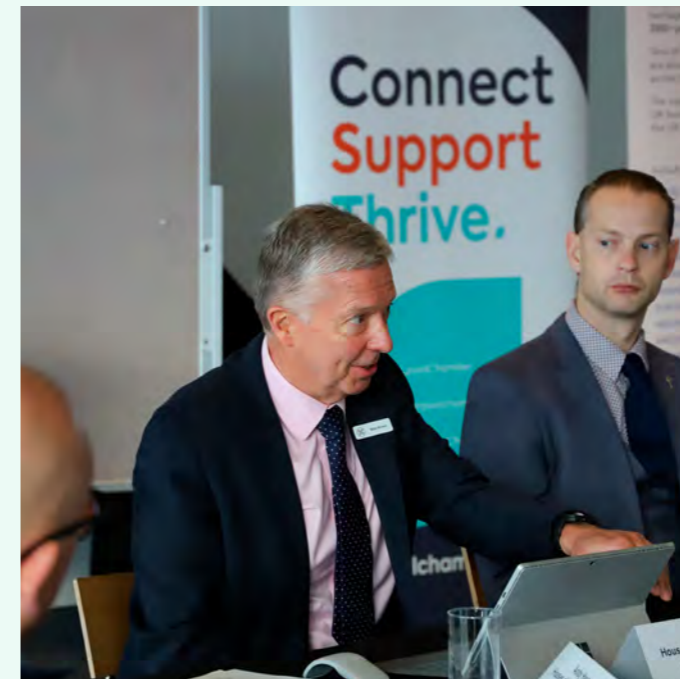


## Overview

Seen by the North West region as a ‘hub of heritage restoration’, the City of Liverpool played host to the fourth roundtable meeting hosted by the Delivery Authority in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce. Businesses, training providers and local government officials gathered from across the North West to join the discussion which was organised and chaired by team at the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

## What we heard

- The importance of early and transparent communication is essential to working with organisations around the UK.
- The R&R Programme will offer exciting opportunities; however, many of the attendees would not have been aware of the Programme and the work required had they not been at the roundtable. It is therefore essential that the Delivery Authority continues to communicate with the supply chain to raise awareness.
- The Delivery Authority should outline any minimum requirements for bidding for work as early as possible to allow organisations sufficient time to prepare to tender for the work when it comes to the procurement.
- It is important for the Delivery Authority to map out which specific skillsets will be needed to deliver the R&R Programme and when these will be required. This will allow the industry to focus its efforts on training people as there would be more certainty that the trades will be needed in the near future.
- Geography is a potential barrier to opportunities being made available in the North West, with the building being physically located in London. It is important that the Delivery Authority take steps to level the playing field in some way for businesses that are further away from London if they are going to be engaged with the Programme.



## Virtual Engineering Centre

While in the North West, the Delivery Authority team visited the University of Liverpool’s Virtual Engineering Centre to better understand how new innovative technologies might support delivery of the R&R Programme.



## St George’s Hall

The team also visited St George’s Hall in Liverpool to hear about the restoration work completed to the iconic building, which includes the Minton tiled floor and the restoration of the ceiling.



## Kirsty Keegan, Heritage Collections Surveys Associate Project Manager Apprentice

Kirsty (pictured above) talked to attendees at the North West roundtable about her experience starting an apprenticeship on the R&R Programme after 18 years in another career. Having initially not seen an industry change as a viable option, the apprenticeship has allowed Kirsty to change her career path to something more aligned to her passion for art and history while also gaining a valuable qualification.

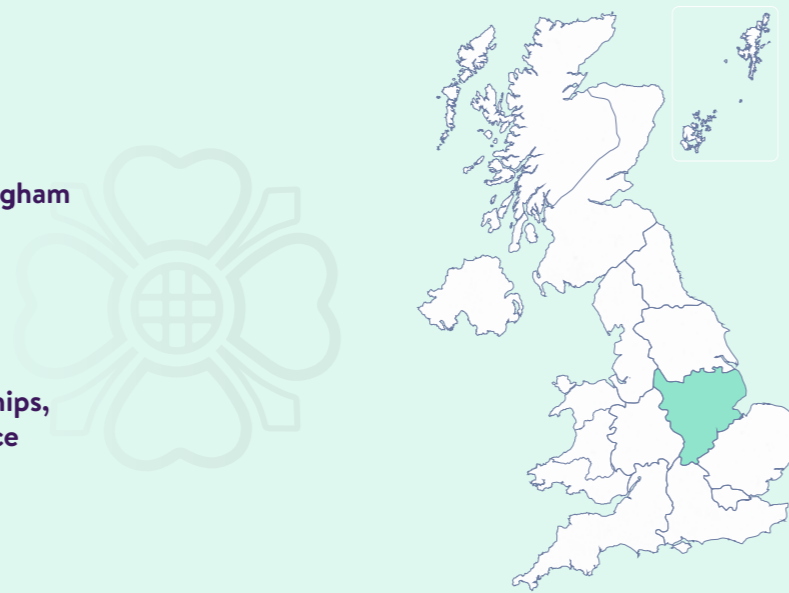
# East Midlands

Date  
**February 2023**

Location  
**Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham**

Number of attendees  
**14**

Chair  
**David Pearson, Director of Partnerships,  
East Midlands Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

