



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Matthew Pennycook MP**  
*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Peter Freeman  
*Chair of Homes England*  
Via email only: [peter.freeman@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:peter.freeman@homesengland.gov.uk)

30 October 2024

Dear Peter,

Thank you again for your continued work on Cambridge, and the invaluable support and advice you and your teams have provided to me over past months. I am delighted to confirm your appointment as Chair of the Cambridge Growth Company. Your appointment will commence on 30 October 2024, for an initial period of 18 months, unless terminated before that date.

Cambridge is one of the UK's most important economic assets, a global centre of innovation home to the largest life sciences cluster in Europe. With strong intellectual roots, the unique innovation ecosystem that has emerged in Greater Cambridge over the past fifty years has been a phenomenal success – life science firms in Cambridge already contribute nearly £3 billion annually to the UK economy. However, Cambridge faces significant barriers to sustainable growth and there are increasing pressures for local residents and communities, such as expensive housing and traffic congestion. Further growth is against a backdrop of constraints on water supply and sewerage, the transport network and increasing risks of flooding. Maintaining the success of Cambridge cannot be taken for granted.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I are determined to help overcome these constraints and for central government to work with local partners to support sustainable growth in Cambridge and its environs. At Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced £10 million of new funding for the Cambridge Growth Company to work with local partners to develop an ambitious plan for the housing, transport, water and wider infrastructure that Cambridge needs to realise its full potential. It will be your responsibility to ensure the effective running of the Growth Company so that this objective is achieved.

The success of Greater Cambridge is a national priority for this government. The Cambridge Growth Company has therefore been established to advise on and drive forward the government's ambitions for the area, working closely with local partners, to make the most of their insights and knowledge about local communities. I know that you will continue to work effectively with local leaders as you build an evidence base to support the development of a long-term strategy that will benefit both the residents of Cambridge and the wider UK economy.

To ensure that immediate progress is made, I would like you to lead the Cambridge Growth Company in progressing the following priorities:

- **Development acceleration:** enable and accelerate developments which align with the government's ambitions for Cambridge and unlock development on stalled sites.
- **Developing the evidence base to support development of an infrastructure-first growth plan and a long-term delivery vehicle:** work with experts to assess infrastructure requirements, including transport, and lay the foundations for a long-term delivery vehicle.
- **Cross-government engagement:** identify solutions to complex constraints and support cross-government engagement to unblock existing development and provide the right incentives for successful development in the long-term.
- **Cambridge Growth Company business plan:** responsibility for overseeing the effective delivery of the Cambridge Growth Company's business plan and other associated documents.

We have previously agreed several high-level principles that the Cambridge Growth Company must adhere to when developing plans for ambitious and sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge. When it comes to the growth strategy, development on a more dispersed geographical footprint is perfectly acceptable, but one or more contiguous urban extensions of the city must be core components of the vision the Growth Company brings forward, in order to maximise the benefits of agglomeration. It must also build on and go further than local plans, in terms of scale, ambition and timescale, and you should work closely with local partners to tackle the constraints that can be difficult to overcome at the local level alone.

I ask that you work with officials within MHCLG to ensure that the work of the Cambridge Growth Company aligns with departmental and wider government priorities. This will include, but is not limited to, Local Growth Plans, the New Towns programme and the National Planning Policy Framework reforms.

## **Governance**

As Chair, you are responsible for ensuring the effective operation of the Cambridge Growth Company's Board, as set out at Annex A. In practice, this means providing expertise, support and challenge to the Board to ensure the organisation continues to deliver its programmes and overall objectives.

In your role as Chair of the Growth Company, I believe it would be beneficial for us to meet to discuss progress once a month. My office will be in touch with yours to make the arrangements.

## **Further detail**

Alongside this role, I expect that you will continue to drive performance in your position as Chair of Homes England for the remainder of your tenure and in line with the strategic objectives I recently set out in the Chair's letter. Homes England will play an important role in boosting growth through the delivery of new housing supply, place-based regeneration, and place-making.

Whilst acknowledging the complementary nature of the roles, I know that you will want to retain the utmost levels of probity in office. Should any conflict present itself, I would ask that you manage these, in consultation with the department, by following the mechanisms set out in your terms of appointment and each organisations' scheme of governance. This includes being prepared to step aside from decisions on which you are conflicted.

Finally, I would be grateful if you could sign (e-signature is sufficient) and return to the Cambridge Strategy Unit at [cambridge.delivery@communities.gov.uk](mailto:cambridge.delivery@communities.gov.uk) to confirm your acceptance of the role.

I look forward to your continued support on this matter of national importance.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Pennycook', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

**Matthew Pennycook MP**  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning