Dear Chris,

Science and Technology Committee
Thank you for meeting with me last week and also for your letter of 11 December relating to ‘No deal’ preparations and Horizon 2020. I look forward to engaging with you on the Committee’s work.

I can now confirm that the Committee would like to hold its first public evidence session with you at 10.15am on Wednesday 30 January. I would expect the evidence session to last for up to 90 minutes.

Twitter questions
As you may be aware we had planned a session with your predecessor for 11 December. In advance of that session we had run a public engagement exercise to source questions on Twitter (#AskSamGyimah) to put to him. We will put some of those questions to you when you appear before the Committee in January. However, in the meantime we would appreciate if you could answer the following:

1. How much will it cost for the UK to build a Global Navigation Satellite System?
2. What are the Government’s plans to increase the numbers of women and those with disabilities and diversity in respect of social class in STEM subjects?
3. How does the Government respond to research which shows that Triple Science is limiting participation in post-16 STEM?
4. How will the Government ensure that the scientific establishment deals with bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment?
5. What evidence is there that the REF has improved scientific research by emphasising impact?

‘No-Deal’ Brexit preparations
I was concerned by your recent response to me regarding ‘No-deal’ Brexit preparations. The points in your letter that responded to the questions I had asked were that:

- you are not currently in a position to provide any details of arrangements for UK equivalents of EU grant schemes that we will not have access to as a third country in the event of ‘No Deal’, such as European Research Council grants, in terms of timescales for implementation and levels of funding; and
• you have not been able to hold the discussions with the Commission promised in the relevant No Deal Technical Notice, relating to UK consortium leaders continuing to be able to receive funds from the EU for distribution to other partners and other issues relating to compliance with Horizon 2020 rules in the context of a change of status to ‘third country’.

This is troubling to hear, and we will want to question you on these points when you give evidence. If you have any further information since writing that letter I would be grateful if you could provide that to the Committee in advance.

We have announced our intention to take oral evidence specifically on ‘No-deal’ Brexit preparations immediately before your appearance on 30 January and will use that session to inform our discussion.

If at all possible, it would be helpful to have your response to this letter in advance of your appearance before the Committee in January and preferably no later than Monday 14 January 2019.

Yours,

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair