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25th September 2018

Dear Robert,

ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND - BUDGET 2018/MINISTERIAL 'TASK FORCE'

Thank you for joining us at our 2nd Regional Conference at Silverstone on the 12th September. The feedback that we've received shows that your remarks were most welcomed by the assembled Political and Business leaders and they appreciated your willingness to answer questions.

Your personal support and enthusiasm for ensuring that the corridor including the connections to it especially to the West and East, realise its economic potential was clear to the conference.

Our response to your Ministerial colleague Kit Malthouse set out that we share the Government's ambition for the corridor.

However, realising that shared ambition requires a long-term commitment from Government and other partners to invest in the strategic infrastructure (roads, rail, digital, utilities, education and health facilities).

Our infrastructure is already under considerable pressure, with congestion and network resilience increasingly a concern, making it all the more important to deliver the investment to support the growth already set out within Local Plans, which in themselves represent an acceleration of planned growth.

A shared ambition requires a shared commitment on the part of both parties – one that is developed on an equal basis. It requires:

- A public acknowledgement that realising the economic potential of the Heartland is a long-term project – indeed that a long-term commitment from the public sector (both nationally and regionally) is essential to give businesses the confidence to invest now
- An acknowledgement by Government that the shared ambition to realise transformational growth cannot be realised without a step change in investment in infrastructure and services – that achieving net betterment for the corridor, in terms of the built and natural environment, requires both capital and revenue investment:

and that it requires investment in the full range of public services that enable a community to be sustainable in the long term

- A commitment from Government to work with England's Economic Heartland to put in place a geographically specific National Policy Statement for strategic infrastructure: a framework that ensures investment in strategic infrastructure – transport, digital, utilities, water resources – is co-ordinated and aligned in ways that support delivery of the shared ambition: a framework that the Government then uses to ensure (via the economic regulators) that infrastructure owners are required to work with local partners to ensure investment in enabling infrastructure is planned and delivered
- A commitment from Government to set out an 'indicative funding envelope' for the Heartland – thereby enabling the two partners (Government and the corridor) to have an honest conversation about the investment choices that have to be made with public funding.
- A commitment from the two partners (Government and the corridor) to use the long-term certainty provided by the National Policy Statement and the clarity provided by the indicative funding envelope to engage with institutional investors who offer the potential to unlock genuinely new investment in infrastructure and services

Our submission ahead of this year's Budget sets out these 'asks' in more detail: a copy of our submission has been shared with MPs across the Heartland region.

As a strategic collaborative partnership we have made a considerable investment in developing the strategic capability and capacity to work alongside Government to drive forward actions that will enable our ambition for the Heartland to be realised. We believe that what is now needed is in effect a 'grand bargain' between Government and the corridor – one that embraces all partners. A bargain whose foundation lies in the inescapable fact that the pace at which the economic potential of the corridor can be realised is inextricably linked with the pace at which investment in infrastructure and services is delivered. We believe that working in collaboration across the Heartland it is possible to use such a 'grand bargain' to create places where people and business realise their potential, and are able to compete on the global stage for UK plc.

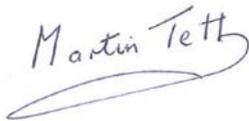
In your speech you invited us to come forward with proposals that will help cement a strong collaborative working relationship between Government and local partners. We believe that there is a need for us collectively to make a serious political commitment to ensuring that collaborative working relationship is put in place quickly and in a way that avoids adding inertia at a time when we need strategic leadership and clarity.

We propose that the way to inject pace is to establish a Ministerial 'task force': led by yourself or a similarly senior colleague.

The 'task force' would comprise a small group of the leading Political and Business leaders from across the Heartland, including the Chairman of England's Economic Heartland, the Chairman of the cross-corridor Leaders' Group, the elected Mayor of the Greater Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority, and a LEP Chairman.

The 'task force' should be time limited and focused on how to use the shared ambition set out in the Joint Vision statement as a building block to develop a 'grand bargain' that could subsequently inform the 2019 Spending Review..

Yours sincerely



Cllr Martin Tett
Chairman, England's Economic Heartland