In February 2023, the team from the Delivery Authority travelled to Nottingham Trent University to host a roundtable meeting in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce. Organised and chaired by the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, 14 representatives from local businesses, training providers and skills experts discussed the need for collaboration within the industry to help tackle the skills gap, and how to ensure that local businesses do not suffer because of the R&R Programme.

## What we heard

- There is a risk that the R&R Programme will attract skilled professionals away from the other regions of the UK, leaving local businesses without the resource required to achieve required targets in areas such as sustainability.
- The Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) do not currently consider large, national infrastructure projects, and there is a need for a skills requirements timeline for the wider industry to help manage this risk.
- The Delivery Authority should work in partnership with industry organisations who have a broad understanding of upcoming industry needs, and training providers such as colleges, to ensure that the required skills will be available.
- There are already skills shortages around the UK; there is a generation of professionals – such as bricklayers – leaving the industry without the skills being passed onto the younger generation.
- There is a lot that is needs to be done to inspire young people into careers in construction and heritage trades, and the Delivery Authority should consider upskilling the existing workforce as well as training new people entering the industry.



- There are many inspiring stories shared of young people who, after struggling with conventional education paths, found success in the construction and heritage industries by embracing craft skills and careers. These examples highlight how alternative routes can lead to thriving, fulfilling careers.
- The education system needs to do more to promote the value of learning hands-on skills. Linking with this, the Programme needs to promote the wide variety of jobs opportunities that will be available with the message that anyone can work on the R&R Programme.



### Chatsworth House

While in the East Midlands, the Delivery Authority team also visited Chatsworth House to learn lessons from the 10-year restoration project that was completed in 2018 at a cost of £32m.



### Nottingham Cathedral – Restoring Pugin

The Nottingham Trent University team showed the Delivery Authority team around Pugin's Nottingham Cathedral where specialist paint conservators have recently completed 5 months of paint trials to uncover a rare survival of original Victorian Gothic church decoration.



### Eleanor Humphries, Business Support Apprentice

Eleanor (pictured above) travelled to Nottingham to talk to attendees at the East Midlands roundtable about her apprenticeship role on the R&R Programme. Eleanor began her apprenticeship nine months into her time on the R&R Programme to enhance her skillset and continue her professional development.

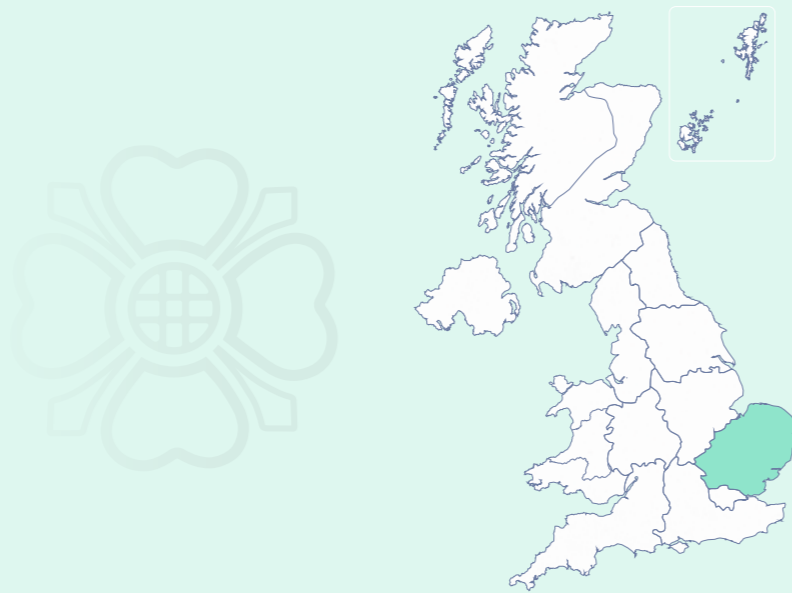
# East of England

Date  
**March 2023**

Location  
**King's Lynn Town Hall, King's Lynn**

Number of attendees  
**15**

Chair  
**Nova Fairbank, Chief Executive,  
 Norfolk Chambers of Commerce**



## Overview

In March 2023, the Delivery Authority travelled to the East of England to host a roundtable discussion in King's Lynn in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce. The historic King's Lynn Town Hall played host to industry representatives and SMEs from across the East of England.

