



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

Kanishka Narayan MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Science, Innovation & Technology
22-26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2EG

www.gov.uk/dsit

Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Chair, Science, Innovation and Technology
Committee
House of Commons

02 February 2026

Dear Chi,

Tech Town

I am writing to inform you that my department has recently partnered with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to establish Barnsley as this government's first 'Tech Town'. The government is committed to leading the way in AI adoption among G7 nations so that British workers and business can seize the benefits this technology offers. Meeting that ambition will take bold action, that is why today my department is launching the Tech Town initiative. It brings together central government and a local authority in a major place-based pilot, creating a national exemplar that showcases the positive impact of safe AI adoption on economic growth and local communities.

The Tech Town initiative is a key part of this government's mission to ensure that tech and AI benefit the places that need it most, tackling regional disparities and supporting local regeneration. Barnsley has significant ambitions to be the UK's leading digital town and we have partnered with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to accelerate these ambitions. Our partnership will seek to:

- Provide new learning opportunities in AI in schools, colleges, and community spaces to support the next generation to thrive.
- Partner with Barnsley Hospital to adopt new technologies to support local healthcare initiatives and improve outcomes for patients.
- Expand the Seam Digital Campus and support the development of a National Centre for Digital Technologies. The campus will position Barnsley as a forward-thinking hub for creative innovation, help local businesses to grow, create more good jobs and bring investment to the area.
- Put Barnsley at the heart of trialling new ideas safely which could improve public service delivery and support local growth.

These shared areas of focus seek to ensure that the Tech Town initiative maintains a laser-focus on supporting increased growth in the region, and boosts understanding of and trust in this emerging technology.

I would welcome the opportunity to draw on the expertise from the Commons Science, Innovation and Technology select committee to inform this programme of work and look forward to working closely with parliamentarians on this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Kanishka Narayan MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the
Department for Science, Innovation & Technology