



East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

Co-Chairs
Vice-Chairs

Peter Aldous MP and Daniel Zeichner MP
Jonathan Djanogly MP, Julie Marson MP, Giles Watling
MP, Baroness Janet Cohen

Secretary
Treasurer

Clive Lewis MP
Dr Dan Poulter MP

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING

10.30 to 11.30 am, Tuesday 4th February, Committee Room 14

1. Welcome and introductions

- Daniel Zeichner MP and Peter Aldous MP welcomed all attendees to the meeting and the MPs present also introduced themselves.

2. Agreement on the registered purpose of the Group

- It was agreed that the purpose of the APPG would continue to be "To bring together east of England's MPs and Peers with elected local leaders - and the private and third sectors - to give a strong political voice for policies which support the east of England's economy and promote its potential as a place to work, study, live and invest."

3. Election of officers

- The following officers were agreed for the APPG in the new Parliament:
 - **Co-Chairs** Peter Aldous MP and Daniel Zeichner MP
 - **Vice Chairs** Rachel Hopkins MP, Jonathan Djanogly MP, Julie Marson MP, Giles Watling MP, Baroness Janet Cohen
 - **Secretary** Clive Lewis MP
 - **Treasurer** Dr Dan Poulter MP

4. Discussion regards APPG Priorities in Advance of the Budget

- The Chair said that because this meeting is taking place just five weeks before the Budget (on 11th March), there will be a general discussion regards the APPG's priorities with the intention that following the meeting a letter from the Co-chairs outlining key issues for attention will be agreed and sent to the Chancellor.
- It was also pointed out that there have been a number strategy documents produced in 2019 including the EE APPG's [An Engine for the Nation's Prosperity](#), the (draft) joint report from both the [UK Innovation Corridor and East of England APPGs: Infrastructure for Innovation and Inclusion](#) and the UK Innovation Corridor APPG's - [Local Industrial Strategy Growth Prospectus](#).

- *Adam Brown, Manager for Infrastructure, Cities and Regions and Sectors at Cambridge Econometrics then presented the as yet unpublished report – [An Economic Strategy for the East of England](#). He made the following points:*
- The UK Economy is at something of a critical moment, faced with a number of major challenges and opportunities. From the Climate Crisis to the Productivity Puzzle, the opportunities of the coming 4th Industrial Revolution, the challenges of dealing with an ageing society, increasing levels of inequality and regional disparities, to identifying our position in a post-Brexit global economy, these challenges cannot be overcome, and these opportunities cannot be seized, without the concerted effort of every UK region
- So rather than asking what the government can do for the regions, perhaps we should be asking, what can the regions do for the nation. As such, I'd like to frame this discussion around the question of what can the East of England do to address these challenges, to seize these opportunities, and what support does it need to be enabled to do this to the best of its ability.
- The East of England has been an economic success story over the past 40 years, with employment expanding by 70% since 1971, behind only the South West and the South East, and labour productivity reaching a level at £49,000 per worker in 2018, ranking third in England behind London and the South East.
- We're all aware of the world-leading university and associated globally-significant tech clusters in and around Cambridge, the UK's leading hub of innovation and knowledge generation outside of London, but there are also region-wide specialisations in the professional, technical & scientific services and information & communication sectors, and a range of complementary specialisms, most notably in agri-food, offshore renewables, tourism, and construction, as well as some niche high-value manufacturing. Crucially, the East of England has the highest proportion of employment in scientific research and development of any UK region, at 1.1% of total employment in 2017, compared to a national average of just 0.4%, putting it at the heart of the UK's knowledge and innovation economy.
- Rapidly changing global markets for products as diverse as electronic devices, Agri-Food, off-site construction and digital Professional Services represent an opportunity for the UK to cement its leading position in global innovation networks. As the R&D hub of the nation, no region is better placed to build on existing strengths in the underlying technologies to really grab these opportunities than the East of England. Furthermore, the region can, and should, take the lead in tackling the four National Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges; with a leading role to play in developing Artificial Intelligence and Data, tackling the challenges of an Ageing Society, delivering Clean Growth and driving forward the Future of Mobility.
- However, the region cannot and will not reach its full economic potential without the development of a coherent, region-wide plan, that has the support of all its constituent geographies. Unlike other English regions, such as the West Midlands or the North East, the economy of the East of England isn't based around a single conurbation. This lack of geographical coherence presents challenges. We have severe housing and commercial space constraints throughout the south and west of the region, but most acute in Cambridge, whilst the more peripheral rural and coastal communities suffer from poor connectivity, low levels of enterprise and innovation, patchy skill-levels, and difficulties with graduate recruitment and retention.

