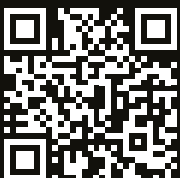




Step Forward Luton 2024 Business & Investment Summit

Tuesday 5th March 2024

There has never been a better time to invest in Luton



Step Forward Luton
Business & Investment



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**STEP
FORWARD
LUTON**



WELCOME

to the first Step Forward Luton Business and Investment Summit

Luton is in the spotlight like never before, our town is in the midst of major transformation with **over £5bn of investment already underway, including a new football stadium, town centre regeneration and rapid airport growth, more businesses than ever are choosing Luton.**

Luton is perfectly placed at the heart of the Golden Triangle, between the world-leading universities in Oxford, Cambridge and London. This is all helped by Luton's outstanding connectivity, with its international airport, rail connections meaning it is just 22 minutes from Central London, and access to a road network including the M1 on its doorstep.

Luton offers businesses the opportunity to grow in a town famed for its diverse, young talent; its economic resilience and tailor made business support services. Today, we will hear about Luton's latest opportunities and growing our economy to ensure that we are equipped for future projects and ambition. We will discuss the next steps for further growth and how this can support local businesses.



Luton will have the second fastest growing economy anywhere in the country in 2024 – second only to London.



With the third youngest population in the country, Luton can be a core provider of skilled workers to the high-paid, quality jobs being created across the region.



Consistently one of the best environments for business start-ups and for digital connectivity.



A host of outstanding anchor institutions from an international airport to a Premier League football team.



With more than £5 billion of inward investment planned and underway, there has never been a better time to invest in Luton.

SCHEDULE

Time	Session	Participants
9.00 - 9.30	Registration	
9.30 - 9.35	Welcome from Today's Host	ClIr James Taylor, Luton Council
9.35 - 9.45	Scene Setting	Robin Porter, Luton Council
9.45	Introduction to Panel Session	ClIr James Taylor, Luton Council
9.45 - 10.55	Panel Session One: Reimagining and Regenerating Luton	Gerard McCleave (Chair) Michael Moran, Luton 2020 Developments Gillian Scarth, Prologis Richard Arnold, Wrenbridge James Sherwood, Luton Rising Justin Richardson, Chamber of Commerce Placi Espejo, OxCam
10.55 - 11.00	SFL Invest	ClIr James Taylor, Luton Council
11.00 - 11.10	Launch of Prospectus	Martin Blower Chair, Business Ambassador Group
11.10 - 11.30	Break	
11.30	Introduction to Panel Sessions	ClIr James Taylor, Luton Council
11.30 - 12.40	Panel Session Two: Destination Luton	Professor Rebecca Bunting, University of Bedfordshire (Chair) Vasundhra Pahuja, Deloitte Alice John, Deloitte Nick Platts, Luton Rising Rhys Hughes, BBC Radio 1 Sanjay Arora, Arora Group Rachel Gillis, Visit England
12.40 - 13.20	Panel Session Three: Women Stepping Forward	ClIr Javeria Hussain, Luton Council (Chair) Veebha Parmar, MySpike Tracy Fensome, Signature Academy Esther Roche, Deroiste Natural Beauty Aimee Gomez, The Fashion Breakdown and Stex X Fashion Marion Geoffroy, Wizz Air Prof Nasreen Ali, University of Bedfordshire Devi Kolli, i3 Simulations
13.20	Lunch & Networking	

STEP FORWARD LUTON

HOST'S WELCOME

SCENE SETTING



Councillor James Taylor
Portfolio holder for Regeneration
and Inclusive Growth
at Luton Council



Robin Porter
Chief Executive
of Luton Council

9.45 - 10.55

PANEL SESSION ONE REIMAGINING AND REGENERATING LUTON

Luton has some extraordinary advantages and has renewed impetus to exploit these to the full. Hear today from our panel of local investors, developers, anchors institutions and partners who are leading the way on regenerating Luton with a multi-million pound programme of mixed use developments either underway across the town or due to get underway in the coming months.

Our strategy for growth and inward investment is not just about developments but also about our micro, small and medium businesses that make up the supply chains that these developers and larger businesses rely on hugely to be successful. The focus is on growing our businesses with support from the wider business eco-system so that the opportunities that come with growth should be of benefit not only to businesses in Luton but contribute to the wider regional economy.