## What we heard

- Despite King's Lynn being a historic medieval port, the East of England does not currently have enough heritage skills to preserve the number of heritage buildings in the region. The Delivery Authority will need to consider how it will benefit the region rather than drain resource that is essential to restoring local heritage assets.
- The R&R Programme should be considered an opportunity to inspire people to upskill in heritage and construction trades.
- There are not enough people teaching heritage and conservation skills which is leading to a skills gap.
- If the Delivery Authority can work to reignite training schemes and leave a skills legacy, this will benefit the region in the long term. To be successful in this, it is important to get into colleges and universities and to work with training providers to highlight the career opportunities the heritage and conservation industries offer.
- Geography and logistics would be a potential barrier to working on the R&R Programme as the building is in London. This would be particularly challenging for apprentices due to the cost of travel being expensive. The Delivery Authority would need to consider what costs it could cover for travel and logistics.
- The R&R Programme is a great opportunity to push the boundaries in sustainability on heritage buildings. If the Programme can achieve its net zero ambitions, as set out in its social value strategy, it can lead the way and show that heritage and sustainability ambitions can go hand-in-hand.



### King's Lynn Town Hall

Following the roundtable meeting at King's Lynn Town Hall, the DA team were given a tour of the venue where they heard about the conservation work that was completed on the façade of the historic building in 2018.



### Clifton House

While in King's Lynn, the team also met with Delivery Authority Board Member Simon Thurley CBE at Clifton House, a Grade I listed medieval merchant's house, to hear about the restoration work completed within the house and tower.



### Sizewell B

Before the roundtable in King's Lynn, the Delivery Authority team visited Sizewell B to discuss all elements of running a major programme, from health and safety to resourcing challenges.

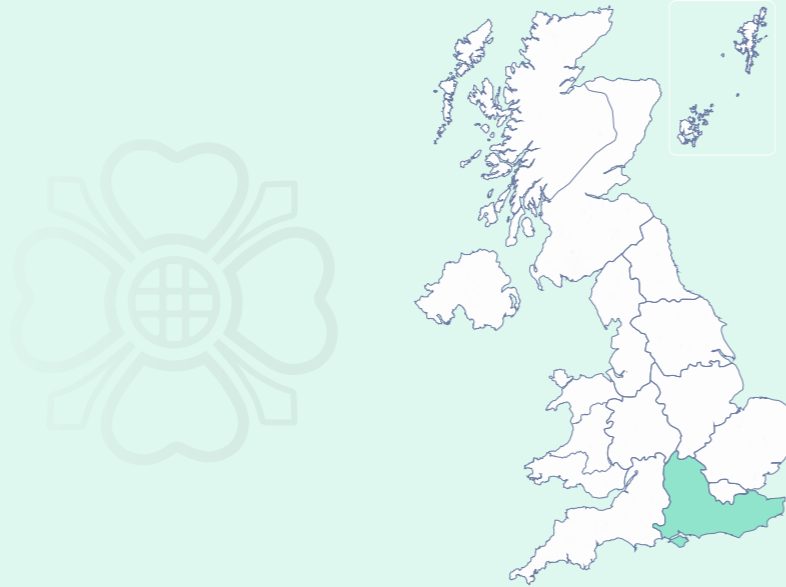
# South East

Date  
**April 2023**

Location  
**Ashford Business Point, Ashford**

Number of attendees  
**11**

Chair  
**Richard Lavendar, President,  
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

In April 2023, in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce, the Delivery Authority hosted a roundtable meeting in Ashford, Kent to meet with local businesses, training providers and skills experts from the South East of England. Chaired by the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, the discussion focused largely on the challenges of tackling the skills gaps within the heritage and construction industry, and the need for early contractor engagement.

## What we heard

- Kent has a high density of both listed, timber-frame building and churches that require specialist skills to preserve. To ensure that these buildings are preserved for future generations, there needs to be a lot more training of heritage skills and awareness, even if this is linked into other courses. Those working on these buildings need to be aware of the context in which they are operating. This will be the same on the Palace of Westminster.
- Regarding the skills gaps, the big issue is trying to recruit teachers for the industry. The package is not appealing enough to attract skilled workers into teaching, and so people often retire before their skillset is passed on. Colleges are already working with industry organisations to address this.
- The Delivery Authority could help training providers and industry organisations tackle skills gaps by working to change the perception of construction and hands-on skills as a second-choice, non-academic career, and showing people sustained career pathways. This could involve helping develop a timeline around the need for jobs and skills within the construction and heritage sectors over the next 30 years.
- Regarding procurement, early contractor engagement is critical to successfully working with organisations of all sizes around the UK. Especially with the amount of unknown and the expected challenges of working in a 150-year-old building, those working on the R&R Programme need to adopt a collaborative approach to decision making which will reduce risks around delays and added cost.



