



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Chair Science and Technology Committee
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6th April 2022

Dear Greg,

I am writing to update you on the latest developments at the **Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC) in Harwell, Oxfordshire** on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Vaccine Taskforce (VTF).

As you may know, VMIC Ltd have undertaken a competitive sale process in recent months to sell their Harwell facility. VMIC is a private company and the decisions made regarding the future of the facility were made by the VMIC Board of Directors, not the Government. However, given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and grant funding provided to VMIC by the Government, my officials in the VTF have remained in contact with the relevant parties during the transaction process. This process has now been concluded and I can confirm that the asset has been sold to the contract development and manufacturing organisation Catalent.

My officials and I are supportive of the VMIC Board's sale decision. Catalent is a global leader in the sector. It has strong existing relationships with key vaccine developers, and a proven track record of manufacturing Moderna's mRNA Covid vaccine, as well as Pfizer/BioNTech, Janssen & AZ. Catalent also had a long-standing presence in the UK, with a workforce of over 1,300 across its existing sites in Nottingham, Swindon, Haverhill, Dartford and Bathgate. Globally, Catalent operates at over 50 sites producing more than 70 billion doses of products annually. The VTF is confident that in a future pandemic Catalent would have the ability to produce vaccines in the UK for the UK.

Catalent's stated plans to invest up to £120m in the facility and provide more than 400 jobs are encouraging signals for both the local economy and the wider strength of the UK's life sciences ecosystem. Once completed, the facility will be used for the development and manufacture of biologic therapies and vaccines, including mRNA, proteins, and other advanced modalities: a valuable contribution to the UK's vaccine resilience. Catalent expects that the new facility will support both public and private organisations to develop and manufacture biotherapeutics.

The Government has ambitious plans to build on the success of our response to the pandemic, grow UK's domestic vaccine ecosystem, and support vaccine innovation in the UK. In terms of our support of innovation, we have provided £127.3m to the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult (CGTC) to fund a state-of-the-art manufacturing



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innovation centre alongside the £26.48m for the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) in Darlington to support the development of mRNA capability. Both facilities are well placed to address many of the original innovation objectives of VMIC. We are also, however, reflecting upon the rapid acceleration of the global vaccines sector over the last 18 months, especially the emergence of mRNA, and actively considering what additional support we could further to strengthen the UK's global leadership in vaccine development.

Yours ever,

GEORGE FREEMAN MP
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation