

## Open New Year Letter 2025

If science were a country then Cambridge would likely be its capital, and if discovery were a global competition the city and region would regularly be winning for Britain. That's because Greater Cambridge is where innovation makes history and where the future comes first.

The 'can-do' spirit and ingenuity is hardwired, running from Newton's law of gravity, through the rules of football codified here 175 years ago, the discovery of the structure of DNA, the medical and technological breakthroughs of IVF and microprocessor design. All of them discoveries that have changed how we think and how we live. The number of Nobel Prizes awarded to members of the University of Cambridge for significant advances recently reached an extraordinary 125. We believe that innovation not only makes history – it also makes a better world.

So, we are rightly proud of our city, its region and its people - past and present. But as we enter a new year the question before us is how we can collectively do more for the country now and in the future. Our future success must seek to include everyone, be shareable and sustainable.

Britain is at a critical fork in the road. There are important choices for the summer Spending Review which will help chart the course we take as a country for years to come. The tough economic environment puts a premium on investing in growth sectors for the long term and prioritising delivery, working together as never before.

We know that the Greater Cambridge region can be the beating heart of this national renewal. It is home to world-class clusters in strategically valuable emerging sectors including AI, Genomics, Life Sciences, Cybersecurity, Advanced Therapies and Semiconductor Design. It is home to two Universities where world leading research sits at the heart of this innovation community. It is incubating the technologies and unicorns of the future with an economy that generates over £50bn of turnover per year and is a net contributor of around £1bn to the Treasury annually.

The success of the Cambridge economy has a direct positive impact across the country, creating jobs elsewhere in priority sectors and supporting the emergence of other innovation clusters. We know we need to move faster together to help support the UK economy even more which is why Innovate Cambridge has brought people together to accelerate the pace of innovation across sectors and the wider ecosystem, working with the NHS as a key partner to develop the life sciences strategy

But if we are to maximise the potential benefits of those future Cambridge innovations - the 'software' breakthroughs - it will mean investing in the 'hardware' of the city. Lack of investment in housing, water and transport needs has meant we have not been able to maximise growth for Cambridge, the region and Britain.

We trust that the new Government recognises that any change cannot simply be done to the City and South Cambridgeshire but must be done with us in partnership, and we welcome the reappointment of Peter Freeman to the Cambridge Growth Company. The Government have renewed their commitment to Greater Cambridge which is why today we are renewing our commitment to Britain. As business and elected leaders across the city and region, we know that we must always balance long term strategic planning with

delivery in the short term so we are facing into this important moment with a collective mindset - 'Cambridge Can 2030' - with three core priorities; purpose, partnership and pace. All united in endeavour by the power of possibility.

First, we are aligned on our collective purpose and what we believe Greater Cambridge can do for Britain, what it will require from all of us and what we need as a city and region to make it happen. To invest in homes with a new Development Corporation, to build new hospitals, to find creative ways to unlock lab and clinical space, to accelerate East West Rail and develop better transport links across the city and region and to build new reservoirs to fix the water crisis. And it must first and foremost be about people - their jobs, skills and community as well as their cultural, sport and leisure opportunities. New houses do not necessarily equate to good homes. What fits around them is equally important. Invest here and, in return, you will find an aligned and committed leadership group who will help drive delivery and make change happen.

We know progress depends on working with others right across the country. To that end we are excited by our developing partnerships with Manchester. City leaders have met at a senior level in recent months to map the future - with Mayors Andy Burnham and Dr Nik Johnson and the two Combined Authorities working closely together. We all believe there is a real opportunity to be seized through this regional first and are always looking to learn from others.

It is encouraging that increasing numbers of entrepreneurs and institutions are signing up to the Cambridge Pledge - committing a percentage of their future wealth to drive transformative change through social impact investment in the community. This is another example of how Cambridge does development differently and is an exemplar of inclusive change.

And finally pace. We have got to move at speed as there is not a moment to waste. Britain is in a global race for talent and ideas. The competition and the offer from international centres of innovation is growing, and it is increasingly being felt by firms in Cambridge.

Our past success has been hard earned and should give confidence that Greater Cambridge can be a beacon for Britain in the future. Backing Cambridge means backing regional job creation right across the country. and creating the path for the £10 billion life science and tech companies of the future. It is not a gamble. It can happen. Equally it can't be taken for granted.

So it is time to embrace the possibility of now. Whilst no one is underestimating the challenges ahead of us we fervently believe we need to face into them with realism about what it will take to succeed but also with optimism and ambition about what we can deliver and the prize to be seized.

Britain's best days can lie ahead. Our potential as a country is huge because the ingenuity, talents and spirit of its people are limitless. We have a shining past and the next chapter can be brighter still - and Cambridge can and will help write it.

Signed by:



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