### Maison Dieu (Dover Town Hall)

Following the Roundtable meeting in the South East of England, the Delivery Authority team visited Dover Town Hall to learn about the £4.27m project to restore the Grade I listed Maison Dieu.



### The Shrine of St Augustine and the National Pugin Archive Centre

The Delivery Authority team also visited the Shrine of St Augustine and the National Pugin Archive Centre in Ramsgate where they were joined by Craig Mackinlay, MP for South Thanet between 2015 and 2024.

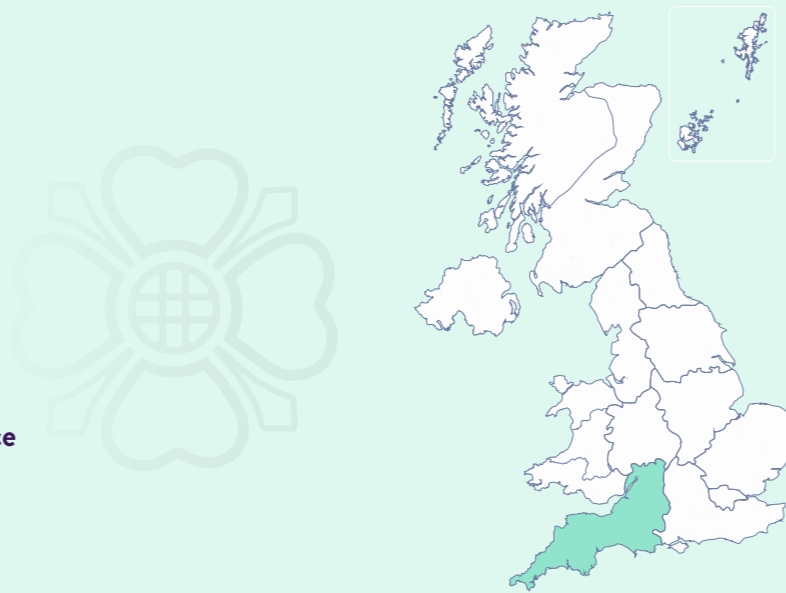
# South West

Date  
June 2023

Location  
Bristol Soapworks, Bristol

Number of attendees  
15

Chair  
Phil Smith, Managing Director,  
Business West Chamber of Commerce



## Overview

The final roundtable hosted in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce was delivered in Bristol in the South West of England. The Business West Chamber of Commerce invited local businesses, training providers and skills experts to join the discussion in summer 2023. The meeting was held at the Bristol Soapworks, a manufacturing hub for the region for hundreds of years that is now being renovated to be a new district with homes, workspace and cultural space, all set around a new public square including biodiverse green spaces.

## What we heard

- The size and scale of the R&R Programme is set up for larger organisations. The Delivery Authority should market the Programme as open to SMEs around the UK by packaging up the works into smaller projects or phases, with each package outlining the specific specialist skills required to complete the works as early as possible. This would allow SMEs to identify where they might be able to work on the Programme.
- The Delivery Authority must remain accountable to its supply chain when working with Tier 1 contractors, especially around payment terms. Often, SMEs and specialist contractors with limited resources would not be able to wait over 60 days to be paid for work that they have completed. If this would not be guaranteed, SMEs will likely not want to engage with the Programme and will look for work elsewhere.
- The Delivery Authority should be bold with its obligations and targets around social value that would benefit the industry and local areas. Organisations would be willing to work towards ambitious targets that had a tangible benefit. It is important that social value commitments were not all generic and can be tailored to suit the supplier.
- Training providers are withdrawing courses because there is not the industry to justify putting on the training and therefore heritage and construction skills are not being developed. The South West is trying to tackle this through 'Building Families', such as the 'Building Bristol' network which supports all major capital developments to create inclusive learning and career opportunities for local people of all ages. The Programme would benefit from engaging with these local networks and understanding where they would be able to support the Programme in skills development.



### Bristol Beacon

While in the South West of England the Delivery Authority team were joined by Thangam Debbonaire – MP for Bristol West between 2015 and 2024 – at the Bristol Beacon to learn about the venue's £132m refurbishment.



