



East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group
Co-Chairs: Jess Asato MP and Andrew Pakes MP
Vice-Chairs: Blake Stephenson MP & Marie Goldman MP



Notes from the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group and East of England LGA Parliamentary Reception held Tuesday 3rd December in the Churchill Room

Ministers, Members of Parliament, and regional leaders underscored the East of England's pivotal role in driving the UK's growth ambitions at the annual East of England All-Party Parliamentary Reception. Co-hosted by the East of England Local Government Association and the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group, the event highlighted the critical investments needed to sustain the region's contributions in feeding, powering, and supplying the nation.

The other key theme of the evening was the urgent need for safe, warm, and genuinely affordable homes to support the region's growth and prosperity and a pivotal report, 'Healthy Homes in the East of England' was launched by Baroness Sharon Taylor of Stevenage, Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government. She said that the report would support not only Integrated Care Boards in the East of England but across the country.

OPPORTUNITY EAST - A VITALLY IMPORTANT INNOVATION REGION DRIVING NATIONAL SUCCESS

Jess Asato, MP for Lowestoft and Co-chair of the East of England APPG introduced speakers:

- The recently launched Opportunity East report highlighted that the East of England is a key contributor to the UK's economic growth potential. As a net contributor to the Treasury, it boasts the highest R&D spend per capita nationwide and is projected to contribute £220 billion to the economy by 2035.
- The region generates one-third of the country's clean energy, hosts the UK's largest port—handling 48% of Britain's containerised trade—and produces over £1.1 billion in farming income annually, growing over a third of the country's vegetables. Here in the East, we are feeding, supplying and powering the nation.

Cllr Graham Butland, Chair of East of England LGA remarked:

- EELGA published "Opportunity East" report 4 months ago at the Net Zero Conference in July. It made clear the East of England is a strategically important region, home to key sectors of national importance, including life sciences, leading ports, and strategic food production.
- However, key infrastructure is needed to enable the East of England to flourish, especially projects that boost physical and digital connectivity within the region. In particular, the rail projects around Ely and Haughley Junctions and East-West rail are essential for the region's future.
- Partners in the region are very ready to work with the Government to promote sustainability and inclusivity.

Gareth Thomas MP, Minister for Local Growth, Department for Business and Trade, said:

- The East of England is a centre for economic growth and productivity. The region boasts a world-leading life sciences sector with Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) located at its heart. CBC is the largest centre of life sciences and medical research in Europe, employing over 20,000 researchers, industry scientists and clinicians on one site and in close proximity to Cambridge Science Park - home to 7000 people at over 130 companies.
- In Suffolk and Norfolk, over 10,000 employees work within the life sciences sector. However, the productivity and innovation in the East of England reaches beyond the life sciences sector as the area is home to 15.3% of all farmed area in England, the region's fertile farmland supports a nationally significant £3.5bn agri-food sector.
- There are over 1,000 companies in the film and TV cluster in Hertfordshire, including TV production in Elstree Studios and Warner Bros. Sunset Studios are in the process of building a new £700m TV/film studio campus at Waltham Cross to create 4,800 jobs.
- The area is also a key driver for the governments Net Zero agenda as the area is home to over 52% of the UK's installed capacity for offshore wind, with over 1,000 wind turbines in operation off the East of England coastline.
- Central Government has made no secret of its ambition to go for growth. He endorsed the fact that the East of England is at the heart of that and the clear links between the report and the Industrial Strategy which identifies many key growth sectors in which the region excels.
- The importance of local government in sustained growth and improving outcomes for communities was emphasized.

LAUNCH OF [HEALTHY HOMES FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND](#)

Baroness Sharon Taylor, Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government, said:

- The Opportunity East report offers a clear rationale for substantial investment in infrastructure to overcome some of the region's challenges, such as water supplies and grid connections.
- This government is committed to building 1.5 million homes by the end of the Parliament and, as the report makes clear, the East of England offers the potential to build in areas with good transport links and in proximity to economic hubs.
- The "Healthy Homes in the East of England" report will be a useful tool for Integrated Care Systems across the country. I recognise the importance of the association between housing and health and the need for collaboration between housing and health sectors.
- Unfortunately, over 1.2 million people are on waiting lists for social housing and over 150,000 children are in temporary accommodation in the UK. Sometimes this accommodation is cold, damp, and can have a direct impact on people's health. This must change.
- That is why we are taking decisive action to kickstart the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation. Councils have a huge part to play in achieving this aim, and we will do everything we can to facilitate a council housebuilding revolution.
- Everyone deserves to live in a safe and decent home. This is why we are introducing Awaab's Law in the social rented sector and, taking powers to extend it to the private rented sector.
- She emphasized the need to unblock the planning system and for local leaders to grasp the historic opportunity offered by the Devolution Bill, which makes devolution the default setting.
- We will make it easier for councils to come together and form combined authorities and we will devolve more powers to existing ones – meaning access to new powers over skills, transport and employment support. You have our commitment to work with you to get Britain building again. Building communities, not just houses.

Cllr Jacqui Taylor: EELGA Spokesperson for Housing and Homelessness

- “Healthy Homes in the East of England” emphasizes the need for safe, warm, affordable social housing. The report makes key suggestions to reduce ill health and shift from treatment to prevention, in line with the Government’s view for health in the UK.
- While a net contributor to the UK economy, the East of England contains hidden pockets of deprivation and health inequalities. These need to be addressed.
- The report recognizes the importance of Integrated Care Systems in demonstrating sustainable ways of working.

James Francis, Vice Chair of Build East, commented:

- Supports the principles in “Healthy Homes in the East of England”. Energy efficiency should only be the starting point for a comprehensive approach to housing reform, and that there is a lot of work needed to boost health and wellbeing.
- James raised the importance of rent convergence to increase fairness, transparency and capacity, and is looking forward to the Long-Term Housing Strategy.
- The importance of partnership across the whole system to create healthy homes and communities was recognized. He felt there was a compelling argument to come together to create the healthy homes that we both need and want.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Charlotte Horrobin, speaking for Chambers East, reiterated:

- East of England is a net positive contributor to the Exchequer, and the region powers, feeds, and supplies the UK with offshore power powering a third of homes.
- Critical infrastructure projects are needed to remove barriers regarding digital, road, water, and energy services. The East of England is a critical artery for the UK.
- The importance of investment into Ely and Haughley Junction and development of Local Skills Improvement Plans were emphasized.

Andrew Pakes, MP for Peterborough and Co-chair of the East of England APPG, concluded:

- Everyone deserves a safe, warm, affordable, and stable home to live a good-quality life.
- It’s noted that rising costs and a shortage of quality housing in the East of England have created a challenge but, after hearing what has been said today, I am sure that councils, housing associations and the private sector will work with the region’s MPs and the Government to seize the opportunity for greater collaboration and meet that challenge.

The East of England Parliamentary Reception was kindly sponsored by:

