



Lancashire Built Environment Conference

#BEC24

Today's speakers

John Chesworth

executive chairman, Harrison Drury Solicitors

John has specialised in property since qualifying as a solicitor in 1997. He joined Harrison Drury in 2007 and became managing partner within 12 months.

He now leads the board of directors shaping the future of the firm in his role as chairman.

John also chairs the Preston Towns Fund Bid and the Lancashire Branch of the Forum for the Built Environment (FBE).



Michael Conlon

chairman of Conlon Construction, Preston

He sits on the board of Creative Lancashire and has been a trustee of the homeless charity, Emmaus Preston for 16 years.

Michael has been chairman of the Conlon group since 2022 and was proud to be appointed a 'Lancashire Business Ambassador' in 2019.

The company has carried out a number of prestigious projects, including in recent years the refurbishment of Preston Bus Station and a current project is the 'Harris, Your Place' scheme at the Grade I listed Harris Museum and Art Gallery in Preston.



Gemma Cornwall

founder of Viridium – a building consultancy with focus on sustainability and ESG

As a Chartered Building Surveyor, Gemma combines traditional building surveying with energy efficiency and sustainable building practices.

In her role as director at Viridium, Gemma advises on energy efficiency upgrades and sustainability strategy within clients' commercial portfolios.

She has advised clients including CBRE Investment Management, Indurent, Mileway, Savills and Cushman & Wakefield, as well as individual property owners, tenants and pension funds.





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Katie Day

strategy director and deputy chief executive,
Transport for the North

Katie has more than 20 years' experience working in public bodies and central government.

Before joining TfN, she spent over five years as director of policy and communications at the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

She also worked at the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as head of operations for the Regional Growth Fund, and, at the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) leading internal communications and strategic policy.

She previously held a variety of leadership and management roles at the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), focused on urban and rural regeneration, enterprise and business growth and economic development.



Linda Dean

principal for apprenticeships, business development
and people, Blackpool and The Fylde College

Linda started her career in the private sector, leading the sales team for a national tour operator. She has been deeply engaged in apprenticeships, employability both youth and adult, and skills policy and delivery since the mid-1990s.

She has worked in leadership roles within the Training and Enterprise Council, Learning and Skills Council, National Apprenticeship Service, independent providers, third sector and colleges.

Linda has been a board member for the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, and currently is a volunteer in Scouting.





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Nick Gerrard

growth and prosperity programme director,
Blackpool Council

Nick has more than 30 years of leading-edge planning, urban regeneration, economic development and corporate management experience at the public/private interface.

He has contributed to high-calibre boards, including Manchester's New Economy, Trafford Council, North West Development Agency, Merseyside TEC and Trafford Park Development Corporation.



Dan Hughes

planning director, PWA Planning

A keen runner, Dan has been with PWA Planning since 2014 in which time he built up a broad range of sector experience including housing, commercial and industrial and sports and leisure projects.

He has managed projects for clients including Story Homes, Oakmere Homes, Preston North End Football Club and Scunthorpe United Football Club.

Dan is a chartered town planner, he specialises in the preparation and management of complex planning applications, often involving public consultation and negotiation with public bodies and statutory consultees.



Simon Lawrence

director of growth and regeneration at
Lancashire County Council

Simon leads the county's major development portfolio which currently includes projects such as the Farington Cricket Facility, the Eden Project at Morecambe and the planned arrival of NCF at Samlesbury.

He also spearheads the council's business support service, which includes the well regarded Boost and Rosebud offers.

Finally, since joining the council last year he has led on the devolution activity, working closely with colleagues in Whitehall, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen all focussed on achieving a deal for Lancashire.





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Lukman Patel

chief executive Burnley Council

Appointed to the role in August 2023, Burnley's chief executive Lukman Patel has been keen to strengthen the links between the council and the borough's business community.

Lukman has worked with the local authority since 2015 in a number of key roles, including being the chief operating officer from 2017-23, and heading up its legal department prior to that.

Before beginning his local government career at Trafford Council in 2014, he was a commercial property lawyer working for a national legal firm in Manchester.



Adrian Phillips

chief executive of Preston City Council

Adrian was appointed to the role in April 2019.

Having worked as an officer at Preston City Council for the past 33 years, Adrian has been actively involved in the delivery of a range of major capital projects including leading on heritage park restorations such as Avenham & Miller and Winckley Square, and as project sponsor for the Preston Markets Quarter redevelopment.

Prior to his appointment, Adrian was the council's director of environment.



Courtney Prestage

commercial director at Connections2energy

Courtney brings a wealth of financial expertise and business acumen to her role.

With a degree in Business Studies and an Advanced Diploma with the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Courtney joined the company seven years ago as a finance officer and has rapidly progressed through the ranks, showcasing her exceptional talent, dedication and strategic insight.

As a woman excelling in the male-dominated utilities and construction sectors, Courtney brings a fresh perspective and serves as an inspiration for diversity in leadership.





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Rose Rouse

chief executive of Pendle Borough Council

Rose was the former chief executive of Eden District Council in Cumbria. She started her local government career in policy and performance, before moving into leading large front-line services and community-led regeneration projects.

Working for a regional association of local government, Rose led major programmes on supporting improvement, social care policy and environmental strategy.

Rose is vice-chair of the DCN Chief Executives Group and is facilitating delivery of DCN work on regeneration and growth.



John Winstanley

managing director, strategic land, Story Homes

As MD for the department, John brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to his role, accumulated during his 15 years' experience working in private housing and land promotion.

He oversees the Strategic Land business unit to deliver exciting new land opportunities for Story Homes for the next five to 15 years.

John works closely with other senior team members to facilitate a strategy for Story Homes' long-term business plans and ultimately helps to shape the future of the business.



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