### Royal West of England Academy

The Delivery Authority team also visited the RWA in Bristol to learn about the recently completed £4.2m refurbishment of the Grade II listed building.



### Gloucester Cathedral

Following the roundtable the Delivery Authority team also met with the team responsible for the Cloister Project at Gloucester Cathedral.



### Linda Esztergalyos, Internal Audit Apprentice

Linda (pictured above) joined the South West Roundtable meeting in Bristol to talk about her experience as an Internal Audit Apprentice working on the R&R Programme. Linda took on the apprenticeship to further develop her skillset and to open up the opportunity to attend courses addressing specific areas relevant to her work.

# Scottish Highlands

Date  
July 2023

Location  
Inverness Town Hall, Inverness

Number of attendees  
29

Chair  
Colin Marr, Chief Executive,  
Inverness Chamber of Commerce



## Overview

In July 2023, businesses, training providers and industry professionals from across the Scottish Highlands travelled to Inverness for the first of two roundtables hosted in Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce. Held at the Victorian, Grade A listed Inverness Town House - the location for the first cabinet meeting ever held outside of London in 1921 – the discussion was chaired by the Inverness Chamber of Commerce. Due to transport issues, the Delivery Authority team had to join the meeting virtually, however thanks to the work of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and Inverness Chamber of Commerce, the meeting went ahead as planned.

## What we heard

- Many organisations would walk away from the opportunity to work on the Programme due to the added cost and complexity of needing to travel to London. It is therefore essential that the Delivery Authority considers how it can remove geographical barriers through things such as off-site working or supporting with some travel costs.
- The Delivery Authority should support people through the tender process to ensure it is as easy as possible.
- Early procurement is fundamental to success, with the design stage being where you set yourself up for success or failure. Listening to experts in the design stage is really important, especially in the heritage sector where there are a lot of unknowns.
- With a tiered programme structure, top level contractors often pass requirements down the chain to small organisations that are less likely to be able to meet them.
- Payment in a tiered structure is problematic for small organisations. Large companies often pay within 90 days, which for an organisation with one or two people is unsustainable.
- There is a need to push traditional skills in Scotland, however this shouldn't be limited to young people and there should be a focus on upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce. Funding and finding suitable teachers are two of the main issues in skills development in the heritage industry. The R&R Programme could be a catalyst for a resurgence in traditional skills development.



### Inverness Castle

After rearranging travel plans, the Delivery Authority team visited Inverness Castle in September 2023 to learn about the £30m project to transform the Castle into a visitor attraction.



### Eden Court

The team also visited Eden Court to learn about the refurbishment project, completed in 2007, that improved the heating and ventilation systems and increased accessibility in the Theatre.



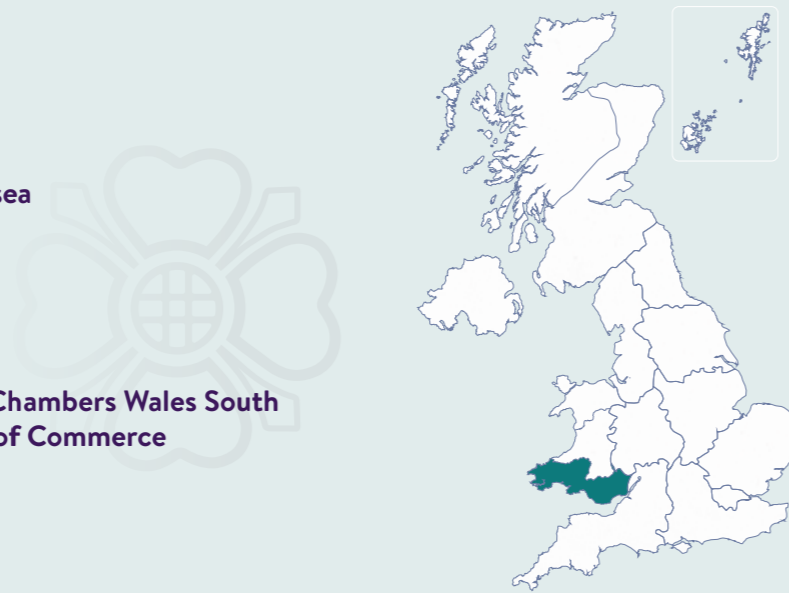
# South Wales

Date  
**September 2023**

Location  
**National Waterfront Museum, Swansea**

Number of attendees  
**17**

Chair  
**Paul Butterworth, Chief Executive, Chambers Wales South East, South West and Mid Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

In September 2023 the Delivery Authority travelled to the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea to meet with local businesses, training providers and industry skills experts from across South Wales for the next roundtable meeting, organised and chaired by Chambers Wales.

