

Summary RBF, 11th November 2025

The forum began with welcomes and introductions, with an overview explaining the merger of the Charity Forum and the Social Value Forum into a single central hub for Responsible Business. Tom Nadin then provided an update on changes at Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, including the resignation of the former CEO due to external commitments. Chris Plant has stepped into the Interim CEO role, while Tom now serves as Interim Deputy CEO, with recruitment for a permanent CEO expected to conclude by mid-2026. Tom also reiterated the Chamber's mission of supporting prosperity, ethical business practices, and innovation across the region, underpinned by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Following this, members explored the future direction of the Responsible Business Forum through four themed discussions: the Responsible Business Accelerator, Opportunities for Young People, Social Impact Measuring, and Commissioning and Procurement. The Accelerator discussion focused on helping organisations embed responsible and sustainable practices through clearer impact measurement, shared learning, practical tools, and cross-sector collaboration. The group emphasised that businesses often want to act responsibly but lack capacity and clarity, highlighting the importance of accessible frameworks and examples of good practice. The Opportunities for Young People group explored barriers such as misconceptions around work experience, inconsistent careers advice, and confusing apprenticeship routes. They stressed the need for clearer employer guidance, inclusive recruitment, and increased visibility of positive pathways through case studies and school engagement. The Social Impact Measuring group discussed how consistent frameworks, better data sharing, and qualitative insights such as lived experiences could help organisations demonstrate and improve their impact. Meanwhile, the Commissioning and Procurement group explored how procurement can drive ethical business behaviour by valuing social, environmental and governance outcomes rather than focusing purely on cost, calling for simpler frameworks, clearer communication, and more support for SMEs and local suppliers.

The forum also received an update on the Responsible Business Accelerator programme itself, which provides businesses with a structured framework, tailored pledges, impact-tracking tools, and one-to-one support to embed responsible business practices. Developed with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in mind, the programme aims to make responsible practices more accessible,

particularly for SMEs and VCSEs, and is currently being piloted with organisations in Stoke-on-Trent through UKSPF funding, with further plans to expand into East Staffordshire. The meeting closed with a reminder that all Chamber forums will continue to link discussions to the UNSDGs, reflecting the Chamber's commitment to raising awareness of these goals among local businesses. The next meeting was confirmed for Thursday 19th February 2026 at Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.