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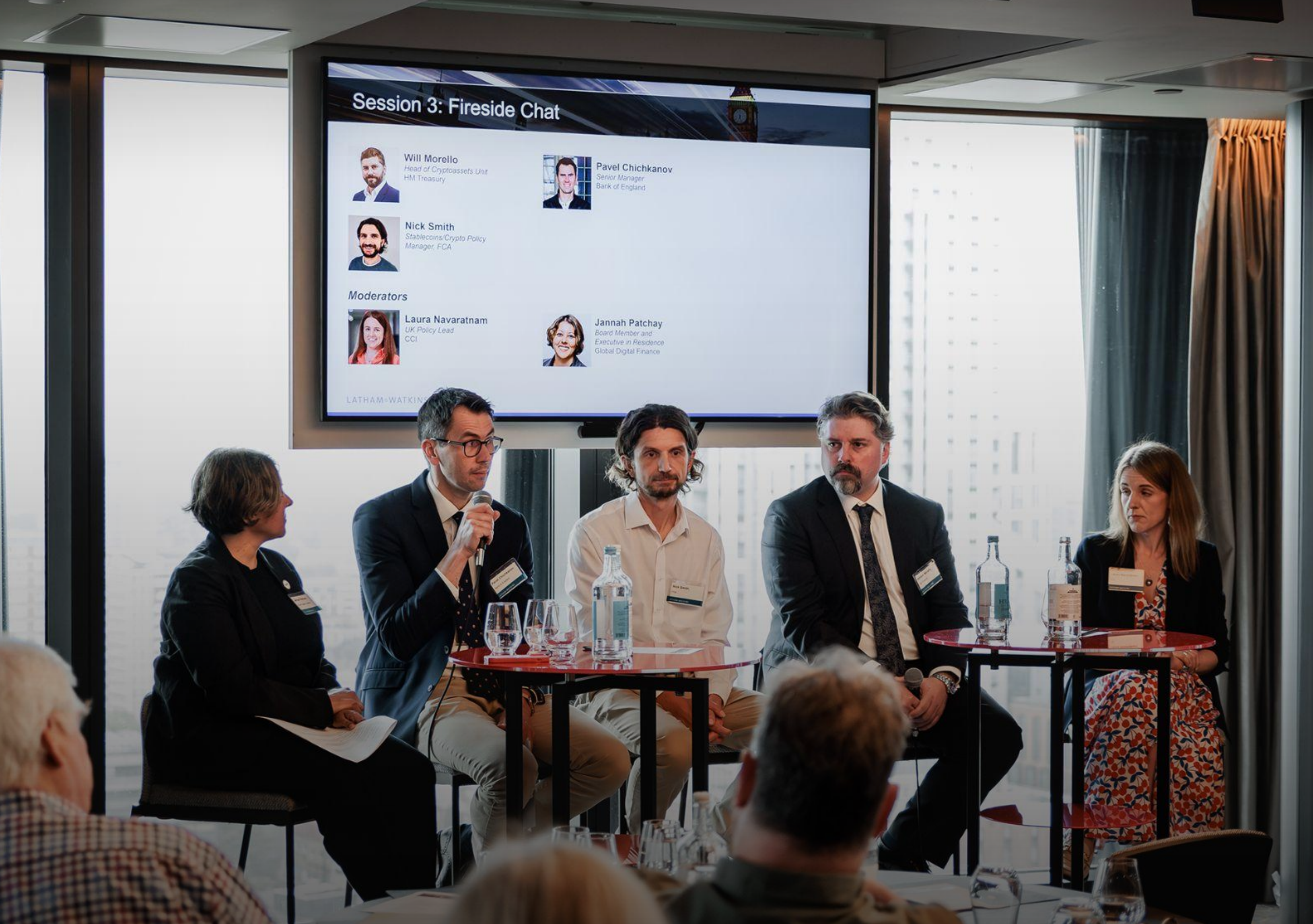


UK Policy to Practice Conference 2026

June 11, 2026

Introduction

On June 11, the Crypto Council for Innovation, Latham & Watkins and Global Digital Finance convened for their annual UK conference in London. From Policy to Practice: Making the UK Crypto Regime Work brought together legislators, firms, advisers and policymakers across five sessions, with regulators and public-sector voices sitting alongside firms building under the new regime, making for a discussion which was uniquely honest and practical rather than theoretical.

After a multi-year consultation process, the UK has moved from designing rules to implementing them. The consultations have been published, industry has responded, and firms are already preparing for authorisation. The question is no longer what the regime should say, it is whether the regime works in practice, and whether the UK can convert a well-designed framework into a functioning market that competes on a global scale.

