



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Pro-Vice-Chancellors' Office

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Dear Stephen

RE: West Cambridge Innovation District, a new home for research and enterprise in the physical sciences and technology

For more than 800 years, the University of Cambridge has been making discoveries that change people's lives. But an idea is only an idea unless it is turned into a reality.

We have an opportunity at West Cambridge to help more ideas become realities by creating a place where research and enterprise can meet and flourish. We want to take a new approach to encouraging university-industry collaboration, one in which innovation is 'designed in' and the barriers to growth are 'designed out', creating a dynamic and exciting place for researchers and research-led businesses to work – and play.

Today, the West Cambridge campus is home to world-leading research in technology and the physical sciences. More is coming, not least the new, state-of-the art Ray Dolby Centre (Cavendish Laboratory) and the Department of Engineering. Cambridge Enterprise and Cambridge Innovation Capital are already on hand, providing the know-how and investment that are critical in bringing new ideas to market. Alongside them, Cambridge Network is busy connecting people from business and academia, ideaSpace West has provided office and meeting space for more than 200 fledgling businesses, while established companies Schlumberger and Aveva are thriving at High Cross.

Most of the ingredients are already here. We want to build on this success to create a new innovation district, a community where new businesses can start and grow, and create new jobs. Where big business benefits from proximity to the innovative thinking of the small and the small can learn how to grow from the big. Where an entrepreneurial mindset thrives among academics and students. And where the wider Cambridge community will want to come to enjoy both the place and the recreational facilities it provides.

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By creating new and shared spaces for researchers, students and businesses to work, play and connect, with the right funding and the right business support, we will help turn great ideas into ventures that change the world.

A new vibrant innovation district at West Cambridge will:

- Connect world-class researchers with world-class businesses
- Turn Cambridge brilliance into sustained economic growth
- Bring people together in a new community where collaboration and enterprise thrive.

In line with the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the West Cambridge Innovation District will:

- Optimise the sustainable use of resources and resilience to climate change
- Improve users' health, social, and economic well-being
- Develop better (and sustainable) transport links and local connectivity
- Have a positive impact on the ecology, biodiversity and quality of the City
- Create spaces for businesses to grow and create more jobs

Why do we need an innovation district?

Cambridge is the UK's fastest growing city-economy and the most innovative city in the country, where more new businesses are started than anywhere else in the UK. In 2019, for the third year in a row, it occupied the top spot in Grant Thornton's Sustainable Growth Index and was rated the best place for 'dynamism and opportunity'.

- 7% year on year average growth in the City of Cambridge
- The 'Cambridge Cluster' is home to 5,000+ knowledge intensive firms
- Employing 61,000+ people
- Generating an annual turnover of £15.5bn turnover
- Contributing £3 billion+ in taxes each year

This is a fantastic story, but it's not the whole story. Although Cambridge has an impressive track record for creating new ventures, the UK as a whole – Cambridge included – is not good at growing those new ventures into established businesses. Research suggests that fewer than 10% of UK science and technology start-ups reach what's called the 'scale-up' stage. In fact, only 1% of the 24,000 businesses based within a 20-mile radius of Cambridge employ more than 100 people. That's a lot of wasted potential.

How can we help Cambridge spinouts and start-ups grow – and deliver the social and economic benefits they promise? There is considerable evidence, particularly from the US, that by bringing together entrepreneurs, risk capital, large corporations and universities in the same place, it is possible to catalyse a step change in research translation, scale up and inward investment, benefiting Cambridge, the region and the whole of the UK. Additionally the innovation district will support, through local supply chain benefit and wider support, jobs across all pay scales and broader economic benefits.



The Government has just launched the UK Research and Development Roadmap, which puts innovation at the heart of post-coronavirus economic recovery for the UK. The innovation district will mean Cambridge plays a central role in helping UK recovery.

These proposals for the West Cambridge Innovation District are intended to do just that, by supporting businesses at all stages of their development in a research-led environment which encourages ideas and innovation, connectivity and collaboration.