Chair: Gerard McCleave
Corporate Director for Inclusive Economy at Luton Council

Panel/speakers:

Luton 2020 Developments
Michael Moran, Chief Operating Officer

Prologis
Gillian Scarth, Director

Wrenbridge
Richard Arnold, Director

Luton Rising
James Sherwood, Advisor

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
Justin Richardson, Chief Executive

Oxford to Cambridge Partnership
Placi Espejo, Innovation and Economy Lead

STEP FORWARD LUTON

SFL INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS



Martin Blower
Chair, Business
Ambassadors
Group

We are formally launching Step Forward Luton invest and our new investment prospectus. It showcases the overall investment proposition for Luton in a flexible document with key inserts to share with different audiences and networks.

11.30 - 12.40

PANEL SESSION TWO DESTINATION LUTON

There is so much to be excited about in Luton right now, the town has the potential to become a real destination for visitors, with the long-standing role that some of our anchors will play as well as the impact of some really transformational major events to come. The panel will focus on Destination Luton and the emerging visitor economy offer in the town. With the Premier League football club and the new stadium being one of the main attractions of a strong visitor economy in Luton, and additional numbers coming through the town centre for football and other live events like the Radio 1 Big Weekend festival. We will hear from Deloitte about the opportunities for the town from both the stadium development and from Luton Rising about the contribution of London Luton Airport on to not only attracting more people to visit Luton as they come through the airport, but the wider benefits the Airport has to the wider economy. The Arora Group will discuss their development plans and ambitions for the Luton Hoo to host the Ryder Cup - another major catalyst for building a strong and lasting destination offer that can appeal to lots of different audiences. Rachel Gillis from Visit England will outline the emerging opportunities in Luton and the wider area, which impresses on us the need to develop a new visitor economy plan that harnesses the legacy and opportunities of these developments and events and seeks to build a sustainable destination offer around arts, culture, heritage, sport, hospitality and education in the town.

Chair: Professor Rebecca Bunting
Vice Chancellor of the University of Bedfordshire

Panel/speakers:

Deloitte
Vasundhra Pahuja, Assistant Director

Deloitte
Alice John, Assistant Director

Luton Town Football Club & 2020 Developments
Gary Sweet, CEO

Luton Rising
Nick Platts, Managing Director

BBC Radio 1
Rhys Hughes, Head of Live Music and Events

Arora Group
Sanjay Arora, Chief Operating Officer

Visit England
Rachel Gillis, Regional Development Lead

STEP FORWARD LUTON

12.40 - 13.20

PANEL SESSION THREE

WOMEN STEPPING FORWARD

The final panel, dedicated to celebrating inspirational women ahead of International Women's Day on 8th March, with a special panel of some of our truly inspiring female leaders in business across our town.



Chair: Councillor Javeria Hussain
Portfolio Holder for Skills and Employability at Luton Council

Panel/speakers:



mySpike.co.uk
Veebha Parmar, Founder



Signature Academy
Tracy Fensome



Deroiste Natural Beauty
Esther Roche



The Fashion Breakdown and Stex X Fashion
Aimee Gomez



Wizz Air
Marion Geoffroy, Chief Executive



University of Bedfordshire
Prof Nasreen Ali



i3 Simulation
Devi Kolli

STEP FORWARD LUTON



Councillor James Taylor Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Inclusive Growth

Councillor James Taylor is the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Inclusive Growth at Luton Council and a Director of Luton Rising. Cllr Taylor is a ward Councillor for High Town and first joined in 2015, re-elected in 2023 and now part of the Executive delivering the 2040 vision.



Robin Porter Chief Executive, Luton Council

Robin Porter has been the Chief Executive for Luton Council since May 2019. In this role, Robin is responsible for more than 2,700 staff and the delivery of circa 730 services, as well as a budget of £500m – all focused on supporting Luton's vibrant and diverse 225,000 population, and working with partners to deliver the collective 2040 ambition to eradicate poverty. Robin is also the Shareholder Representative for all of the Council owned companies who in part manage the Councils £3.5bn of commercial investments. Robin has now been part of the Luton community for 16 years. Before taking up his current appointment he held a number of roles including Deputy Chief Executive; Director of Transformation; and Chief Operations Officer for London Luton Airport Limited. Before joining Luton, Robin worked as a senior manager in the private sector in the project finance industry and before this he was a British Army Officer.

Panel One Chair & Speakers



Gerard McCleave Corporate Director for Inclusive Economy, Luton Council

Gerard McCleave is the Corporate Director for Inclusive Economy and joined Luton Council in July 2023. Gerard is responsible for our place shaping services, those that are about improving the well-being of Luton town and the people that live here. Gerard has held senior positions in local and central government across the UK. Prior to joining Luton, he was responsible at Thurrock Council for inclusive growth, sustainable development, culture and arts and led the regions bid that secured Thames Freeport.