- In many ways, a number of these problems are complementary; a strategic plan, that better integrates the region into a more coherent regional economy could simultaneously mitigate many of these issues, by enabling growth to spread more evenly and efficiently across the region as a whole. There is a major opportunity to more closely link Greater Cambridge to the rest of the region through improved transport infrastructure and the development of interlinked “knowledge corridors”, but the region has many other valuable assets, including its high-quality farmland and the East Anglian coastline. These assets offer complementary capabilities, which make up a broad regional offer that is greater than the sum of its parts.
 - Our vision of the future of the East of England is therefore a network of dynamic knowledge corridors, linking the key knowledge - and tech - clusters and institutions, to both the significant coastal and rural assets with specialisations in agri-food, logistics, offshore renewables and tourism, as well as to the wider South East region, with which it has much in common
 - Our report shows that the growth priorities of different parts of the region are entirely complementary. A co-ordinated approach, building on existing sub-regional growth plans, would provide a strong case for government support for growth in the East of England, that as we have outlined, will benefit not just the region, but the entire nation. Elsewhere across the country, we have a Northern Powerhouse, a Midlands Engine, and an Economic Heartland. Perhaps it’s time for the East of England to have a strategic vision of its own.
- *Questions and contributions were then invited from those present and included:*
- The CaMkOx corridor is of interest as there is significant new housing also attached to the scheme. Its governance should be considered as it is coherent at either end but there is nothing in the centre. It was pointed out there is support for east-west rail although not for a new road.
 - Is there a role for a Combined Authority for the whole of the East of England? There is certainly a case for closer working with the Sub National Transport Bodies and the better co-ordination – or in the first instance mapping – of the plethora of organisations across the region.
 - The A1, A120 and other roads have been of concern with MPs writing to the Chancellor seeking support.
 - We should be talking about the quality of infrastructure as well as quantity. Should we even be talking about more roads or more leaky cardboard box homes? What are needed are 21st century solutions to 20th century problems – more digital connectivity and sustainable solutions.
 - East of England has a key role in moving to zero carbon because of its renewables sector – this could be the region’s USP in the year of COP 26. Should it have its own carbon reduction target?
 - Sustainable energy and sustainable housing are both key issues for the East of England. The region has key strengths in clean tech, R&D. It should work with the EE Energy Group.
 - Within Government there is a debate about levelling up and potentially many more resources will be going to the north. There is a fear that East of England’s towns, especially its coastal towns many of which equally need regeneration, may lose out.
 - Local government may be the last bastion of austerity! In the long term, councils are a delivery agent and should have a bigger role but need a sustainable long term fairly funded future role.
 - Norwich is a member of the fast growth cities network – alongside Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Swindon. They need to be supported.
 - There is a need to extol virtues of the region more and also to recognise some areas very wealthy whilst others have considerable challenges including Clacton and Yarmouth.
 - Skills needs a ten-year approach. In the Innovation Corridor there is a skills concordat. Collaboration rather than competition has allowed the plotting of future needs. This could be a model for the rest of the region.

