# East Midlands business leaders share insights for 2024



As 2024 unfolds, Business Link Magazine has once again reached out to key leaders within the East Midlands business community to glean their insights and forecasts for the year ahead. This tradition, now over 30 years old, enables regional stakeholders to assess the evolving landscape and strategise for the coming months.

Vinod Patel, a Deal Advisory Partner at BDO LLP, shared his perspective on the current state of East Midlands businesses. Despite ongoing macro-economic challenges that have created a tough trading environment, Patel noted the resilience and ambition inherent in the region. The East Midlands is recognised for its robust manufacturing, logistics, and technology sectors, which are poised to transform in the near future. “Businesses that successfully leverage emerging technologies and automation will attain enhanced productivity and efficiencies,” Patel remarked, highlighting the significance of these advancements in light of labour shortages, tight budgets, and ambitious growth targets.

The recent Autumn Budget has introduced additional pressures for businesses in the area. Patel pointed out that the increase in National Insurance Contributions (NIC) might lead to difficult decisions regarding payroll management, including potential reductions in headcount, postponed pay increases, and recruitment freezes. This situation may compel companies to rethink their pricing strategies to manage the unavoidable rise in operational costs.

He emphasised the importance of investment in education and skills development within the East Midlands to prepare the workforce for the rapid changes in job market demands. Local educational institutions must engage more deeply with businesses to develop training programmes tailored to emerging needs. The retention of talent within the region is critical, bolstered by its appealing mix of urban and rural living, affordable housing, quality education, healthcare, and a diverse array of cultural and recreational opportunities.

Furthermore, Patel highlighted the region’s strong transport infrastructure, which includes major motorways and rail links, as well as proximity to East Midlands Airport. While this infrastructure supports both national and international trade, there is room for development, particularly in rail investment, to further enhance competitiveness.

Looking ahead, there is cautious optimism for the East Midlands in 2025 and beyond. A relatively stable economic outlook post-election, along with government initiatives and local enterprise partnerships geared towards fostering growth, presents an encouraging scenario. This is underscored by the recent approval of the £160 million East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ) and over £2 million allocated to the Future Energy Skills Hub (FESH). Such funding initiatives work to create a more conducive environment for business investment and expansion, essential for the region’s growth trajectory.

Patel anticipates that the market might witness interest rate reductions in the coming year, a shift that could boost deal activity, including trade, private equity, debt, and IPOs. He noted that mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity may rise as companies seek to consolidate within increasingly fragmented markets facing revenue and margin pressures.

In conclusion, Patel asserts that prioritising investment in people, technology, and infrastructure will be paramount in maintaining the East Midlands' competitiveness and forward-thinking approach in the evolving business landscape. The region's ability to adapt through innovation and collaborative efforts amongst businesses and educational institutions will be key to navigating the challenges that lie ahead.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.chesterfield.co.uk/2024/06/positive-outlook-for-east-midlands-businesses-as-new-research-shows-boost-in-sales-and-orders/> - Corroborates the positive outlook for East Midlands businesses in terms of increased sales, orders, and investment intentions.
2. <https://www.emc-dnl.co.uk/2024/12/17/downturn-in-east-midlands-business-confidence-says-latest-research/> - Supports the downturn in business confidence, including drops in sales, orders, and profit expectations, and the impact of price pressure and recruitment challenges.
3. <https://www.icaew.com/technical/economy/business-confidence-monitor/east-midlands> - Provides details on the Business Confidence Index for the East Midlands, including domestic sales growth, exports, and challenges such as regulatory requirements and competition.
4. <https://www.eastmidlandsbusinesslink.co.uk/mag/news/east-midlands-businesses-begin-2024-with-growth-in-confidence/> - Highlights the growth in business confidence in the East Midlands at the start of 2024, including targets for growth and investment in teams and technology.
5. <https://www.chesterfield.co.uk/2024/06/positive-outlook-for-east-midlands-businesses-as-new-research-shows-boost-in-sales-and-orders/> - Mentions the importance of investment in new equipment and training, aligning with Patel's emphasis on leveraging emerging technologies.
6. <https://www.emc-dnl.co.uk/2024/12/17/downturn-in-east-midlands-business-confidence-says-latest-research/> - Discusses the impact of increased National Insurance Contributions on payroll management and pricing strategies, echoing Patel's concerns.
7. <https://www.icaew.com/technical/economy/business-confidence-monitor/east-midlands> - Supports the need for investment in education and skills development to prepare the workforce for changing job market demands.
8. <https://www.eastmidlandsbusinesslink.co.uk/mag/news/east-midlands-businesses-begin-2024-with-growth-in-confidence/> - Highlights the region's strong transport infrastructure and its role in supporting national and international trade.
9. <https://www.chesterfield.co.uk/2024/06/positive-outlook-for-east-midlands-businesses-as-new-research-shows-boost-in-sales-and-orders/> - Mentions the cautious optimism for the East Midlands due to a stable economic outlook and government initiatives, such as the East Midlands Investment Zone.
10. <https://www.icaew.com/technical/economy/business-confidence-monitor/east-midlands> - Supports the anticipation of interest rate reductions and their potential impact on deal activity, including M&A and other financial transactions.
11. <https://www.emc-dnl.co.uk/2024/12/17/downturn-in-east-midlands-business-confidence-says-latest-research/> - Emphasizes the importance of prioritizing investment in people, technology, and infrastructure to maintain competitiveness, as highlighted by Patel.
12. <https://www.eastmidlandsbusinesslink.co.uk/mag/featured/2025-business-predictions-vinod-patel-deal-advisory-partner-at-bdo-llp/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data