The day was structured to test that question from every angle. The first session brought together the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Xapo Bank, Agant, and Blockdaemon to examine authorisation, applications and supervision, and what the FCA expects of firms entering the gateway. Next, Fireblocks, TRM Labs, PayPal, and MoonPay touched on important topics such as governance, custody and safeguarding, operational resilience, and AML.

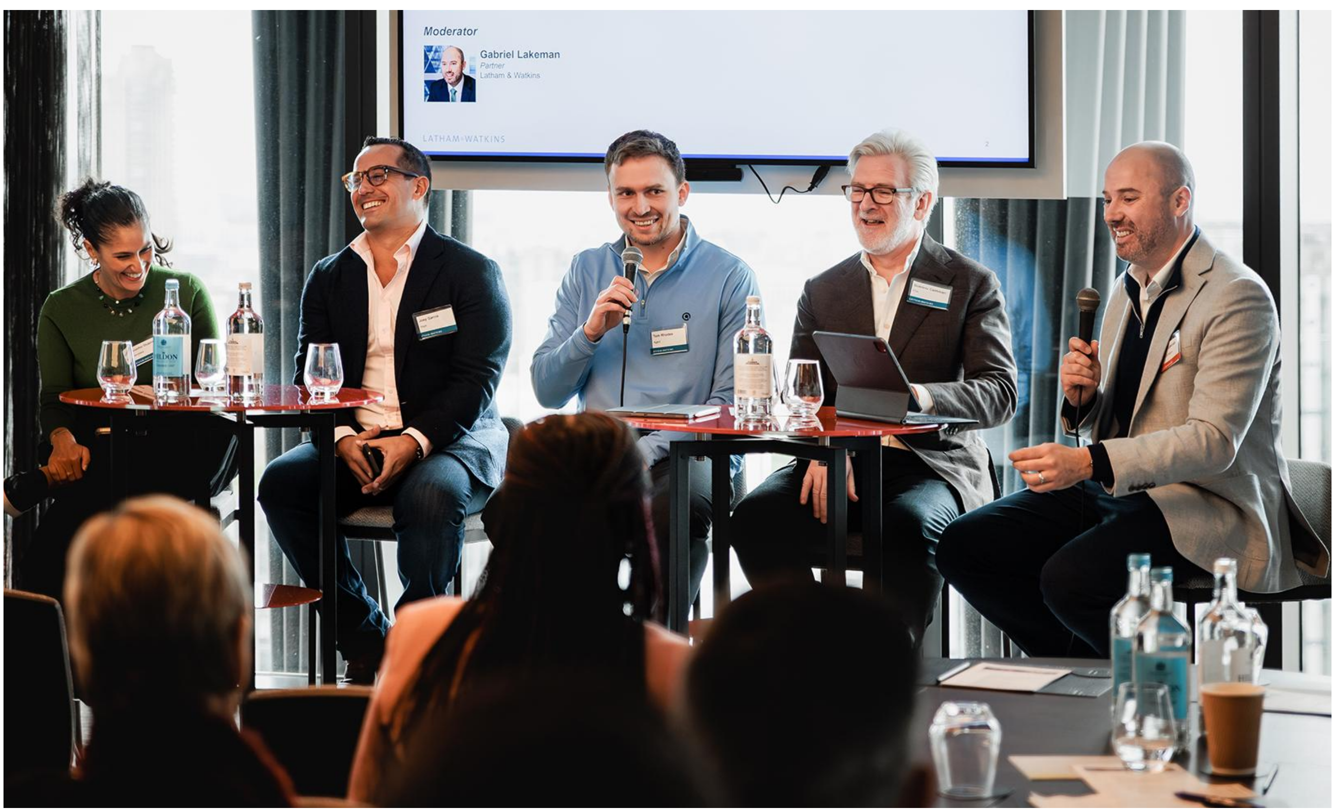
As we know, tech does not exist in a silo. Where the UK sits in the global context is just as important as what is happening domestically. Binance, Mesh, Bitpanda, and Schroders provided this global context, drawing upon lessons navigating new regimes elsewhere.