Michael Moran Chief Operating Officer, 2020 Developments

Michael has been a key member of the 2020 Developments team for over seven years and, in that time, has acquired over 60 acres of prime development land in Luton; gaining planning consent for over 1.5m sq ft of commercial space, 1,200 homes and a new 23,000 seat capacity stadium for Luton Town FC. Michael has a Master's Degree in Property Investment and Development from the University of Manchester and – prior to joining 2020 Developments – worked with a number of leading investors and developers across Europe.



Gillian Scarth Director of Capital Deployment and Leasing, Prologis

Gillian Scarth is a Director in the Capital Deployment and Leasing team. She is primarily focused on driving growth and supporting the delivery of new and existing projects in London and the South East. Gillian joined Prologis in 2022 and has 20 years' of experience in development, leasing and asset management as both occupier and landowner, having worked at Sainsburys', Capital and Regional, Kier Property and Moore Hunter. Gillian is a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.



Richard Arnold Director, Wrenbridge

Richard is a Director with Wrenbridge and as well as heading up the Sport division also leads the firms project delivery team. He is experienced in regeneration projects of national significance, leading multi-disciplinary teams to deliver transformational development.

Panel One Chair & Speakers



James Sherwood-Rogers Advisor, Ventures, Luton Rising

James has been leading businesses, teams and boards for over 25 years, across a range of sectors, primarily Real Estate, Finance and Technology. A pioneer of big data in the property sector, he previously built one of the UK's largest proptechs, Landmark Information Group (now a subsidiary of Daily Mail Group Trust plc) with businesses spanning property information, mapping, risk management, and insurance. James advises both the private and public sector on strategy, data and technology, and Chairs COPSO, the UK's leading property information trade association.



Justin Richardson Chief Executive, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Justin was appointed Chief Executive at Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce in 2018 to spearhead an exciting period of investment and transformation at the Chamber. Having previously worked as Head of Finance & Strategic Partnerships, Justin has led on a number of local business support programmes and can draw on an extensive network to bring insight into the current local business and economic landscape. Justin is passionate about fostering a collaborative business network and providing a platform for local businesses to connect and build meaningful long-term relationships. His remit, and that of the Chamber, is to provide a voice for business and become an enabler for local companies to grow and succeed.



Placi Espejo Innovation and Economy Senior Lead, Oxford-Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership

Placi has over 20 years in the consulting world, with a robust commercial acumen, funding intelligence and a passion for developing new and exciting innovation ecosystems. She is also TEDx Speaker, a natural connector and champion of collaborations, driven by the opportunity to support sustainable economic growth whilst enhancing the environment at her role within the Oxford to Cambridge Partnership.

Prospectus Launch Presenter



Martin Blower Chair of Step Forward Luton Business Ambassador Group

Martin has been working in Luton for over 10 years with Howden insurance (formally A-Plan insurance) who have been on Upper George St for over 60 years. He has actively supported the local community through charity fundraising, for the Rotary bandstand in Wardown Park as former past president of Luton Someries Rotary club, Director at the Mary Seacole housing Association, Director of Luton BID, amongst other organisations, Martin is the Chair of the Step Forward Luton Business Ambassadors Group and his main focus will be to drive investment into the town centre.

Panel Two Chair & Speakers



Prof Rebecca Bunting Vice Chancellor at the University of Bedfordshire

Professor Rebecca Bunting took office as Vice Chancellor at the University of Bedfordshire in October 2020, following her position as Interim Vice Chancellor since January 2020. Prior to that she was formerly the Vice Chancellor at Bucks New University. Professor Bunting is a founding director of the Higher Education Academy and of its successor organisation, Advance HE. She is also the Chair of a number of national HE committees for learning and teaching, and widening participation. She has conducted research and published in the field of children's language and literacy development, educational linguistics and pedagogy.

Panel Two Chair & Speakers



Vasundhra Pahuja Assistant Director, Deloitte Economic Advisory

Vasundhra is an Assistant Director within Deloitte UK's Economic Advisory team. Vasundhra specializes in public sector economics, with a focus on economic impact assessments, social impact assessments, and cost benefit analysis.

Vasundhra's sector expertise includes tourism, sport, entertainment, culture, education, healthcare and life sciences, and real estate, having worked on projects for local councils, central government and arm's length bodies within the UK and internationally.