5. Topics for future meetings

- *The Chair reminded attendees that there was a previous plan to hold a joint meeting with the Innovation Corridor APPG. It was agreed to proceed with a joint meeting around the theme of levelling up in March. It was also noted that there had been a Regional Visit in the last Parliament and other ones - Coastal Towns or Bio-methane/Hydrogen plants were suggested - could be arranged subject to interest and funding.*
- *Suggestions for other topics for future meetings were then invited. These included:*
 - Climate change and regional contribution to net zero target
 - Local (spatial) plans – and sustainable housing growth
 - Local industrial strategies (all the region’s LEPs should have agreed strategies by end of 2020)
 - Coastal communities and regeneration
 - Sustainable infrastructure
 - Skills post Brexit
 - The Environment Bill and Agriculture Bill
 - Energy and gas distribution
 - Agile decision making - devolution
 - Digital connectivity and 5G
- *Finally, it was noted that it has been suggested that the Group prepares a further submission to the Spending Review in the Autumn and holds another summer reception.*

6. The meeting ended with a request to the Secretariat to prepare a letter to the Chancellor highlighting the agreed priorities for the region and with thanks to Adam Brown and all attendees.

ATTENDEES

Clive	Lewis	Norwich South	MP
Duncan	Baker	North Norfolk	MP
Giles	Watling	Clacton	MP
James	Wild	Norfolk North West	MP
Jerome	Mayhew	Broadland	MP
Jonathan	Djanogly	Huntingdon	MP
Rachel	Hopkins	Luton South	MP
Julie	Marson	Hertford and Stortford	MP
Paul	Burstow	Peterborough	MP
Baroness Janet	Cohen	House of Lords	Peer
Anthony	Bennett	Office of	Jo Churchill MP
Aaron	Cohen-Gold	Public Affairs Manager	University of Cambridge
Alan	Waters	Councillor	Norwich City Council
Ann	Limb	Chair	London Stansted Cambridge Consortium
Adam	Brown	Manager	Cambridge Econometrics
Alex	Riley	Programme Manager	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Arnold	Craven	External Affairs Manager	Cadent Gas
Darren	Elsom	East of England Network Director	Cadent

Graham	Lambert	Managing Director	Vinci
Hannah	Staunton	Head of External Affairs	East West Rail
Ingeborg	Oie	CFO	CMR Surgical
James	Stevens	Director for Cities	Home Builders Federation
Kate	Belinis	Chief Executive	Community Development Action Hertfordshire
Neil	Ward	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	University of East Anglia
Robert	Parker	CEO	Beechwood Homes
Ingeborg	Oie	CFO	CMR Surgical
Sian	Wotherspoon	Executive Assistant	BECG
Tom	Bennett	Head of Communications	Greater Cambridge Partnership
Victoria	Driskill	Analyst	IFM Investors
Andy	Williams	VP MedImmune	Astrazeneca
Zak	Ivany	Associate	BECG
Roy	Elmer	Public affairs	EELGA
David	Stirton	Associate	IFM Investors
James	Sloan	Senior Policy Advisor	CBI
Daniel	Johns	Head of Public Affairs	Anglia water
Clr Javier	Hussain	Board member	London Luton Airport
David	Hutt	Director	Gleeds
Alan	Todd	Cambridge lead	FSB
Richard	Bayley	Managing director	North Essex Garden Communities
Rebekah	Peacock	Consultant	Snapdragon PLMR
Jonathan	Oates	Corporate Affairs Director	LSA

Apologies

Stephen	Barclay	North East Cambridgeshire	MP
Dr Daniel	Poulter	Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	MP
Mike	Penning	Hemel Hemstead	MP
Mark	Francois	Rayleigh and Wickford	MP
Lord Bishop	Of St Albans	Bishop	House of Lords
Lord Chris	Smith	Peer	House of Lords
Sarah	Hughes	Chief Executive	Centre for Mental Health
Chris	Abraham	Interim Chief Executive	Community Action Suffolk
Dan	Thorp	Director of Policy and Programmes	Cambridge Ahead
Alessandra	Caggiano	Head of Strategic Partnerships	This Land
Andy	Walker	Head of Policy and Research	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Gillian	Beasley	Chief Executive	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils
Hans	Pung	President	RAND Europe
James	Wood	Account Director	Built Environment Communications Group (BECG)
Jane	Paterson-Todd	Chief Executive	Cambridge Ahead