## What we heard

- It is important to demystify complicated procurement processes and ensure that they are accessible for small businesses who might not have the resource to dedicate time to lengthy requirements.
- There may be some small, specialist businesses who would benefit from support through these processes, otherwise there is a risk that the Delivery Authority will miss out on their expertise. The Delivery Authority should create a pack to help guide businesses through its various processes and set out early what would be required.
- Any retentions or performance bonds that are being considered should be removed to ensure fair competition throughout the lifecycle of the R&R Programme.
- The heritage construction industry in Wales is dominated by SMEs, and therefore the Programme needs to harness some of the micro-organisations and maintain a line of sight on their whole supply chain.
- It is important to allow the specialists to make decisions and offer innovative solutions without the client putting barriers in place.
- There is a cross-border challenge when it comes to funding apprenticeships. For those based in Wales, they would want to fund apprentices who then stay and benefit the local area. As there is no set UK-wide standard for funding apprenticeships, the Delivery Authority would need to consider how it can work cross-border and create apprenticeships in the different regions and nations of the UK.



### Swansea Palace Theatre

Following the roundtable in Swansea, the Delivery Authority team met with Swansea City Council's Regeneration team to hear about their work to save and transform one of Swansea's most historic buildings.



### Volunteering at the Lost Peatlands Project

Before leaving South Wales, the team spent the morning planting sphagnum moss and removing invasive plants at the Lost Peatlands Project in Neath Port Talbot.

# Scottish Lowlands

Date  
September 2023

Location  
CMS Glasgow, Glasgow

Number of attendees  
22

Chair  
Charandeep Singh BEM, Deputy Chief Executive,  
Scottish Chambers of Commerce



## Overview

In September 2023 the Delivery Authority team visited Glasgow in the Scottish Lowlands for the second roundtable meeting in partnership with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce. The discussion covered challenges around filling growing skills gaps and how the Delivery Authority can create a level playing field when it comes to procurement.

## What we heard

- There is an aging workforce which is not very diverse, with construction and traditional skills being heavily male dominated. The R&R Programme is a great opportunity to help change this as a high-profile major programme. To be successful in this, the Programme should start engaging with those currently in schools as soon as possible, as many of them could make up the workforce for the works.
- The Delivery Authority should collaborate with industry bodies and training providers to fill skills gaps through conversion courses or heritage awareness courses. These would help people adapt their skillset to enable them to work on the Programme by upskilling rather than retraining in a whole new discipline.
- Planning ahead is crucial, and the Delivery Authority should conduct a skills gap review to map out the Programme and industry needs over the lifespan of the Programme.
- Geography and travel will be an issue, as the cost of travelling to, and staying in, London is unaffordable for many small businesses.
- If the Delivery Authority wishes to source materials from around the UK it needs to consider the best and most sustainable way to do so. Transporting materials and goods from one side of the country to another is difficult logistically and would lead to a large carbon footprint.
- Direct employment for selected resource requirements is a good way to maintain relationships with small, specialist organisations.



### Glasgow School of Art

Following the roundtable meeting in Glasgow, the Delivery Authority team visited Glasgow School of Art to hear about the project to rebuild the Mackintosh Building following a fire in 2018 as it neared the end of a £35 million restoration project following a previous fire in May 2014.



### Scottish Parliament

While in the Scottish Lowlands, the DA team met with the Scottish Parliament's maintenance and facilities team to discuss the management and running of the parliamentary building and adapting to changing standards and new technologies.



### Engine Shed, Stirling

The Delivery Authority team met with Historic Environment Scotland at the Engine Shed in Stirling to discuss skills development and how the R&R Programme can create accessible opportunities in the nation.



