

# NEWCASTLE BUILDS POST-BREXIT TRADE LINKS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST



Newcastle NE1, the city's Business Improvement District (BID), is supporting the city's businesses to forge worldwide trading links as the country prepares for Brexit.

NE1 has organised a visit from the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce (ABCC), which represents businesses in a number of Arab states. Led by ABCC Secretary General and Chief Executive Dr Afnan Al Shuaiby, and ABCC Director of Trade Service Abdeslam El-Idrissi the delegates visited leading Newcastle companies and institutions.

NE1 Chief Executive Sean Bullick said: "The result of the EU referendum brought an element of risk to the North East's position as an exporter and while we are sure the Government will do its best to maintain our trade links in Europe and build more in the wider world, we are taking the initiative and are proactively building links that will sustain and grow Newcastle's economy, regardless of the result of the Brexit negotiations."

The visit focused on some of the areas where companies in the Newcastle City Region have complementary interests in the Middle East, namely subsea engineering and renewable energy, science and healthcare, and education.

It was organised to promote opportunities for business, investment, trade, knowledge transfer and learning, and to strengthen links between Arab speaking countries and Newcastle.

Highlights of the trip included visits to Pearson Engineering at the city's historic Armstrong Works, Shepherd Offshore in Wallsend, the Institute for Genetic Medicine at the International Centre for Life and Newcastle University.



Bruce Shepherd, Managing Director of Shepherd Offshore, said: "The visit was extremely informative, we will be having a further meeting to discuss future projects in the Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf".

In addition to this, the visitors hoped to raise the economic, trade and diplomatic profile of Arab nations by meeting and sharing ideas with regional figures on issues such as research, governance, regional economics and new technologies.

Professor Lyle Armstrong, Professor of Cellular

Reprogramming at the Institute of Genetic Medicine, said: "What we do with our STEM work in Newcastle affects everyone in the world. We want to role this out as a treatment for any disease, for anyone in any part of the world. International trade links are of enormous importance to us not only for finding new markets that we can adapt our cures to, but also for attracting inward investment that helps our university and our corporate operations to prosper.

Abdeslam El-Idrissi said: "We are delighted to have visited Newcastle and would like to thank our hosts Newcastle NE1 Limited for helping to organise our trip. There are a number of areas where the interests and expertise of Newcastle and the Arab nations complement one another and we are keen to explore them.

"This visit has allowed us to further friendship, co-operation and engagement with the people and companies of the North East. It is clear that there is much commercial potential in Arab-British collaboration which we hope to unlock."

Sean Bullick added: "We are honoured to have welcomed the delegates from the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce to Newcastle. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase what Newcastle city region's world class businesses have to offer countries in the Arabic world. We have world leaders in sectors such as offshore and renewables, science, health, science and education, all of which are areas of interest to our visitors."