Alice John Assistant Director, Deloitte's Sports Business Group

Alice leads the Economic Growth and Development market offering in Deloitte's Sport Business Group, working with central and local governments advising clients on securing inward investment, developing business cases and evaluating the social and economic impact that sport delivers to people and place. Alice has worked on large-scale multi-stakeholder programmes with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Sport England, and Manchester City Council on multiple impact measurement and evaluation programmes.



Gary Sweet CEO, Luton Town football Club & 2020 Developments

Gary Sweet is an experienced and versatile commercial business leader. Under his leadership, Luton Town has been promoted to the Premier League after a 31-year hiatus. Gary is honoured to play a lead role in Luton Town's resurgence and a supporting role in Luton's regeneration.



Nick Platts Managing Director, Luton Rising

Nick is the Managing Director for Luton Rising. A Luton Borough Council owned company that is responsible for nearby Luton Airport and its assets. Nick oversees the management for Luton Rising's wide ranging developments and positive social-impact programmes including sustainability, the recently opened Luton DART and leads on applications for long-term growth of the company's biggest asset, Luton Airport. Prior to his appointment at Luton Rising, Nick has worked for London Heathrow Airport Ltd. He also lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for three years; first as Director of Cargo for Riyadh Airport, then as Head of Programme leading the development of the country's first economic zone. Nick's experience in the world of aviation is not limited to business development – he migrated to the UK in 2004, after serving for 10 years in the Royal Australian Air Force as a pilot.



Rhys Hughes Head of Programmes, BBC Radio 1

Nearly 30 years experience at the BBC, starting as a producer at Radio 1 in the mid 90's. Became Executive Producer in 2000, across both Radio 1 mainstream and specialist departments. Took on the role of Head of Programmes for both Radio 1 and 1Xtra in 2011, overseeing the day to day running of both stations. Moved in 2017 to Head of Live Music and Events across the BBC's Music stations – Radio 1, Radio 2, BBC 6Music, BBC 1Xtra, Asian Network and BBC Introducing, delivering the biggest Live Music Event the BBC have ever done in Biggest Weekend in 2018 – 4 festival sites in the four nations across one bank holiday weekend.



Sanjay Arora Chief Operating Officer, the Arora Group

Sanjay joined the Arora Group in 2016 as a Director to oversee all the group's new acquisitions and new developments. He was appointed Chief Operating Officer in 2022 to focus on setting the vision for the future of the Arora Group as well as continuing to diversify the existing portfolio into new sectors. He began his career at KPMG in 2013, working in Corporate Finance. Sanjay holds an MBA and a degree in Business Management from Royal Holloway University of London. Sanjay also joined as one of the youngest ever members of the prestigious Young Presidents Organisation in 2015. His interests include golf and boxing and working as an Ambassador to The Arora Foundation.

Panel Two Chair & Speakers



Rachel Gillis Regional Development Lead, Visit England

Rachel is the Regional Development Lead for the East Midlands and East of England, at VisitEngland. Prior to this she was the North York Moors International Project Manager at VisitEngland and through the pandemic supported destination organisations on a DMO Taskforce. Rachel has also worked as a freelance project manager, including managing England's Great Walking Trails Project, working closely with the team at Visit Peak District and Derbyshire.

Panel Three Chair & Speakers



Councillor Javeria Hussain

Portfolio Holder for Skills and Employability at Luton Council and Director of Luton Rising

Councillor Javeria Hussain is the Portfolio Holder for Skills and Employability at Luton Council, and a Director of Luton Rising. Prior to that she was the Chair of Luton Rising from May 2021 - Jan 2024. Professionally, a regulatory affairs specialist for an international law firm with 11 years+ experience in regulatory law, risk management, sanctions, governance and compliance. Cllr Hussain has extensive experience in local government, is a Rotarian and loves sports and arts.



Veebha Parmar Founder at mySpike.co.uk

Founder of mySpike, the new Kitchen essential, a versatile cooking tool for conventional ovens, air fryers and BBQs. She developed the idea in her home kitchen, and improved the prototype to be more heat efficient and versatile whatever you are roasting, airfrying or BBQing. We have been featured in Top Sante, Daily mail and on Times Radio. Currently available online at myspike.co.uk and now launching into UK cookshops, department stores and garden centres Before mySpike, she was winning awards for customer service during her 17 years at NatWest.



