



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

30 June 2022

Dear Secretary of State

I write on behalf of the Arc Leadership Group to update you on our progress in developing a locally led pan-regional partnership in the wake of your call for a more locally led arrangement for the Arc.

We were pleased to hear from Minister Neil O'Brien that the Government recognises the importance of the region as a globally renowned hub of innovation. We believe this region will need to continue making significant contributions towards meeting ambitions to level up the country, address climate change and, for the UK to deliver its role as a global science superpower. We want to ensure our area's economic success can bring value and opportunity to all our communities, now and in future.

In recent months we have worked with your senior officials to develop a pan-partnership proposal that will bring greater levels of private sector investment into the country and deliver solutions to health and wellbeing, climate and environmental challenges. We understand from your officers that funding is potentially available over a three-year period, subject to business case and agreement to our governance model. To avoid false hope, I am seeking your in principle agreement that government supports the establishment of a pan-regional partnership covering the Arc and commitment to this funding package as soon as possible.

With this commitment, we will be able to continue several key projects, in parallel with finalising our partnership arrangements. Included will be delivery of:

- A regional investment prospectus including a portfolio of investable propositions from across the region which builds on the Trade & Investment Plan work we jointly commissioned with DIT
- Pilot and best practice projects jointly funded with DEFRA on biodiversity net gain and nature recovery which help support viable delivery of our planned developments

Cont'd...

- Collaboration with DEFRA on the next phases of the Integrated Water Management Framework which will support plan delivery as well as address urgent water quality and quantity issues
- A data observatory and intelligence hub in collaboration with England's Economic Heartland, LEPs and the Arc Universities Group to gather data and provide analysis to support local plans and strategies, business cases for infrastructure and investment as well as our programme
- Establishing a Living Lab programme and fund which will support our networks (life sciences, energy, mobility, aviation and space) to accelerate innovation

We ask also for formal Government communication about the status of the Arc Spatial Framework following the public consultation last year. With this clarity, and your in-principle support for the establishment of a pan-regional partnership in the Arc we look forward to working with your officials to coordinate public communication about the future of regional collaboration in this area as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Barry Wood
Leader of the Council
Chair Arc Leadership Group

Cc

Rt Hon Neil O'Brien MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Levelling Up, The Union and Constitution

