

## CPI engages in top level talks on UK manufacturing



**The first of a series of round table discussions on the future of UK manufacturing, part sponsored by CPI on behalf of the corrugated packaging industry, has taken place at Westminster. Ministerial level MPs and Peers were present from all main parties and CPI was joined by other manufacturing interests, including the Food and Drink Federation.**

The debate was fuelled by research that was carried out amongst politicians, business people and the general public in February. Its key findings were:

- Negative perceptions of the manufacturing sector are seen as detrimental to attracting talent: one of the most important themes to have emerged from the research so far is the need to promote a positive story around manufacturing in this country, to bust popular misconceptions about how impoverished the sector is and remind everyone how internationally competitive and renowned the UK remains at making and designing things.
- 'Improving our Skills Base' is seen as an important lever for the government to pull in order to improve the perception of UK manufacturing: if the UK manufacturing sector enjoys little prestige among school-leavers and university graduates, as part of a wider phenomenon in which it is under-appreciated by society at large, this may be depriving it of the talent that can make it increasingly internationally competitive, as well as engendering a skills deficit which could be obstructing further inward investment.

Andy Barnetson, CPI's Corrugated Sector Manager, has been involved in the pro-manufacturing initiative from the beginning. "We are starting to hear more positive attitudes from senior politicians towards manufacturing in the UK, and we are trying to get them to turn these attitudes into more supportive policies by providing them with research, engaging them in discussion, and then following up with recommendations for action.

The corrugated packaging industry acts as an excellent barometer of all the pressures on manufacturing generally. Since we recruit people at all levels, and from the entire academic spectrum, we see the need to encourage more people to choose manufacturing as a career.

We believe there is more potential for products of all types to be manufactured in the UK with the right conditions. There is more to manufacturing than the prestigious sectors like pharmaceuticals and aerospace; the food and drink industry and the packaging that goes with it are equally vital to Britain's prosperity.

It is quite right that we start by considering the perception of manufacturing, but there are many other issues to address as the debate continues. In order to generate sustained growth in manufacturing we need less regulation and a better understanding from Government on the cumulative impact of this regulation, which often crosses several government departments.

We are getting our messages across to the policy-makers and by the end of this year we are aiming to have made significant progress towards a new strategic vision for manufacturing in the UK."

### ENDS

For further information please contact Andrew Barnetson, Corrugated Sector Manager, on 01793 889602 or email [abarnetson@paper.org.uk](mailto:abarnetson@paper.org.uk).

### Notes to Editors

- CPI is the voice of the paper industry in the UK, representing papermakers, tissue manufacturers, corrugated packaging producers and recovered paper merchants.
- CPI represents 73 Member Companies, with a combined annual turnover of £4 billion and 19,600 personnel.
- For additional information on the UK paper industry, in the first instance, please contact Annabel Acton, Communications Coordinator, on 01793 889612 or email [aacton@paper.org.uk](mailto:aacton@paper.org.uk). Alternatively, please visit: <http://www.paper.org.uk>.