

## Industry Forum January Newsletter

### The Road to UK Recovery

Covid-19 vaccines and the election of Joe Biden give grounds for optimism for 2021. There remains much to do to help our healthcare services to recover, and to restore the UK to health. It is equally important to rebuild our damaged economy so that it can flourish in a world of new trading relationships, and transition rapidly to using renewable energy and sustainable practices.

Two problems are likely to impede our recovery: First, the current UK economic model, adopted in the 1980s, has stalled since 2008; Second, we are a deeply polarised nation, committed to resolving issues in an adversarial manner. These problems are not unconnected, and require straightforward, honest discussion to find solutions. In this pivotal year for the UK, the Industry Forum will work with policy-makers, business, and other organisations in helping to find such solutions.

**As our contribution to recovery, we are offering a 50% discount on our usual fees for new members joining for calendar year 2021.**

We look forward to new members joining the Industry Forum family, and adding strength to our calls for ambitious, innovative and fair management of the economy on which we all depend.

For more information, please email [jwyer@industry-forum.org](mailto:jwyer@industry-forum.org)

Our next three meetings will be:

#### *Opportunities and issues for post Brexit international trade*



**21 January**

In the context of a worsening economic situation, a lack of clarity about the new arrangements for EU trade, and many new trade deals still work-in-progress, some businesses in the UK have concerns about their future international trade prospects. Besides the obvious issues of increased border friction with the EU, the legal basis of data transfer with the EU and US is not clear, and some sectors are concerned about the prospects of new foreign competitors who are not subject to the same regulations as indigenous companies. At the start of the New Year, the Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade will lead a discussion on 'Opportunities and issues for post Brexit international trade'.

The speakers will be:

**Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP**, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade  
**Lila Thompson**, CEO, British Water  
**Darren Budd**, Commercial Director UK/Ireland, BASF plc  
**Anil Kakaria**, Head of Sales & Operations, EMEA, Moglix

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## ***Implications of the new UK National Security and Investment Bill***



**1 February**

The UK Government is introducing comprehensive and wide-ranging proposed reforms to its powers to scrutinise foreign investment, and investment with national security implications. The long-awaited National Security and Investment Bill marks a step-change to the Government's enforcement powers bringing it into line with most other developed countries. While strengthening the UK's ability to intervene in transactions to protect UK national security, the Government wants to ensure that the UK remains a "global champion of free trade and an attractive place to invest." Three questions arise: Is this too late after domestic and foreign takeovers of a raft of leading UK companies? Will this cut the enviable rate of UK foreign direct investment? And, will decisions form part of a consistent and effective industrial policy? Stephen Kinnock MP who reviewed this Bill as a member of the Public Bill Committee, will lead the discussion of these issues.

The speakers will be:

**Stephen Kinnock MP**, Shadow Minister for Asia and the Pacific  
**David Offenbach**, Consultant, Simons Muirhead & Burton LLP

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## ***An integrated approach to pensions and benefits in recovering from the pandemic***



**9 February**

Economic recovery from the pandemic is likely to be difficult and there is some danger that 'Treasury thinking' will resist innovative ideas that require further expenditure and investment. Many people in business, however, recognise that to avoid a repeat of the slow recovery from the 2008 financial crisis, new thinking is vital. In addition to investment in infrastructure and a transition to renewable energy, this could include an approach to benefits based on Universal Basic Income or Universal Basic Services that would, for example, stimulate aggregate demand, increase labour market flexibility and help reduce welfare, and law and order, crises. Jonathan Reynolds MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, will lead an Industry Forum, virtual round table on the topic of 'An integrated approach to pensions and benefits in recovery from the pandemic'.

The speakers will be:

**Jonathan Reynolds MP**, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

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In the first half of 2021, we are also planning meetings on the following topics:

- What does a Biden US Presidency mean for the UK and Europe?
- The outlook for UK international trade. (Separate events for US, Germany & India)
- Preparing for COP26
- New thinking about funding and pricing life sciences treatments
- UK/China trade prospects and security risks
- Upgrading our digital infrastructure to drive economic recovery
- Where does hydrogen fit in our future energy mix?
- New security threats
- Improving government understanding and use of science
- Future European cooperation
- Transport in a post-COVID-19 World

Please let us know if you would like to work together on these or other topics.

Our recent meetings in 2020 have covered digital inequality, our digital future, diversity and inequality, and managing procurement in an emergency. As usual these are topical subjects and showcased Industry Forum members. Our last meeting is summarised below:

### *The key role of housing in recovery from the pandemic*



Building more houses could play a key role in recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

This was the overwhelming conclusion from an Industry Forum policy workshop yesterday. The expert panel was led by Clive Betts MP, Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee. He was followed by Melissa Dowler, a Director of Bell Phillips Architects, John Slaughter, Director of External Affairs for the Home Builders Federation, and Robert McIlveen, Director of Public Affairs for the Mineral Products Association. More investment and higher targets are needed, as well as plans that take into account future climate changes, new pandemic risks, and modern construction methods that could cut construction costs.

The potential benefits are great and include a reduction in social problems, better provision for new working practices, and greater mobility of labour.

### *New member offer*

We are keen to sign up new members to work with us and expand our meetings and research activities. For 2021, we are offering new joiners during the year a 50% discount on our usual fees. If you're not already a member, and would like to help shape our agenda, host events, and receive invitations to all meetings, get in touch by email at [info@industry-forum.org](mailto:info@industry-forum.org), or give us a call to find out more on 0207 434 0090.



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