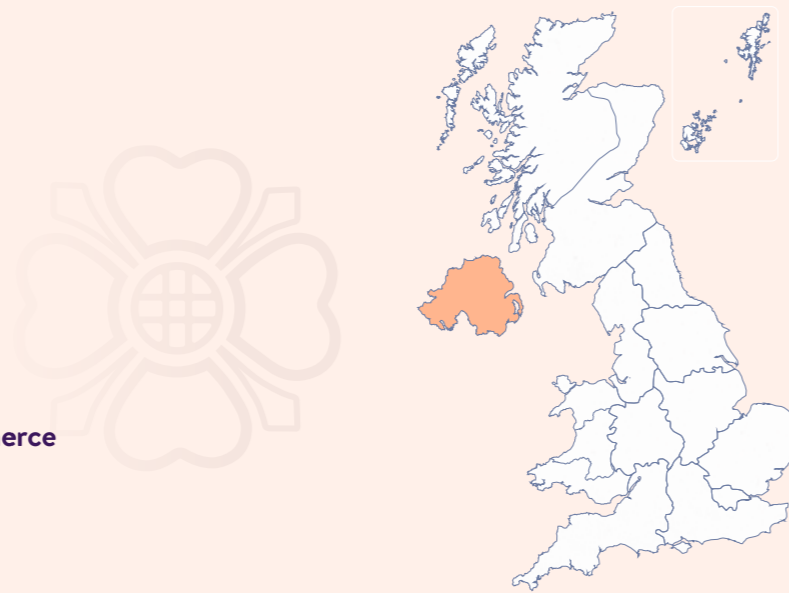
# Northern Ireland

Date  
**November 2023**

Location  
**Custom House, Belfast**

Number of attendees  
**27**

Chair  
**Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive,  
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

In November 2023, the Delivery Authority partnered with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce to meet with local businesses, training providers and skills industry experts for a roundtable event at Custom House in Belfast. The venue sits in the centre of Belfast and was subject to a £14m refurbishment and modernisation programme in recent years.

## What we heard

- Procurement processes can be complicated and time consuming, and the Delivery Authority should put together a guide on how to work through the processes.
- The opportunities created by the R&R Programme need to offer the supply chain value-for-money. The more resource required to bid for work, the less this would be considered the case.
- The Delivery Authority needs to maintain a line-of-sight to the smaller, specialist organisations that will make up its supply chain.
- There is a number of examples of when organisations in Northern Ireland have successfully worked on projects in London. In many cases, prefabrication of equipment has been done in Northern Ireland and transported across the London. There are safety benefits to this as well as reducing the burden to on-site logistics.
- One of the best ways to engage with young people and encourage them into the heritage and construction industries is through digital construction techniques, which can help connect traditional skills with modern technology.

### The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society

We had a site visit to one of their projects at Riddel's Warehouse and a presentation on their Heritage Angels Awards scheme which is run annually in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This inspiring initiative really sparks the public imagination and brings in a lot of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



### Hillsborough Castle

The team also visited Hillsborough Castle to learn about the ambitious programme of capital projects to conserve and re-present the heritage of the Castle delivered by Historic Royal Palaces.



### Titanic Museum

While in Belfast, the team also met with Judith Owens, Chief Executive of the Titanic Museum, to hear about the building and opening of the visitor attraction in 2017 and how it has continued to adapt to modern standards.



### County Down for the Conservation Depot

The Delivery Authority team met with the Northern Ireland Executive Department for Communities at the County Down Conservation Depot to learn about the heritage skills used to preserve state care monuments in Northern Ireland.



### Muhammadou Ndure, Digital Engineering Technician Apprentice

Muhammadou (pictured above) attended the Northern Ireland roundtable to talk about his experience as a Digital Engineering Technician Apprentice within the R&R Programme's Digital Design Team. Muhammadou has been in the role for over two years having joined after finishing his A-Levels.

# North Wales

Date  
**February 2024**

Location  
**Village Hotel St David's, Deeside**

Number of attendees  
**15**

Chair  
**Sarah Bailey, Chief Executive,  
West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce**



## Overview

In February 2024, the Delivery Authority hosted its final roundtable meeting of the series in partnership in North Wales with the West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce. The meeting brought together local businesses, training providers and skills and industry experts from West Cheshire in England and North Wales.

## What we heard

- There are significant challenges around working and developing skills cross-border as all nations in the UK have different set ups and funding models for apprenticeships. The way around this could be to work with industry organisations who can provide funding for skills development regardless of the nation. Through this route, there is funding available for heritage employers.
- The Delivery Authority needs to play a role in kickstarting skills development and training in areas in which it would be reliant as there are many shortages. For example, at the time of the discussion there were no stonemasonry apprenticeships in Wales.
- The Delivery Authority should work with small businesses on social value and tailor these in its contracts and through the procurement set up to ensure they are achievable. There is a risk that some social value requirements can deter SMEs from bidding for work if they are deemed unattainable, and these requirements cannot be the same for all elements of the work.
- If the Delivery Authority were to create or contribute towards an engaging educational resource to encourage school children into STEM subjects or into the heritage industry, this would be a really positive legacy piece for the Programme.
- It is important that the Delivery Authority continues to build a presence in the different areas of the UK. While the initial roundtable discussions are a really positive first step, the engagement must be consistent, transparent and sustained to convince local businesses in the regions and nations of the UK that the R&R Programme is accessible to organisations across the UK.