Tracy Fensome Founder, Signature Academy

Tracy Fensome is a renowned and influential expert in the beauty, aesthetics, and permanent makeup industry, with a career spanning over 20 years that blends artistic talent with business expertise. As the founder of Luton based TF Aesthetic Clinic and the Signature Academy, an award-winning private VTCT ITEC centre, Tracy is deeply committed to mentoring and nurturing the professional growth of her clients and students. Her significant role as an ABM business coach, especially her contributions to the Help to Grow Scheme, demonstrates her dedication to enhancing both her own professional skills and those in the industry.



Esther Roche Founder, Deroiste Natural Beauty

Esther Roche, is the founder of Deroiste Natural Beauty, an award-winning inclusive skincare brand. With over 20 years in dental-related fields, she founded a leading dental nurse training centre and advocates for individuals to reach their potential. As the host of "The Mum CEO Podcast," Esther explores the dynamic intersection of motherhood and entrepreneurship. Juggling the responsibilities of raising five children, community leadership, and mentorship, Esther remains dedicated to giving back and serves as Chair of her local committee run pre-school. Esther's journey embodies resilience, balance, and the power of entrepreneurship. Get ready to be inspired as she shares her story.



Aimee Gomez Director, The Fashion Breakdown

Aimee Gomez is a successful entrepreneur within the fashion industry with her business's The Fashion Breakdown and Stex X Fashion and has most recently moved into the heritage and tech sector supporting, future proofing and growing local heritage to new audiences.

Panel Three Chair & Speakers



Marion Geoffroy Managing Director, Wizz Air

Ms. Geoffroy is currently the Managing director of Wizz Air UK. She joined the company in March 2015 as the Head of Legal and General Counsel, In September 2018 she became a chief corporate officer and company secretary, she then appointed to become managing director of Wizz Air UK in August 2021. Prior to that, she held senior leadership roles in the Legal department of Air France-KLM from 2000 to 2011. In 2011, she became the General Counsel at Verlingue Insurance Brokers for four years. Ms. Geoffroy assumed her current position at Wizz Air in September 2018, where she oversees the Legal, Data Protection, and Health and Safety departments. She holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) from Paris XI University, a Lawyer-Linguist Master from ISIT in Paris, a law degree from Philipps University in Marburg, Germany, and a Master of Laws (LL.M.) from McGill University Institute of Air and Space Law in Montreal, Canada.



Professor Nasreen Ali

Professor of Public Health Equality, University of Bedfordshire

Nasreen Ali is professor of Public Health Equality and Course Lead for the MSc Public Health. She teaches on a range of health and social care courses and leads the Health and Social Care Inequalities unit for the MSc Public Health, which is delivered in Luton, Myanmar and Guyana. Professor Ali also leads on the Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care System (ICS) Inclusive Workforce Research Programme and the Health Education England (HEE) Workforce Development for Integrated Care Research Programme.



Devi Kolli Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer at i3 Simulations

Devi is Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer at i3 Simulations. Having led talented teams of diverse experts over the past 15 years of her entrepreneurial, research and development and product designing journey, she had the privilege to learn from experience and continue to learn by collaborating with like-minded individuals and organisations. As an angel investor and seasoned technology entrepreneur, Devi's industry interest extends across healthcare, education, location-based entertainment, film and interactive media productions, museum and heritage and defence. Her technological strengths include emerging technologies including Extended Reality (XR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), Gesture Recognition and Virtual Production (VP).

Have you considered applying for the King's Awards for Enterprise?

The most prestigious awards for UK businesses since 1965. Recognising and encouraging the outstanding achievements of UK businesses in the fields of:

- Innovation
- International Trade
- Sustainable Development
- Promoting Opportunity (through social mobility)

Whether a small business with a great innovative product or service, or a larger company running an impressive social mobility programme, this award is a prestigious way to recognise your contribution to enterprise.

For more information, visit www.gov.uk/kings-awards-for-enterprise, alternatively, speak with the SFL team for help with completing the application form.



SFL PARTNERS



Special thank you to our partners and Business Ambassadors for supporting us with this event.

TEAM SFL



Sinead McNamara
Service Director,
Inclusive Growth

sinead.mcnamara@luton.gov.uk



Rizwana Zaman
Economic Growth &
Strategic Regeneration
Manager

rizwana.zaman@luton.gov.uk



Fergus McLardy
Programme Manager,
Community Wealth
Building

fergus.mclardy@luton.gov.uk



Niall Gleeson
Economic Growth
Officer

niall.gleeson@luton.gov.uk



Corey Albone
Programme Manager
for UK Shared Prosperity
Fund Projects

corey.albone@luton.gov.uk

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