



HOUSE OF LORDS

Science and Technology Committee

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The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss, MP
Prime Minister
(By e-mail)

27 September 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee to welcome you to your new role.

Our committee recently concluded an inquiry into delivering a UK Science and Technology Strategy and we would like to highlight some of the conclusions and recommendations for your new administration.

The UK has many strengths in science and innovation, despite chronic underinvestment compared to other OECD countries. **We believe that these strengths are under serious threat and that efforts should be redoubled to ensure that the UK reaches and exceeds the target of 2.4% of GDP spent on R&D.** A coherent, consistent and focused science and technology policy is crucial for delivering both economic growth and more efficient public services. Because it drives the long-term solutions to unlock economic growth and mitigate the energy and climate crises, it would be short-sighted to allow research and development funding to become a casualty of tough economic conditions.

In our report, published in August, we urged the next Prime Minister to appoint a dedicated Minister for Science and Innovation and that this should be a Cabinet-level position. We note, however, that at the time of writing this position has not been filled and any Minister of State appointed is not expected to attend Cabinet. **We urge you to reconsider this and appoint a Science Minister to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.**

We also heard from witnesses in our inquiry that they welcomed the establishment of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) as a subcommittee of Cabinet which provided a forum for issues of science and technology that cut across Government departments to be discussed and actioned. **We are therefore disappointed to see that the NSTC appears to have been disbanded. We strongly urge you to reconsider this decision. A coherent and consistent strategy for science and technology coordinated across government departments is vital for economic growth and to tackle the many challenges we face.**

The UK has significant potential in science and technology and we welcome the ambition to make the UK a “science and tech superpower” – but we urge your new administration to renew its focus on science and technology investment as core to meeting the challenges we face.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy and the Chair of the Commons Science and Technology Committee and I will be publishing the letter on the Committee's webpages.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brown of Cambridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the word "Cambridge".

Baroness Brown of Cambridge
Chair, House of Lords Science and Technology Committee