### Caernarfon Castle

The team also travelled to Caernarfon to meet with the team responsible for the King's Gate project, a £5m project that has improved accessibility around the Castle and allowed visitors to access areas of the medieval gatehouse for the first time in centuries.



### Gwrych Castle

Following the roundtable meeting, the Delivery Authority team travelled to Gwrych Castle in Conwy County Borough to learn about the ongoing restoration work to save and reopen the Grade I listed building.



## Next steps

The wide-ranging feedback received from the 13 events has offered a number of tangible actions for the Delivery Authority to consider which will help shape procurement and engagement strategies as the Programme develops its Programme Business Case. The lessons learnt from the discussions will be put into practice in conjunction with the Delivery Authority's new strategic partners once they have been appointed for phase two of the Programme.

Throughout the discussions, attendees highlighted the importance of supporting and guiding SMEs through potentially complex procurement processes which are necessary for any organisation working on the Parliamentary estate to work through as they bid for work. The Delivery Authority and its future strategic partners will consider how best to work with SMEs to demystify these processes, ensuring they are as simple and accessible as possible for the Programme's future supply chain.

One of the main barriers to small businesses around the UK bidding for work on the Programme was the physical location of the building, with the cost of travel and accommodation in London increasing the overall cost for organisations to deliver work the further away they physically are from the building. To mitigate this, the Delivery Authority will need to consider how it can help reduce geographical barriers through initiatives such as off-site working where appropriate.

In 2023, the Delivery Authority published its approach to delivering benefits across the UK, outlining the Programme's ambition to inspire careers, develop skills and create jobs nationwide. The discussions at the round tables revealed that while the necessary skills are present across the UK, they may not be available in the quantities required. There are significant skills gaps and concerns about resources being drawn away from the regions as a result of the R&R Programme.

To address this, the Delivery Authority and its partners will develop a labour demand forecast as they refine their plans. They will also collaborate with industry organisations and training providers to promote career opportunities in traditional crafts and industries, aligning with the Programme's social value objectives.

Many attendees emphasised the importance of ongoing communication and engagement to keep businesses and industry stakeholders informed about the Programme's progress and to ensure that the market is prepared when opportunities arise. The Delivery Authority is currently focused on procuring Strategic Partners and outlining the opportunity to become a first-tier supplier. During this period, the Delivery Authority will maintain open communication with the supply chain and industry stakeholders, providing updates on the R&R website and social media platforms as plans evolve over the coming years.

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<https://rrparliament.app.jaggaer.com/web/login.html>

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## Appendix

### Partner organisations for roundtables in the England

#### British Chambers of Commerce

- Doncaster Chamber of Commerce
- Black Country Chamber of Commerce
- North East Chamber of Commerce
- Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
- East Midlands Chamber of Commerce
- Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Business West Chamber of Commerce

### Partner organisations for roundtables in Scotland

#### Scottish Chambers of Commerce

- Inverness Chamber of Commerce

### Partner organisations for roundtables in Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce

### Partner organisations for roundtables in Wales

- Chambers Wales South East, South West and Mid
- West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber of Commerce

### Attendees from the Houses of Parliament Restoration and Renewal Programme

- Mike Brown, Chair of the Delivery Authority Board
- Andy Haynes, Commercial Director, R&R Delivery Authority
- David Jones, Skills and Apprenticeships Manager, R&R Delivery Authority
- Michael Slack, Knowledge Manager, R&R Delivery Authority
- Justine Cullen, External Engagement Manager, Parliament R&R Client Team
- Scott Young, Head of Skills, Employment and Education, R&R Delivery Authority
- Clare Lovett, Stakeholder Engagement Lead, R&R Delivery Authority
- Ying Seow, Senior Sustainability Manager, R&R Delivery Authority
- Nick Kapoutzis, Head of Organisational Development and Learning, R&R Delivery Authority
- Florence Jackson, Quality Practitioner Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Kirsty Keegan, Project Manager Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Eleanor Humphreys, Business Support Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Kieron Moore, Finance Assistant Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Ngozi Ezeh, Office Assistant Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Linda Esztergalyos, Internal Audit Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Aaron Goadby, HR Assistant Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Rishi Modha, Management Accountant Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Muhammadou Ndure, Digital Engineering Technician Apprentice, R&R Delivery Authority
- Diane Abrams, Archaeology Lead, R&R Delivery Authority
- Patsy Richards, Managing Director, Parliament R&R Client Team



## Further information

To find out more about our work,  
you can contact us in a number of ways:

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[www.restorationandrenewal.uk](http://www.restorationandrenewal.uk)

Email us at: [restorationandrenewal@r-r.org.uk](mailto:restorationandrenewal@r-r.org.uk)

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