

Press release: Industrial Strategy on the agenda at latest Business Advisory Group

Today's session is the latest in a series of meetings that aim to provide a mechanism for businesses to engage with UK Government on a range of strategic economic issues and to provide UK Government with high level advice on critical business and economic issues facing Northern Ireland.

This afternoon's meeting was an opportunity for Minister Hopkins to encourage discussion on areas of particular resonance to Northern Ireland in relation to pillars one and four of the Industrial Strategy – investing in science, research and innovation and supporting businesses to start and grow – and to encourage the business groups present to respond to the consultation. It also allowed the minister to provide assurance that the Government is committed to political stability and urge members to use their influence to encourage political parties to deliver a functioning and effective Executive post-election.

Speaking after the meeting, Kris Hopkins MP said:

The Industrial Strategy is a vital part of this Government's plan to drive growth across the whole United Kingdom and create more high skilled, high paid jobs and opportunities. New Sector Deals and investment in research and development will support the industries of the future where the UK – and Northern Ireland in particular – has the potential to lead the world.

Both the Secretary of State and I will continue to explore how to maximise the positive impact that this Strategy can have in Northern Ireland, particularly in exploring Sector Deals, removing barriers to innovation and growth and developing new trade and investment deals to increase exports.

Today's session also provided an opportunity to stress the need for political stability as a fundamental basis for industrial success. Securing strong, stable devolved institutions in Northern Ireland that will provide leadership, support innovation and boost skills will be vital to delivering on Northern Ireland's potential as a place to invest and do business as we continue to build an economy that works for everyone.

Today's meeting was attended by the following:

John Cunningham, Camlin Group
Peter Cunningham, Camlin Group
Linda Brown, Institute of Directors
Ian Sheppard, Institute of Directors/Bank of Ireland
Wilfred Mitchell, Federation of Small Businesses
Roger Pollen, Federation of Small Businesses
John Friel, Federation of Small Businesses
Angela McGowan, Confederation of British Industry
Nick Coburn, Northern Ireland Chamber
Chris Morrow, Northern Ireland Chamber
Professor Paddy Johnston, QUB Vice-Chancellor
Professor Paddy Nixon, UU Vice-Chancellor
Liam Nagle, Norbrook
Nick Wheelan, Dale Farm
Shaun McAnee, Danske Bank
Lynsey Cunningham, Ulster Bank
Joanne Stuart, Catalyst NI