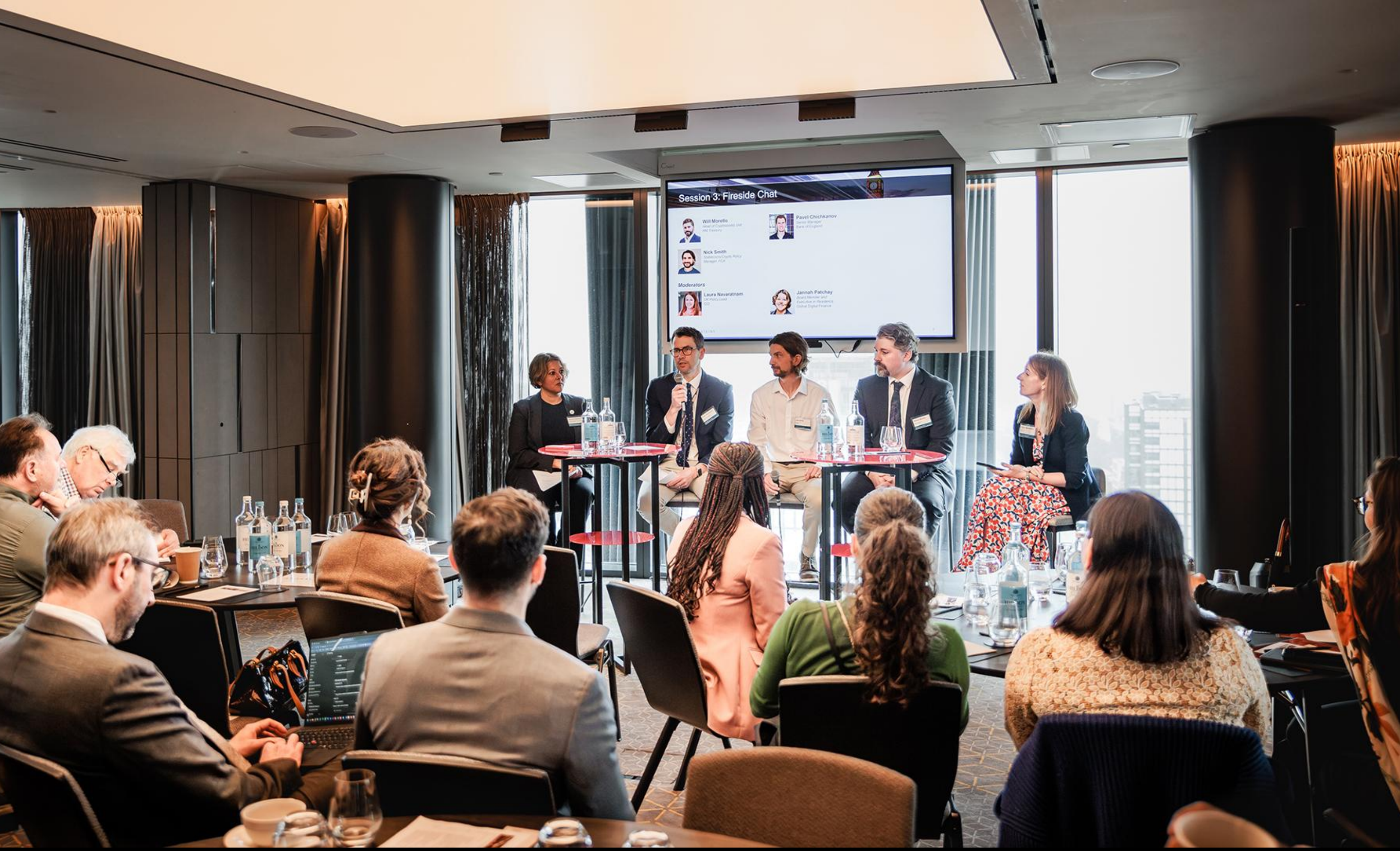
In the afternoon, UK regulators took the stage, providing first hand insights for the industry. We thank the FCA, HM Treasury, and the Bank of England for their time and crucial perspectives on next steps.

Rounding out the day, and bringing the conversation back home, Lord Holmes brought important political context and dynamics, reminding the audience of the importance of identifying digital asset opportunities in every bill - whether social housing, education, defense or civil aviation - as it comes through Parliament. The closing plenary with policy leaders from Stripe, Circle, Coinbase and Kraken, brought a strategic perspective by identifying what was needed to move forward decisively. This included regulatory fixes, enhanced coordination, changing the public narrative, and global harmonisation.

Overall, six themes ran through the discussion and they form the structure of this report. The pages that follow set out each in turn. The conference worked because of the people in the room. Our thanks to Latham & Watkins for hosting, to Unblocked for coordinating the day, and to Global Digital Finance for partnering with us across the programme. We are grateful to every speaker and moderator who gave their time and candour. The work now moves from the conference hall to the authorisation gateway, and we look forward to convening this group again next year to take stock of how far the UK has travelled.

Laura Navaratnam
Crypto Council for Innovation





6 Key Themes & Takeaways

1. From policy to delivery — the regime is real

"The debate is over. The UK has moved from writing the rules to running them — and the clock is now ticking for firms."

