



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
Department for Levelling up
Housing and Communities
2 Marsham St
London
SW1P 4DF

Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA
www.cherwell.gov.uk

Please ask for: Cllr Barry Wood
Email: Barry.wood@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Direct Dial: 01295 221525

21 March 2022

Dear Secretary of State

I write on behalf of the Arc Leadership Group, a cross-party collaboration of Leaders and Chairs from local councils, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and universities from across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

As a group, we recognise the contribution this region makes to meeting the Government's ambitions for levelling up, net zero and in making the UK a global science superpower. Through our collaboration, we want to ensure our area's economic success brings value and prosperity to all our communities, now and in future; in particular, to bring greater shared prosperity to all our residents.

Despite rumours to the contrary, we understand from your senior officials that the Oxford to Cambridge region remains a priority for the government. We are told that the preference of ministers now is for collaboration to be driven by a locally led, locally defined partnership, and not through pursuing a government led Growth Body. It's on this agenda that we seek clarity as to the level of government commitment, to continued partnership working, including the extent of financial support available to further develop our pan-regional joint working.

Until there is clarity on the Government's position, we have agreed a six-month programme to continue our collaboration, prioritising areas of shared interest: most notably on environmental gain, clean and green economic growth and vital strategic infrastructure to support our existing and future communities. Over the immediate term, we are pleased to work cooperatively with government departments. This includes the DIT, with whom we have jointly commissioned work to create a regional scale Trade and Investment Plan and DEFRA, where together we are developing work around natural capital, water management and biodiversity net-gain.

Cont'd/...

We also continue to work closely with our sub-national transport body and DfT to collectively press the importance on government delivering its committed investment to the next phase of East-West Rail: without government intervention in this key strategic infrastructure scheme, Local Plan examinations and adoption are at serious risk of delay or failure. Government support on this next phase of investment is urgently needed and confirmation of such would be much appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Barry Wood
Leader of the Council
Chair Arc Leadership Group

Cc

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor, HM Treasury

Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs

Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Secretary of State, Department for International Trade

Rt Hon George Freeman MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science, Research and Innovation

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State, Dept for Transport

