



[www.EnglandSEconomicHeartland.com](http://www.EnglandSEconomicHeartland.com)

Kit Malthouse MP  
Minister of State for Housing  
Ministry of Housing, Communities &  
Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON SW1P 4DF

EEH Business Unit  
c/o Buckinghamshire County Council  
County Hall  
Walton Street  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1UA

e:mail – [kit.malthouse@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:kit.malthouse@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

17<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Dear Kit,

### **Delivering ambitious housing growth in the Cambridge–Milton Keynes–Oxford Corridor**

Stretching from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire, England's Economic Heartland brings political and business leaders together in a strategic collaborative partnership with a shared commitment to realise the economic potential of the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge corridor and surrounding areas.

In this regard England's Economic Heartland and Government have a shared ambition for the growth 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.

We recognise that our shared ambition for economic growth and the jobs that come with it will mean higher levels of housing for the longer term as highlighted by the National Infrastructure Commission and we welcome the Government's initiative in stimulating the debate.

However, any new proposals for new settlements – were they to come forward – would present additional pressures on the Heartland's strategic infrastructure and services. These would present significant challenges in their own right and would need to be addressed in order to give confidence to local communities and businesses that our infrastructure needs will be met.

England's Economic Heartland has not been approached by any local authority (or grouping of local authorities) in respect of a prospective proposal for a new settlement.

It is essential that any consideration of a new settlement proposal is done within the local plan making process: this is particularly important to ensure that the current round of local plan making is not undermined in any way.

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

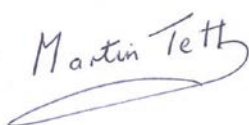
What is needed is effect a 'grand bargain' between Government and the corridor – one that embraces all partners.

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 are committed to working in collaboration with Government and partners across the Heartland, to use 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.

We believe that the work underway to develop a 'joint vision' for the corridor is potentially the starting point for such a 'grand bargain'. We believe that the next Spending Review presents the opportunity to work collaborative in developing the detail of a 'grand bargain' for the corridor.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr Martin Tett**  
Chairman, England's Economic Heartland