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Entrepreneurs call for boost for transport and infrastructure ahead of Autumn Statement

Four leading entrepreneurs – Hermann Hauser, Sherry Coutu, Andy Richards and David Cleevely – are calling for travel time between London, Oxford, Cambridge and the rest of the UK to be cut as part of a broad-based strategy for boosting innovation.

To realise the vision of the Golden Triangle promoted by Boris Johnson in April, the authors say journey times across the South East region need to be reduced dramatically.

They argue that it is currently as hard to work between Oxford and Cambridge as it is to work with Manchester, Amsterdam, or Paris. “Drawing lines between places on a map does not make them connected,” said David Cleevely, one of the authors. “We need to connect people and ideas and back this with infrastructure to match.”

Recent reports show that there are more people employed in tech in the South East than in California (<http://goo.gl/ZnxWze>). The distance from Cambridge or Oxford to the southern suburbs of London is the same as the distance from San Francisco to South San Jose at the end of Silicon Valley. To a foreign investor, the principal South East clusters – Cambridge, Oxford, London, Stevenage, Milton Keynes, the Thames Valley, Martlesham – are broadly one and the same place. But excessive travel times prevent the benefits of this being realised.

Bringing these places together could unlock significant innovation and growth. In the long run, the report says, this has to be done by investment in rail, with King’s Cross becoming the mega hub of the South East, and Oxford and Cambridge within 30-40 minutes travelling time.

The report also highlights other kinds of infrastructure which could encourage the networking that is vital to innovation clusters – such as huge interactive video screens showing cafés and streets in other locations. Walking past such a screen, you see someone you had been meaning to have a chat with; you attract their attention and talk as if you had met in person.

The report also suggests that a new branding strategy for clusters in the UK is needed – one that can be owned by Manchester or Glasgow as much as by Cambridge or London. The authors point to the “Britain is GREAT” campaign as an example of how this could work.

The authors are calling for government to get together a broad range of individuals and organisations to plan how their recommendations could be turned into practical reality, not just for the South East but for the whole of the UK. They note that Nesta, the Innovation Growth Lab, Innovate UK, the Connected Digital Economy Catapult and the Centre for Cities are already working on a similar agenda, and they argue that this work itself needs a hub – they suggest King’s Cross itself.

The report will be accessible at 08:00 on Monday 1 December at the following URL:
<http://entrepreneurshipolicy.co.uk/how-to-make-the-most-of-uk-innovation/report.pdf>

Notes for editors

Recommendations of the report

The authors recommend that the government should convene a broad range of individuals and organisations to plan how to:

- I. Inspire initiatives and experiments that connect people and ideas in creative ways.
- II. Invest in infrastructure to improve connectivity to London King’s Cross as the mega-hub for the South East, and cut travel time between the corners of the Golden Triangle to well under an hour (see table).

From	To	Target time
Oxford	King’s Cross	40 mins
Cambridge	King’s Cross	30 mins
Oxford	Cambridge	40 mins
Cambridge	Heathrow	40 mins
King’s Cross	Stansted	20 mins
Oxford	Heathrow	30 mins
Ipswich	Cambridge	40 mins
Ipswich	King’s Cross	40 mins

- III. Develop an inclusive UK-wide branding strategy for clusters that allows excellence to grow and prosper, no matter where it resides, and empowers all participants equally.

About the Authors

Dr David Cleevly CBE FREng is an entrepreneur who has founded a series of companies including Abcam, Analysys, and 3waynetworks. He also co-founded Cambridge Network, Cambridge Wireless, Cambridge Angels, and the award winning restaurant Bocca di Lupo, as well as acting as government advisor and founding the Centre for Science and Policy at the University of Cambridge.

Sherry Coutu CBE is an entrepreneur, angel investor, and advisor. She currently serves on the boards of the London Stock Exchange Group plc, Zoopla plc, and a number of private companies, and chairs Founders4Schools, which she founded. In addition, she is an advisor to LinkedIn and Harvard Business School, and chairs the Financial Strategy Advisory Group for the University of Cambridge. She is the author of The Scale-up Report (Nov 2014), which showed how to stimulate economic growth in the UK by closing the scale-up gap.

Dr Hermann Hauser CBE FRS FREng FInstP is the co-founder of Amadeus Capital Partners and has founded or co-founded companies in a wide range of technology sectors. These include Acorn Computers (where he helped spin out ARM), Active Book Company, Virata, Net Products, NetChannel, and Cambridge Network Ltd. He was a founder director of IQ (Bio), IXI Limited, Vocalis, SynGenix, Advanced Displays Limited (acquired by Cambridge Display Technology), Electronic Share Information Limited, and E*Trade UK, and has supported many other start-ups. His report on Technology Innovation Centres in 2010 led to the setting up of the Catapult Centres, for which he recently completed the Hauser Review of the Catapult Network (Nov 2014).

Dr Andy Richards FRSC is an entrepreneur and angel investor specialising in healthcare, with a track record as a founder, director, and active investor in more than 20 innovative companies over the last 14 years. He is currently Chairman of Ixico plc, Novacta, Abcodia, Congenica, Cambridge Temperature Concepts, and the British Science Association, and is also a Director of Arecor, PsychologyOn-line, Cancer Research Technology (commercial arm of CR-UK), and Babraham Bioscience Technologies. Most recently he was appointed non-executive director to Cambridge University Hospitals Trust.

Julia Powles (editor) is a researcher in technology law and policy, currently completing a PhD at the University of Cambridge. She has worked as a lawyer, judicial clerk, scientific researcher, and UN speechwriter. Throughout studies and work in Cambridge, Oxford, and London she has been involved with a number of start-ups, as well as being a regular commentator on intellectual property, privacy, and tech policy issues.

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