

**Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:  
Next steps for the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor**

Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026

\*\*\*Taking place online\*\*\*



Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
**Sean Woodcock MP**, Member, Housing, Communities, and Local Government Select Committee
- 9.05 **Developing regional capacity and priorities for further devolved powers across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the wider Growth Corridor**  
**Rob Bridge**, Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- 9.15 **The strategic potential and restructuring practicalities of unitarisation**  
**Helen Mitchell**, Programme Director, Local Government Reorganisation, Oxfordshire County Council
- 9.25 **Priorities for governance, regional leadership, and meeting ambitions in the Growth Corridor plan**  
*assessing national and regional delivery frameworks | cross-regional collaboration and shared objectives | accountability and transparency in governance | priorities for devolution and local government reorganisation | implications of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill | environmental and community duties | addressing local skills gaps alongside regional objectives | tackling regional inequalities | inclusive growth, including rural areas | transport infrastructure priorities | next steps for devolution in Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire, and the wider region*  
**Naomi Green**, Managing Director, England's Economic Heartland  
**Robin Webber-Jones**, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director, Curriculum, The Bedford College Group
- 9.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.05 **Water infrastructure delivery and supporting regional development and environmental goals**  
**Leonie DuBois**, Head, Engagement, Land, and Consents, Thames Water
- 10.15 **Advancing community priorities, infrastructure and housing delivery, and environmental resilience across the Growth Corridor**  
*achieving Local Growth Plan targets | delivery and financial implications of Planning and Infrastructure Bill measures | assessing proposals for new towns | insights from Milton Keynes and Peterborough developments | assessing plans for water management and flood protection | infrastructure requirements for development | regional planning, social and economic infrastructure, and placemaking priorities | supporting nature recovery, stewardship, and safeguarding distinctive natural qualities | impact of development on rural communities and housing affordability | community participation, engagement, and buy-in*  
**Frazer Osment**, Director, LDA Design  
**Dr Edel McGurk**, Regional Director, South East, Natural England  
**Paul Thomas**, Director, Planning and Placemaking, Milton Keynes City Council  
**Sarah Lou Hassenpflug**, Manager, Central England Regional Energy Strategic Planning, National Energy System Operator
- 10.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.00 **Chair's closing remarks**  
**Sean Woodcock MP**, Member, Housing, Communities, and Local Government Select Committee
- 11.05 Break
- 11.15 **Chair's opening remarks**  
**Lord Lansley**, Chair, Cambridgeshire Development Forum
- 11.20 **Strategies for accelerating growth and frameworks for collaboration between local partners**  
**Dr Olga Kozlova**, Director, Innovation and Engagement, University of Oxford  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.45 **Strengthening research and innovation capacity and the role of place-based investment**  
**Jim Stretton**, Managing Director, ARC Group and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
- 11.55 **Positioning the Corridor as a global hub for science and technology**  
*developing investment and infrastructure pipelines | Industrial Strategy and the Industrial Strategy Zones Action Plan | key considerations for the Oxford Growth Commission and insights from the Cambridge model | innovation partnerships with other UK hubs | commercial space, laboratory capacity and utility infrastructure | connectivity priorities, including East West Rail and mass transit | support for business growth, trade, and place-based development | harnessing benefits of major transport infrastructure | developing the visitor economy*  
**Alistair Lomax**, Director, Arc Universities Group  
**Nicola McConville**, Partner, Mishcon de Reya  
**Councillor Adam Zerny**, Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council; and Chair, England's Economic Heartland  
**Will Gallagher**, Chief Strategy and Development Officer, East West Rail  
**Matt Allen**, Executive Director, Oxford-Cambridge Supercluster Board
- 12.25 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.45 **Progress and next steps for Growth Corridor strategy implementation**  
**Cav Elithorn**, Director, Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor, HM Treasury  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**  
**Lord Lansley**, Chair, Cambridgeshire Development Forum  
**Harry Nelson**, Westminster Social Policy Forum