Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

The Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

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Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee
House of Commons
London
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Dear Clive,

INVESTMENT ZONES

I am writing to you to outline my department's ambition for Investment Zones which were announced today in the Chancellor's statement.

This Government is united around one core priority this autumn: to fulfil our country's great potential by unleashing economic growth in every corner of the UK. That growth has, for too long, been constrained by a restrictive fiscal landscape that stifles innovation and dampens growth; and a planning system that is too complex, too slow, and too burdensome.

That is why today we have announced our intention to establish a number of Investment Zones across the country. We are beginning today in England but this is a UK-wide mission. We will work intensively with devolved governments and other partners to agree how we can use our levers to deliver Investment Zones in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These will be the cornerstone of this Government's ambitious approach to unleash an economic revolution across the country through lower taxes and a streamlined planning system.

Our Investment Zone offer will focus on:

- **Reducing the tax burden in Investment Zones**. This will give businesses the certainty they need to invest for the long-term in these places and provide us the opportunity to build on the success of the Freeports programme.

- **Establishing a bespoke approach to planning in Investment Zones.** We want to streamline the current system, while ensuring developments are safe and sustainable, to enable developers to innovate and respond to the market better and deliver the attractive, well-designed new communities we all want to see. This bespoke approach for homes and businesses will only apply within the geographic boundaries of Investment Zones.

- **Consolidating the UK's strengths in science, tech and other industries**, by removing the barriers and bureaucracy that constrain innovation and investment.

Our ambition for Investment Zones is to go further than any government growth programme to date. This includes seizing the opportunity to turbocharge the Freeports programme by offering early discussions with all Freeports about the possibility of extending the Investment Zone incentives to them. This will not only ensure that those Freeports that want to are able to build on the successes they have had to date by accelerating investment in their areas, but that both programmes complement one another.

I want to be clear, there is no question of imposing Investment Zones on any area in the UK. For Investment Zones to be successful there must be a partnership between local leaders, devolved governments and the UK Government, which also includes those in the private sector and the local community.

I will shortly launch an expression of interest process to invite all upper tier authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities in England to come forward with proposals, working closely with their district and county councils. This is a bold offer to places that will transform the growth and opportunities of people and businesses in these areas while powering similar growth and opportunities across the rest of the UK.

I look forward to working with you and the Select Committee on this and hope to be able to share further details as soon as possible.

Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities