

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Mark Bretton
Chair, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Mark has chaired the Hertfordshire LEP Board since 2016 and also chairs the Enterprise Zone Programme Board which leads the development of Hertfordshire's Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone. Mark was previously Managing Director in the Operations business of Accenture, before which he held leadership positions at Tata Consultancy Services, Royal Mail and Siemens. He is also on the Business Leaders Council of the charity Teach First, which aims to address educational disadvantage in England and Wales.



Paul Clarke
Chief Technology Officer, Ocado

Paul joined Ocado in 2006. After establishing new teams for simulation and mobile development, he co-wrote the first of Ocado's award-winning mobile apps. In his current role, Paul heads up Ocado Technology, whose 950+ software engineers and other IT specialists are responsible for building the software and IT infrastructure that powers Ocado and also Morrisons' online grocery business. Paul has worked in software engineering, consultancy, interim management and a number of software start-ups.



Christine Doel
Director, SQW

Christine is Director and Head of Markets at SQW and specialises in sustainable economic and spatial development at local, sub-national and national levels. Her specialisms include analysis, strategy and implementation planning across functional urban areas. Christine holds a PhD in economic geography from the University of Cambridge.



John Gourd
Chair, Industrial Strategy Commission

John chairs the commission that leads the development of Hertfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy. Prior to this, he served as Chair of Hertfordshire LEP from July 2011 to June 2016, and as Business Representative on the Board until March 2018. John is the Site Planning and Services Director at Johnson Matthey in Royston, a chemicals and sustainable technologies company.



Neil Hayes
Executive Director, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Neil has led the Executive Team of Hertfordshire LEP since its creation in 2010. Under his tenure, Hertfordshire LEP has pursued the priorities set out in its Strategic Economic Plan and secured over £309m funding to support economic growth within the county. Prior to joining the LEP, Neil was Head of the Economic Development Unit at Hertfordshire County Council and Head of Partnerships at the East of England Development Agency. Neil's early career was in business support working for Business Link and the British Chambers of Commerce.



Professor Damian Ward
Dean of Hertfordshire Business School and Professor of Business Economics, University of Hertfordshire

Professor Ward has worked in a number of UK business schools and is a recognised authority on the teaching of business economics and applied business economic research. With a wealth of experience teaching in-company degrees for major global brands including the BBC and Emirates Airlines, Professor Ward connects learning to real management problems. In research, Professor Ward has applied economic models and big data analysis techniques to contemporary issues in financial economics. His work has been cited by the World Bank and he acted as an advisor to the UK Financial Services Authority.