24 July 2018

Dear Norman,

SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

With the summer recess approaching, I believe now is a good opportunity for me to highlight some of the developments and recent achievements for the UK in science, research and innovation, as well as outlining my priorities and ambitions for the future.

In her Jodrell Bank speech on 21 May, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government’s support for science, research and innovation, outlining her ambitious and stretching missions for the four Grand Challenges in our Industrial Strategy.¹

These missions identify how we can maximise the opportunities presented by global challenges that affect us all, including disruptive technologies, like Artificial Intelligence (AI), and an ageing society. We can all benefit from these changes, whether it’s using data, AI and innovation to transform the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart disease and dementia by 2030, or helping to ensure that people can enjoy five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-science-and-modern-industrial-strategy-21-may-2018
We remain committed to reaching the target of investing 2.4% of GDP in research and development by 2027. I am looking forward to working with industry and UKRI in the coming months to develop a roadmap that will clearly set out the steps we are taking to achieve this commitment.

When I first took over my Ministerial role, a key deliverable was the successful launch of UKRI and I am delighted that as of 14 May, UKRI has now been officially established. As part of their successful public launch, their Framework Document was published, setting out their mission statement: to work with their partners to ensure that world-leading research and innovation continues to grow and flourish in the UK. I look forward to working closely with Sir Mark and I am confident of a successful future for UKRI.

I was delighted that our recent announcements on Talent reaffirm our ambition to not just to maintain, but also to strengthen the UK’s position as a global leader in science and research, and to be one of the most innovative countries in the world. This includes Greg Clark’s announcement at the International Business Festival in Liverpool on 21 June of a £1.3 billion investment in talent and skills to develop and attract the best in science and innovation.²

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my ambitions and priorities as I look towards the future. I had the honour of speaking at the opening of the Schrödinger Building at Oxford Science Park on 5 July, where I outlined my vision for Britain to become the go-to place for science and innovation.³

I want to see this country’s long history of openness, entrepreneurship and strong institutions underpin this vision of making the UK a platform for innovation. I want us to learn about and borrow the best research from around the world through building partnerships with leading technology and innovation countries. I am delighted to have recently signed two science and innovation agreements with Israel which reflect the priority areas of the Industrial Strategy’s Grand Challenges.

But there is more to this vision than just building partnerships; I want the UK to become a magnet for attracting top talent and I want us to create the right conditions for the UK’s new sectors and emerging businesses to thrive.

Given the recent publication of the Framework for the UK-EU economic partnership, I will write to you shortly to update you on matters in my portfolio impacted by EU exit.

I have also sent a copy of this letter to the House of Lords Select Committee. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours ever,

SAM GYIMAH MP