**Utility Week Press Questions & Notes**

* **What can we learn from countries such as India, China, Germany and France when it comes to industrial strategy?**
* **India** had Nasscom which pulled together the top technology companies and changed 78 laws over 20 years. The focus moved overtime from India first, to think digital think India,
* **China** has a more central control planning approach which feels more like what the Victorians may have done but it's not achievable in a democracy.
* **Germany** do things like start vocational pathways much earlier
* **France** however much better coordinated civil service, which is illustrated by the withdrawal of Afghanistan, and how the business department closely follows our military.
* **Why is there a danger in thinking we can ‘wing it’ when it comes to industrial development?**
* Will not have the right resource in place
* will waste time and money on false hopes, and the idea of the time
* will miss ability to seize material opportunities
* **How do you see the current state of play when it comes to UK industrial strategy?**
* You would expect that this is something the Department of Business would do
* The department of business is doing work in this space, for example they will soon announce the results of their advanced manufacturing review
* HM treasury is also doing work in this space
* but it appears that neither is reaching through the economy to all the right people
* we aim and expect to become that conduit

1. **What is Winmark currently doing to create a vision for UK industrial strategy?** 
   * Most organisations and people when they look at an industrial strategy pick 4 to 5 sectors that they believe have great potential or are popular
   * We see the UK economy more like a forest and we need to help the big trees and the saplings and keep the forest clean and tidy so it can all flourish. This helps build much deeper resilience, diversity and ensures a broader community is included, thereby supporting the sustainability, levelling up and skills agendas.
   * As a result we are clustering all sectors into five groupings, and asking each of those groupings what they are currently doing, what they would like to see happen and where we should focus. Then we will have a focus and a plan, but that is 10% of our job. 90% is about facilitating and encouraging the implementation of that plan.

* **Why did you decide to do this as a private initiative?**

We were asked to do this by our NED network that represents around 800 plc. We then talked to a lot of people and we identified lots of activity but no vision or coordinated plan to pull it together. So we are doing this because we have been asked to, we know the people already and are pros at facilitating groups and planning.

In the end it is the private sector that will deliver the majority of industrial strategy, so it makes sense to start with them. Stats are:

* Revenue - the private sector accounts for 90% of the UKs revenue
* Employment - the private sector employs 75% of all people in the UK
* Innovation – off all the money invested 70% comes from the private sector
* **How could this ultimately end up influencing government?**
  + It is very important for business and investors to have a favourable and stable environment and Government plays a key role in making this happen. So it is very important that Government is engaged with us.
* We're not a lobbying organisation instead we do what is known as policy engagement.
* The way we mainly interface with government is through membership of our existing networks, which many state departments and regulators are already members of.
* We are aiming to achieve broad alignment within the private sector, to then bring on board the independent public bodies, such as regulators, then the state departments and then the politicians.
* **What does the current uncertainty over HS2 say about UK industrial strategy?**
  + This uncertainty is not useful, costs the economy a lot of money and is obviously stressful for all the people involved and employed by HS2.
  + These big infrastructure decisions need to be made and delivered on, and we need a reputation for doing this.
  + Flipping back and forth damages the UK brand as a good place to invest. Investors will vanish if the UK Government is not seen as a reliable partner.
  + Changing ministers and civil servants, can mean the business cases and technical skills and knowledge are lost.
* **Why is stability in government important to industrial strategy (e.g. low ministerial turnover)?**
  + This is key and the main complaint of the private sector towards Government.
  + Instability kills investment, local and international, and therefore damages the future economy. We must remember that for every $1 invested the ROI is roughly $3.7
* **What is the potential for export of British renewable energy and other green technology if we get industrial strategy right?**
  + Not an area of expertise but obviously first we need to put the plumbing in place for ourselves. Then may be we could stop buying electricity from France and instead start exporting across Europe. Many European states are still highly dependent on Russia, so being a reliable European source should be welcomed at a geopolitical level.
* **What should the next government focus on when it comes to UK industrial strategy?**

**Three things would be very useful.**

* + Clarity of who to talk to about what at national, regional and local levels.
  + Support this national planning initiative to help ensure a bright future for the UK.
  + Create a stable environment for the UK and business.