After a multi-year consultation, the UK framework has shifted decisively from design to implementation. The authorisation gateway is opening imminently and the new regime is now a near-term operational reality rather than a policy ambition.

- Five consolidated policy statements will set out the full crypto regime, in addition to further papers on systemic stablecoins, Perimeter Guidance and DeFi-specific guidance.
- Firms should start preparing now based on what is already public; the final regime will look broadly as it did in the consultation papers. The FCA is looking to ensure case officer continuity from early meetings like pre-applications all the way through to authorisation.
- The practical message from the FCA was begin governance, compliance hiring, and systems build now. The window between the gateway opening and the regime going live is too short to start late, and there is no advantage to filing a shell application early.

2. Political clarity is the missing ingredient

"Get off the fence. The UK declared its ambition to be a digital-assets hub years ago — now it needs the political conviction to match it."

Across the discussion, the single most consistent ask of government was clear, coordinated, top-level direction. Industry sees the regulatory machinery moving, but feels the absence of a unified political narrative.

- Competitor jurisdictions are winning on conviction. For example, top-down signalling to regulators in the US, multi-year strategy enabled by political stability in the UAE, and hands-on public-private engagement in Singapore.
- Mixed messaging across the Treasury, regulators and the central bank as well as government turnover has diluted the UK's flow-through effect to the wider market.
- The new Digital Markets Champion should help unlock confidence across the ecosystem but this needs to be combined with a cabinet-level focus on growth and positioning digital assets as a driver of UK financial-services leadership.

3. The perimeter is a coastline, not a clean line

"The regulatory perimeter is the coast of Norway, not the English Channel. Around 95% of cases are obvious — the hard part lives in the fjords."

Most firms will know whether they are in scope. The difficulty, and the demand for guidance, concentrates at the edges of the perimeter where novel structures sit.

- Determining perimeter status is ultimately the firm's responsibility, taken with legal advisers. Regulators have signalled they will not make definitive determinations on every complex edge case.
- DeFi, staking arrangements, self-custody wallets, and the interfaces between regulated firms and technology providers remain the hardest grey areas, and the most commercially important to resolve.
- Guidance will interpret, not rewrite, the underlying law; firms are advised to conduct their own perimeter analysis now rather than wait for definitive answers that may not come.

4. Operational resilience in a 24/7, irreversible world

"A blockchain doesn't take weekends off. If an incident hits at 3am, someone in the UK has to be awake and accountable."

Blockchain's instant, irreversible settlement breaks the traditional-finance playbook of batch cycles, maintenance windows, and reversible transactions. Resilience frameworks have to be rebuilt around that reality.

- Round-the-clock incident response with genuine UK-based senior-management authority is expected. So called "mind and management" cannot be centralised offshore, and incidents will test whether documented controls actually work.
- Zero-trust architecture is becoming a baseline, with multi-signature wallets, role-based access and threshold approvals meaning no single point can move large funds unchecked.
- A common mistake is divorcing authorisation paperwork from operational reality. Firms should start by looking internally at the systems and controls they have in place, and ensuring these are sufficient. Authorisation should not be viewed as a theoretical exam.

5. Financial crime is evolving faster than the controls

"The threat actors iterate daily. Sanctioned wallets can change twice a day — annual reviews simply can't keep pace."

Crypto-native financial crime is moving faster than the frameworks designed to contain it, and the weakest link is increasingly outside the firm itself.

- Third-party providers rather than core platforms are now the primary attack vector, making due diligence on critical service providers essential.
- Real-time sanctions screening and transaction monitoring must update many times a day, yet the tooling to do this at the required pace is still maturing, even as AI-enabled fraud accelerates.
- The opportunity is integrated intelligence — joining up cyber, fraud, and AML with data-led, "agentic" supervision that leverages blockchain's native transparency rather than manual reporting burden.

6. Compete globally with proportion, not prescription

"The UK's edge isn't more rules — it's smarter ones. Outcomes over box-ticking, proportion over prescription."

The UK's comparative advantage lies in an outcomes-based approach, but it only works if it is genuinely proportionate and avoids the duplicative friction firms face elsewhere.

- Proportionality is crucial. Requirements calibrated identically for a 15-person start-up and a global bank block innovation from smaller firms before they can prove market viability.
- Cross-border passporting and equivalence are "close to impossible" in practice; the UK should avoid forcing firms into duplicate licences and compliance stacks across jurisdictions.
- The prize is substantial: deep capital markets, a trusted legal system, and a multi-money ecosystem where regulated stablecoins, tokenised deposits, and central bank money interoperate seamlessly at par.

The next 12–18 months will decide whether the UK secures its seat at the global digital-assets table, or cedes ground to faster-moving jurisdictions.