

BSA Chairman's Dinner 2019

Check against delivery

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome.

It is a real pleasure to see you here at our second newly formatted annual dinner.

We really appreciate your support for the dinner.

And the support of BSA member NatWest for their making it possible.

We greatly value the input and advice from Laura [Barlow] and her team, not only in sponsoring the dinner but throughout the year.

And I also really appreciate all your support for the BSA throughout the year.

As you know, the BSA runs an exceptional programme of events - in London, in Scotland and Wales, and in every region of England.

Your participation in all we do makes it possible.

I would like to welcome in particular Sir David Lidington, our principal guest and speaker this evening.

Sir David very kindly agreed to step in when purdah rules prevented our planned speaker attending.

Sir David has of course had a hugely distinguished career culminating as de facto Deputy Prime Minister, with specific responsibility for the Cabinet Office and public services reform.

Now he isn't burdened with ministerial responsibility, or indeed the responsibility of serving as a Member of Parliament, we look forward to even greater candour this evening as he reflects on those and other issues.

The UK business and outsourced service sector is a major contributor to the national economy - a significant contributor to GDP, a major employer, and a big investor in modernising the workplace.

Roughly 70 per cent of what we do is business to business, with roughly the remaining 30 per cent for the public sector.

Of course, the latter bit generates the most attention.

BSA members are key partners and allies in the whole range of services and projects, from high tech to housebuilding, from dustbin clearing to dinner providing, from road laying to retrofitting.

Every area of project and service delivery is increasingly sophisticated, and most of it is pioneering in the quality, efficiency and standard of delivery.

That goes for business-to-business work too.

Indeed, it can be when public money isn't involved that it's easier to innovate.

So, when they want to modernise the way they deliver ICT, or work with customers, or manage their offices or workforce, its often to the business services sector that other businesses turn.

All the evidence shows productivity rises when they do.

So the sector has an important part to play in helping meet the UK's productivity challenge.

That challenge will face an incoming government of any colour - and whatever the outcome of Brexit.

That puts responsibility on us.

To embrace technology and innovation.

To harness the power of data - intelligently - and make sure it is used effectively.

To train and nurture our people, so they can help us respond quickly to an ever-changing environment.

Above all it's only by becoming collaborative and communicative - with our staff, our clients, our supply chain partners, and each other - that we will be able to drive continuous improvement.

Communication is also at the heart of the BSA's work.

Since we last met here 12 months ago, we've had a very high degree of engagement with government, in the Cabinet Office with officials across Whitehall.

This has been both constructive and fruitful.

We have seen this in the outcome of Santiago 1 and we look forward to seeing it as Santiago 2 progresses.

How these relationships evolve will depend on the outcome of the current political festivity.

And we at the BSA are playing our full part in helping shape that debate and engagement.

Over the last twelve months we have held over a hundred roundtables, seminars, dinners or events across the UK - involving over a thousand BSA colleagues from the private and voluntary sectors.

Over the next twelve that engagement will step up further.

Tonight ladies and gentlemen I would like you to join me in welcoming Rt Hon Sir David Lidington.

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