

Return to Growth: 'Building a Better Smarter Kinder Greener Economy' The UK Innovation Corridor Plan for 2021

Three key objectives for 2021

Objective 1 to support the government's *scientific superpower ambition* by securing investment in the UK Innovation Corridor as a national asset

Objective 2 to uphold the UK's international lead in life sciences in *a post Covid, post Brexit trading and investment environment*

Objective 3 to contribute to the government's 'levelling up' agenda to help rebalance the economy

Outcomes to demonstrate fulfilment of the three objectives

- A. Promotion and dissemination widely *'The UK Innovation Corridor: Global Scientific Superpower delivering UK economic growth and post Covid recovery' November 2020*
- B. Enhanced ways of working collaboratively particularly with regard to securing inward investment and trade, improving skills levels, and addressing community well-being and the impacts of climate change
- C. Demonstration of the case that 'levelling up in some areas of the country does not mean levelling down in others'

ACTION PLAN

- A. Promote and disseminate widely our document *'The UK Innovation Corridor: Global Scientific Superpower delivering UK economic growth and post Covid recovery' November 2020*

The UK Innovation Corridor has a critical role to play in helping fulfil the government's policy ambitions to **enhance the UK's scientific superpower status**. Evidence indicates that the UK Innovation Corridor can maintain its global position in a post Covid, post Brexit world because of the advantages and recognition it has as a life sciences agglomeration equal to, or ahead of, the best global scientific clusters.

We all need to make the case for this, and the underpinning case for related **infrastructure investment** to government as outlined in *'The UK Innovation Corridor: Global Scientific Superpower delivering UK economic growth and post Covid recovery' November 2020* and in *'UK Innovation Corridor Submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review: making a UK scientific superpower a reality' September 2020*

Key Actions

- (i) **strengthen engagement with key government departments and policy stakeholders**, as follows:
 - a. maintain engagement with BEIS as it develops its R&D Roadmap, R&D People Strategy and R&D Place Strategy

- b. develop, submit and support bids to the 'levelling-up fund' announced by HMT
- c. ensure government departments and officials other than BEIS, e.g. MHCLG, DfT, DfE, DIT and opposition parties, are aware of the UK Innovation Corridor's role in **enhancing the UK's scientific superpower status**

(ii) strengthen and broaden support and advocacy among MPs/Peers/local authority and business leaders in the Innovation Corridor as follows:

- a. use the Innovation Corridor APPG meetings, East of England APPG meetings and relevant webinars and conferences and webinars to harass support
- b. directly engage with MPs/Peers and their offices and with leaders, CEOs, VCs, College Principals.

B. Enhance our ways of working collaboratively particularly with regard to **securing inward investment and trade, improving skills levels, and addressing community well-being and the impacts of climate change**

International comparisons point to the fact that what economists and geographers refer to as 'diffusion mechanisms' are strong in the UK Innovation Corridor's. However continuous improvement is vital in order to sustain current competitive advantage and this is why a focus on **inward investment and skills** remains vital if we are to uphold the UK's international lead in life sciences in **a post Covid, post Brexit trading and investment environment**.

This means we need to work together and with partners to

- make improvements to our modus operandi *i.e. be **better** at what we do*
- accelerate rapidly the pace of change *i.e. work **quicker** and more productively*
- work more intelligently *i.e. use our collective brain power, being **smarter** by working more efficiently and effectively in teams and by making good use of technology*
- behave more humanely *i.e. being **kinder**, cooperating with each other, as well as with our climate and environment so we are **greener***

Key Actions

(i) deepen relationships with local authority leaders and officers, business and educational leaders as follows:

- a. capture the consortium's terms of reference and ways of working in order to publicise its membership, activities, and achievements more widely
- b. ensure that individual local authority and business leaders are provided with information/content/speaking platforms/opportunities to advance projects relevant to their local/business needs and plans
- c. ask members to incorporate appropriate references to the UK Innovation Corridor in all relevant documents and proposals including updated Local Plans and Local Economic and Skills Strategies
- d. attend appropriate Board meetings, Scrutiny Committee meetings to answer questions and explain activity to members

- e. partner with Arcadis, in response to their report *'Our Shared Recovery; solutions for stronger communities'* to produce a showcase response featuring the work on this done by three of the Innovation corridor Councils Haringey, East Herts Council, and South Cambridgeshire Council.

