

# Making it in Leeds

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News release from Leeds Manufacturing

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## Buying locally ‘key to UK and Yorkshire recovery’

Business leaders and advisers are uniting behind a call for ‘common sense’ business policy to help businesses in the UK, and particularly Yorkshire, to grow.

Experts from the CBI, Leeds, York & North Yorkshire Chamber and Deloitte met this week to discuss how to rally businesses to review their procurement policies to benefit local and regional manufacturing businesses and the environment.

The weakened pound, near record high freight charges and carbon incentives together with increasingly competitive UK products and a desire to keep UK plc growing, are behind a call to shorten supply chains and source more components and supplies as close to home as possible.

Andrew Palmer of the CBI said: “Never before has there been more reason to buy British, and from within the region if at all possible. The growth of the economy and future job creation could be given a massive boost by even a small increase in the percentage of goods sourced here, and we are urging firms to invest time in refreshing supplier databases to try and find new trading relationships here in the region.”

“We aren’t pretending that every component or material can be found on your doorstep, but we do know that there are many instances where a little time spent on research could deliver efficiencies for the buyer, reduce costs and benefit the local and regional economy, and that is just sensible,” he added.

Many billions are spent by Yorkshire firms, public sector bodies and other organisations each year, and just a ten per cent rise in regionally sourced supplies could boost the economy dramatically and create thousands of extra jobs at a time when public sector job cuts make them more desperately needed than ever.

“It has never made more sense for Yorkshire businesses to buy raw materials, components and even finished products locally. The UK is still the 6<sup>th</sup> largest manufacturing base in the world, and accounts for 15% of UK GDP. We play a significant part in this story, and have successful manufacturers all over the region that could be key to Yorkshire’s economic recovery,” said David Raistrick, national head of manufacturing at Deloitte, based in Leeds.

“It would be wrong to suggest that everything could be sourced regionally or even nationally, or that we should buy more expensive or less appropriate products in favour of their origin, but equally there are really good arguments for revisiting supplier databases and seeing what new entrants have emerged in recent years, and if you can’t find it in Yorkshire, at least source from the UK if at all possible, this is particularly so at present, whilst manufacturing undergoes such a strong revival” He added.

Gary Williamson, chief executive at the Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber said: “Local authorities and government bodies must adhere to strict competitive guidelines when it comes to procurement, but a key component of these is environmental impact, and the shorter the distance from maker to consumer the lower the carbon impact of the product.

“Whilst we can never be self sufficient, we tend to forget that businesses here manufacture a huge range of products, and if we all look to source closer to home where possible we will create jobs, reduce carbon emissions and keep more of our money flowing around the UK economy.”

There are tens of thousands of manufacturers within the Yorkshire and Humber region, and the products they manufacture range from medical devices, micro chips and robots to packaging, textiles, heavy steel fabrications and even vehicles such as passenger buses, fire engines and gritters.

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**Photography:** From left, Gary Williamson, chief executive at the Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber, David Raistrick, national head of manufacturing at Deloitte, based in Leeds and Andrew Palmer of the CBI.

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#### **Notes for editors**

Leeds Manufacturing is a joint initiative by Leeds Chamber of Commerce and Leeds City Council which aims to raise the profile of individual manufacturing companies in Leeds and promote the city as a centre for manufacturing excellence. Further case studies on Leeds manufacturing companies are available online at: [www.leedsmanufacturing.co.uk](http://www.leedsmanufacturing.co.uk)