



East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group

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Secretary Clive Lewis MP

Treasurer Dr Dan Poulter MP

Sent by email on 27/11/23

Dear Andrew

SIX 'ASKS' FROM THE EAST OF ENGLAND APPG IN ORDER FOR THE REGION TO MAXIMISE ITS POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION LED GROWTH

We are writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Science, Research and Innovation and look forward to engaging with you on those important set of issues given the importance of each to the East of England's growing economy.

You may be aware that your predecessor, George Freeman MP, addressed the East of England APPG on 30th October when we discussed how this region can better use innovation to deliver economic growth, levelling up and net zero. For your information the minutes of that meeting are attached, a recording of the session is available [here](#) and the background briefing paper is [here](#).

We were particularly pleased to hear the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's appreciation of the dynamism and importance of innovation to both Cambridge itself and in the wider "ABCD" - *Agri, Bio, Cleantech, Digital* - cluster that includes Norwich Research Park, Orbis Energy in Lowestoft, Adastral in Ipswich, Harlow in Essex and Bioscience Catalyst in Stevenage.

In particular, we noted that the Government now sees the UK economy as one primarily based on science, research, technology and innovation; that the forthcoming bio-engineering strategy should give a further boost to key institutes in the East of England; and that the importance of connectivity – both physical (road and rail) and digital – in order for the massive potential for innovation led growth in the East of England to be realised was acknowledged by the Department.

At the meeting at which George spoke, the ensuing presentations and discussion led to a number of key conclusions emerging. As you will read, these are presented here as questions and we would be very happy to meet to discuss your answers:

1. How could the East of England APPG and its partners work with Government to develop a narrative that recognises the whole of the East of England not just Cambridge as the Innovation Region – such that this narrative would become better known within Government as well as nationally and internationally?
2. How Government could better join up its Science, Innovation and Technology Strategy with the work of other Departments responsible for policy relevant to innovation such as DLUHC (levelling up); Energy Security and Net Zero (decarbonisation); Education (given critical importance of HE and FE to future skills); and transport (given importance of connectivity)?

3. How could DSIT best support the UK Innovation Corridor (which links Cambridge and Peterborough to London) through core funding to develop strategic programmes for example to strengthen the innovation ecosystem – with a particular foci on support for the private sector to develop supply chains and on ensuring all communities can benefit from innovation-led regional growth?
4. How can the Government work with Innovate Cambridge to nurture the Cambridge cluster so it continues to grow and deliver for the whole of UK plc? This will include how it develops 'Commons' within the city but also links within East of England, especially the tech corridor to Norwich, and to other parts of the UK eg Manchester as well as internationally eg Boston and San Francisco.
5. Norwich Research Park - with three BBRSC research centres and 30,000 employees - is already a tremendous (although little known) success story. Its further expansion would not be to the detriment of Cambridge. How will the Government support its efforts to scale up innovation opportunities so they stay in this country when they get to the manufacturing stage?
6. How will DSIT work with DLUHC (its parent Department) to assist Freeport East deliver on its four primary tasks: increasing public and private innovation spending into the Freeport East area; using innovation as an anchor for attracting new investment; strengthening the physical and digital connections that aid innovation activity; facilitating the deployment of innovations to tackle local social and economic disparities.

We very much look forward to hearing from you. If you would be happy to meet in Whitehall to discuss these issues please would you ask your officials to liaise regarding the logistics with Steve Barwick of the APPG Secretariat, who has sent this email on our behalf.

Yours sincerely



Peter Aldous MP
Co-Chair



Daniel Zeichner MP
Co-Chair

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Sent by Steve Barwick – steve@devoconnect.co.uk - East of England APPG Secretariat

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The academic partners of the East of England APPG are the Centre for Public and Policy Engagement at the University of Essex, The University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and the University of East Anglia.