(ii) promote, enhance and accelerate cross Corridor collaboration and link this into wider relevant partnerships as follows:

- a. partner with DIT to secure investment profile and opportunities for the Corridor and in particular for the joint inward investment work being undertaken in the Innovation Core
- b. partner with City & Guilds to develop proposals for Employment and Training Hubs along the Corridor
- c. support the Institute of Technology proposals of the Upper Lea Valley and Hertfordshire/Essex
- d. work with the boroughs and the GLA to facilitate joint action and promote the Upper Lea Valley as *'The Productive Valley'*, a place for innovation-led business growth
- e. support the work of the East of England LGA and the EEAPPG on enhancing 'the voice of the East'
- f. maintain close links with Transport East and England's Economic Heartland
- g. develop and promote the work of the MedTech Forum
- h. facilitate and coordinate a town centres and high streets forum for the Corridor
- i. map the digital strengths and weakness of the Innovation Corridor, by building on the insights, experience and success of the Digital Innovation Zone to ensure the digital capacity of the whole Innovation Corridor is fit for 21st century digital working

C. Make the case that 'levelling up in some areas of the country does not mean levelling down in others'

The UK Innovation Corridor is keen to play its part in supporting other regions to level up. However, the economy of the Corridor itself is not uniform. There are local authorities and some communities in some local authorities where hardship, deprivation and poverty prevail, and all local authorities have been impacted by Covid. The 'levelling up' needs of the Corridor itself, captured in our focus on an **inclusive economy** are outlined in our *Work Recovery Action Programme for the UK's leading sci-tech region May 2020* and in *'UK Innovation Corridor Submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review: making a UK scientific superpower a reality' September 2020*

Notwithstanding the global renown, resources, and resilience of cities in the Midlands and North, the UK cannot create and build new internationally outstanding 'agglomeration centres', as the economists and geographers would refer with the status and authority of London, Cambridge or Oxford. The global dominance of the 'golden triangle' is unlikely to be dislodged or diminished by the development of agglomeration nodes based on other major city centres – especially across the comparatively small physical geographic footprint of the British Isles. Improved transport links and digital connections between the UK's major cities will play a part but take some time to be delivered. Nonetheless, successful 'diffusion mechanisms', to use the economists and geographers terminology once again, which now operate successfully in the UK Innovation Corridor could be deployed across a larger and more diverse canvas to facilitate the spread of innovation more widely across the UK. By

collectively committing to a shared economic vision ‘to *increase GVA of the UK Innovation Corridor from its current level of £189bn to £350bn by 2050, becoming the world’s ‘go to’ hub for life sciences by strengthening its distinctive and competitive innovation ecosystem, characterised by high-value growth, productivity, and creativity*’. In this way, we would promote the conditions for success of the UK Innovation Corridor more widely and with support, we could accelerate the development of these advantages in other parts of the UK.

Key Actions

- (i) Undertake an outreach and engagement programme to increase partnerships and collaboration opportunities for the Innovation Corridor** with other key stakeholder bodies as follows:
 - a. engage with other regional bodies as relevant e.g. Ox-Cam Arc, Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor, Coast2Capital LEP, Catalyst South, Thames Estuary Partnership, Northern Powerhouse . Midlands Engine
 - b. link with appropriate sector bodies e.g. Tech Nation / Tech East
 - c. make contact with relevant parliamentary bodies e.g. Infrastructure APPG

- (ii) produce a case study document**, as follows
 - a. in conjunction with key partners such as Kao Data, One Nucleus, and Creative Places LLP highlight the conditions for the success of the UK Innovation Corridor as a global life sciences cluster and promote this more widely to other parts of the UK

Ann Limb John McGill 20 January 2021