Why West Cambridge?

Most of the ingredients for a successful innovation district are already here:

1. World-leading research and education

The West Cambridge campus is already home to much of the University's research and teaching in technology and the physical sciences. By bringing across the remaining departments into state-of-the-art buildings with cutting-edge laboratories, research and teaching facilities, West Cambridge will become a world-leading hub for technology and the physical sciences.

2. Support for business

Cambridge Enterprise, which supports the University's technology transfer activities is already here as is Cambridge Innovation Capital, the University's preferred investor for life sciences and technology companies. ideaSpace provides flexible office space for high-potential entrepreneurs. Its neighbour, Cambridge Network has been hugely successful in creating opportunities for Cambridge's business and research communities to come together. The Maxwell Centre, which already acts as a gateway connecting industry with the University's research in physical sciences and technology, offers both collaborative working and an accelerator programme for new ventures.

3. Room to grow and connect

But to create an innovation ecosystem in which new businesses can both start and, crucially, scale, more shared space is needed, where companies of all sizes can work alongside academics and where everyone can meet, connect and collaborate.

The intention is to combine four key areas to successfully bring out a true innovation district:

- Academic teams and departments
- Start-ups, spin-outs and scale-ups
- Multinational companies
- Shared community facilities and sites.



West Cambridge Innovation District – a place to work, learn and grow

The Innovation District will be a place where:

- University researchers and students, spinouts and start-ups, growing businesses and multinational companies can work side-by-side
- Venture capital, IP support and mentoring programmes will nurture opportunities for technology transfer and help turn small companies into large ones.
- Everyone who lives in and around Cambridge can enjoy the amenities it provides.

Proposals for West Cambridge aim to transform the campus, creating an attractive and dynamic physical and social environment for University staff, students, businesses and local residents. The close proximity to the new residential and commercial district of Eddington will contribute to create a sense of place.

Within both the new academic and commercial buildings there will be areas for collaborative working, so researchers and businesses will – literally – be working side-by-side.

Using architecture and landscape, new indoor and outdoor spaces will encourage social exchanges. The public realm will include pedestrianised plazas, central gardens, lakes and urban orchards, creating both informal meeting points and spaces where organised activities can take place, from tai chi to pop-up shops and restaurants.

New community facilities have also been designed to foster connectivity and serendipitous 'collisions' that spark new ideas. These hubs will have a wide range of uses, including lectures, business meetings, study facilities, social and networking events, talks and art exhibitions. Amenities will include cafés and shared and open catering opportunities.

Healthy living and the natural world are at the heart of the proposals, seeking to improve users' wellbeing while having a positive impact on the local ecology and quality of place. The Sports Centre is already at West Cambridge, providing state-of-the-art sports and leisure facilities for everyone living and working in the area.

West Cambridge will also be a testbed for developing innovative approaches to help the University achieve its ambition of becoming net zero by 2048.

West Cambridge: in the right place

Cambridge is the right place to create a new innovation district. It capitalises on the cluster's impressive track record in collaboration, innovation and business creation. Geographically, it benefits from being close both to London and the Midlands and, as one end of the Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor, it also has important role to play in boosting the economic potential of the South East.



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And West Cambridge is in the right place. It is close to central Cambridge, the new community at Eddington – with its homes, shops, University of Cambridge Primary School and the Storey's Field Centre – and other housing and development sites. It is accessible by foot, bicycle and car, and is served by a subsidised bus service which connects it to the City centre, the railway station and Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Proposals for future bus connections from the west of the site will further improve connectivity. It is also close to the University's main teaching and research centres and is connected to London.

Since drawing up its first West Cambridge Masterplan in the 1950s, the University has sought to create a community at West Cambridge which could adapt to its changing needs. These refined proposals, articulated in the outline planning application and subsequent amendments, will take the physical form of West Cambridge to its next level, and facilitate delivery of this Innovation District for Cambridge.

Yours sincerely

Professor Andy Neely

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Enterprise & Business Relations