

Business & Trade dinner
Egyptian Hall, Mansion House
Wednesday 3rd June 2026
The Rt Hon The Lady Mayor of London
Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE

Secretary of State, my lords, fellow Aldermen, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen...

Welcome to Mansion House.

It is a great pleasure to host you this evening in what I describe as the embassy for UK financial and professional services — a place where business, innovation and public service come together in support of our nation's prosperity.

Secretary of State, we are delighted to welcome you back. Thank you for your partnership and for the work that you and your department do to champion British business around the world.

And Greg, thank you for joining us. Few people embody British entrepreneurial spirit more clearly than you, and I know we all look forward to hearing your views.

But firstly, to all the leaders here tonight: thank you.

Thank you for the risks you take, the businesses you build, the jobs you create, and the confidence you place in this country.

Your success is Britain's success.

Every investment you make, every company you found, every innovation you launch, strengthens our economy, creates opportunity, and reinforces our position on the world stage.

I am also particularly pleased that the Mayoralty, as Ambassador for professional and financial services and the Department for Business and Trade have signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

Because it deepens our commitment to working together — both of us supporting international engagement, opening doors for British businesses and ensuring that Team UK presents a united face to the world.

And tonight I want to talk about why it's more critical than ever, that we work together.

As Lady Mayor, I have the privilege of travelling internationally. And wherever I go, I can see and feel the enormous respect that exists for London and for Britain.

But I can also see something else.

I see the intensity and the ferocity of the competition.

Around the world, cities and nations are competing harder than ever for capital, talent, innovation and influence. They are investing heavily in their international reputations. They are promoting their strengths relentlessly. They are telling their stories with confidence, clarity and conviction.

And they are competing... directly... with us.

That is why we must act.

The truth is that London remains one of the greatest economic success stories in the world.

The UK remains Europe's leading destination for foreign direct investment in financial and professional services.

The sector contributes more than £300 billion to the UK economy and supports 2.5 million jobs.

Importantly, two-thirds of those jobs are outside the capital.

This is not simply a London success story.

This is a national success story.

The revenue generated here supports communities, businesses and public services in every corner of the United Kingdom.

At a time when economies around the world face profound uncertainty, when geopolitical turmoil fractures supply chains and upends what were once global norms, our financial and professional services sector remains a source of stability, investment and growth.

Businesses choose to locate here because of our talent, our predictable legal system, our regulatory expertise, our openness to global trade, our position as Europe's leading tech hub, our unrivalled ecosystem of services.

These are extraordinary strengths.

But today, we are also competing in a global battle of perception, confidence and economic narratives.

And in a world where information – and misinformation – spreads in seconds, we need to be clear and confident about what our strengths are.

Because if a distorted picture of London and the United Kingdom is projected across the world...

It reaches boardrooms.

It reaches investors.

It can influence decisions about where businesses expand, where capital is allocated and where jobs are created.

It becomes not simply a communications issue.

This is an economic issue.

When I travel overseas, I'm often asked whether the negative stories people read about London are really true.

And the answer is, absolutely not.

The reality could not be more different.

This is one of the safest, most culturally dynamic, most innovative and most internationally connected cities in the world.

- Ranked as the world's most desirable city by Ipsos, eleven years running.

We cannot allow others to write our story for us.

We need to write it ourselves.

Because confidence matters.

It drives investment.

It drives growth.

It encourages entrepreneurs to take risks, investors to deploy capital and international companies to choose Britain over competing markets.

Capital comes to where it feels welcome, and it stays where it feels safe and stable.

Every positive investment decision, creates a ripple effect far beyond a single company.

It creates opportunity and prosperity.

That is why all of us speaking up for Britain matters.

Business leaders.

Industry associations.

Investors.

Entrepreneurs.

Employers.

People whose voices carry weight around the world.

Because the most powerful advocates for this country are **you**:

the people who choose every day to invest here, work here and build here.

It's down to all of us to tell the truth about our City.

Not because we're defensive.

But because we are proud.

Proud of what London and the United Kingdom continue to contribute to the world.

So tonight, I want to issue a challenge to everyone in this room.

Be ambassadors.

Be advocates.

Be champions for this city and for this country.

When you travel, tell our story.

When you meet investors, tell our story.

When you speak with customers, partners and stakeholders around the world, tell our story.

Because other cities and nations are telling theirs.

Together, we can ensure that London and the United Kingdom remain the destination of choice.

So with the backing of industry associations, London Stock Exchange, and others, and over 200 businesses already supporting us, next week we will launch a campaign to do just that – as you can see from these banners!

If you'd like to join us, please let us know.

Because we have a duty to stand up for our city and our businesses and to provide the growth this country needs.

We have to be bold, be united, and with one voice, show the world why London and the United Kingdom remains the best place to invest, to innovate, to build and to do business.

Thank you.