



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

George Freeman MP
Minister of State
Department for Science,
Innovation and Technology
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2NH

W: www.gov.uk

Rt Hon Greg Clark
Chair of the Science and Technology Committee
House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

(By email only)

February 2022

Dear Greg,

I'm writing to update you and the Committee on some important developments in our fusion energy programme. I am delighted that you and members of the Science and Technology recently visited the UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) Culham Science Centre, and I am sure you will agree that UKAEA and the private sector are making excellent progress on the delivery of the UK's fusion programmes and towards the commercialisation of fusion energy.

I wanted to update you and members of the Committee on significant and exciting progress made on the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) Programme, the UK's project to build a prototype fusion power station at West Burton, Nottinghamshire, our work to deepen industrial collaboration with the energy sector, and invest in fusion skills.

On 6 February I announced the creation of a new Special Purpose Vehicle called UK Industrial Fusion Solutions Ltd. Industrial Fusion Solutions will integrate UK scientific expertise and industrial capability to design, develop and build the STEP prototype plant. The establishment of Industrial Fusion Solutions is a key milestone for the STEP Programme and demonstrates the Government's commitment to securing UK leadership in the commercialisation of fusion energy.

Boosting STEM skills and developing a future workforce to support growth of the UK fusion sector will be crucial to the successful delivery of STEP, and the UK's Fusion Strategy. As such, I am pleased to also have announced that a STEP Skills Centre will be built at the STEP site in West Burton in Nottinghamshire. This week is National Apprenticeships Week, an annual opportunity to celebrate the invaluable contributions of apprentices nationwide. The STEP Skills Centre will bolster this, building on the success of the UKAEA Oxfordshire Advanced Skills Centre, by providing local opportunities to gain valuable, hands-on skills for life whilst working at the forefront of fusion science.

I am confident that these announcements will demonstrate the government's serious commitment to the industrial deployment of fusion and investment and the STEP programme ahead of upcoming commercial opportunities for UK companies, and to



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

George Freeman MP
Minister of State
Department for Science,
Innovation and Technology
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2NH

attracting inward investment into the growth of the UK's fusion sector given the increasing global investment into fusion.

Work will start in earnest to design and establish Industrial Fusion Solutions, starting soon with the launch of the Chair recruitment. The Chair will lead the development of Industrial Fusion Solutions and will recruit, support, and independently challenge the Company's Executive during an exciting phase the Programme, from research and development to delivery and commercialisation. If the Science and Technology Committee would like to recommend any suitable candidates, Ian Chapman, the CEO of UKAEA, would welcome a conversation.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE FREEMAN MP

**Minister of State for Science, Research
and Innovation**