



SAUDI BRITISH JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL

Investment and Partnership Summit 2026

Saudi British Joint Business Council

Summary of Proceedings

8 June 2026

The Saudi British Joint Business Council (SBJBC) convened its Investment and Partnership Summit on 8 June 2026, bringing together more than three hundred and fifty government representatives, investors, and senior figures from across the private sectors of the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia at Banqueting House in London. The summit, the sixth such gathering hosted by the Council, was given over to the next phase of economic cooperation between the two countries and to the investment opportunities arising along the bilateral corridor. The programme organised around three key areas of discussion, those being the formation and deployment of long-term capital, the development of cities and infrastructure, and the application of artificial intelligence to education, work, and the workforce of the future.

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia was represented by Her Royal Highness Princess Albanderi Al Subaie, Head of Economic and Cultural Affairs, who delivered the address prepared by the Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Prince Abdullah bin Khalid bin Sultan. The address set out the priorities understood to define the partnership over the coming period, among them the strengthening of cross-border investment flows, the direction of capital towards projects aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, the development of human capability through cooperation with the private sector in education.

The opening ministerial dialogue was hosted by Sir Chris Bryant, Minister of State for Trade, and moderated by Lord Philip Hammond of Runnymede. The session addressed the economic policy priorities and strategic directions expected to shape cooperation in the period ahead, returning frequently to the free trade agreement concluded between the United Kingdom and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Sir Chris Bryant described the agreement as the first of its kind between the GCC and a member of the G7, noting that it removes ninety-three per cent of customs duties on British goods and that it had been designed to support both Saudi Vision 2030 and the British industrial strategy across sectors that include renewable energy, technology, and finance.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Council, Dr Emad Al-Thukair, addressed the pace of growth in bilateral economic relations and the scope for closer strategic cooperation as the implementation of Vision 2030 continues. He observed that more than 1700 British companies now operate in the Saudi market and that the number relocating their regional headquarters to the Kingdom has more than doubled in recent years. Drawing the connection between British expertise in strategic investment, infrastructure, and future sectors and the objectives of Vision 2030, he characterised the relationship

between the two countries as a strategic partnership rather than a trade arrangement alone. He observed that the sectors identified within the British industrial strategy, among them life sciences, the creative industries, financial services, and advanced manufacturing, correspond closely to the priorities Saudi Arabia has set for the decades ahead.

The first panel discussion, *The UK-Saudi Capital Corridor*, examined the part played by private markets, long-term capital, and financial resilience in supporting economic transformation in both countries. Moderated by Alexandra Dimitrijevic of S&P Global Ratings, the panel brought together Tony Cripps, Chief Executive of SAB, Katie Bonfrer, Group Managing Director for Trust and Corporate, Guy Opperman, former Minister for Pensions and Senior Adviser to Smart Pension, Richard Mockett, Chief Executive of Howden Middle East and Africa, and Dr Othman AlKassabi, Chief Executive of Tawuniya. The discussion considered the mechanisms through which capital is formed, deployed, and protected across the two markets, the contribution of pension funds, insurance, and long-term savings as sources of institutional capital, and the bearing of regulatory reform and digital infrastructure on the allocation of capital and the provision of financial services.

The second panel, *Designing the Cities of the Future*, turned to sustainable development and cultural destinations, with contributions from Mohamed Saad, President of the Diriyah Development Company, Michael Dyke, Chief Executive of New Murabba, Abdul-Rahman Al-Ghabban, Regional Manager for the Middle East and President of the Saudi Arabian Bechtel Company, Dr Valerie Vaughan-Dick of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and Austin Judson of CMS. The session moved from the vision underlying the new generation of Saudi cities towards the practical means of implementation at scale, drawing on experience in development, policy, design, and project management in both countries. The speakers gave attention throughout to the balance between heritage preservation, the integration of technology, and environmental resilience, noting the clear shift from design and conception to delivery and value.

The third panel focused on the role of artificial intelligence in education and work and considered how developments in education and technology are shaping the formation of the future workforce. David Russell of Pearson, Ian Campbell OBE of the National Transformation Institute at KAUST, and Leanne Hurrell of Amazon Web Services were joined by the Deputy Chairman of the Council, Rafat Malik, in examining how partnerships between educational institutions and technology firms might develop new models for skills development. The exchange gave weight to the closing of skills gaps, the provision of accessible education across the workforce, and the continued place of human oversight as artificial intelligence is integrated into learning and work.

Two closed roundtable discussions, held by invitation, accompanied the main programme. The first, British-Saudi Private Capital in 2026, drew together senior figures from private equity, family offices, financial institutions, and advisory firms to consider how investors are adapting their strategies amid geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty. Critically, however, time was given to where the opportunities for long-term cooperation are to be found across private markets, infrastructure, and technology. The second, Building Next-Generation Cities, examined the transition from vision to implementation, reviewing examples of development projects within Saudi Arabia and the practices that govern the delivery of infrastructure, cultural destinations, and urban neighbourhoods at scale. Sustainability was a clear target topics across this sessions, noting the balance to be sought across infrastructure and the giga projects to ensure that the value chain is realised.

The Council is extremely thankful to the speakers who gave their time to the discussions held across the day, and to all who attended, whose participation kept the relationship between the United Kingdom

and Saudi Arabia at the forefront of priorities in both countries. A separate, more in depth, post-Summit report will also be available soon.