



# Science and Technology Committee

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From Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Chair

Sir Patrick Vallance  
Government Chief Scientific Adviser  
(By e-mail)

19 May 2021

Dear Patrick,

## Critical and emerging technologies

In my Committee's '5G market diversification and wider lessons for critical and emerging technologies' Report, we highlighted the growing risk of global technological divergence, and recommended that the Government assess this risk and develop measures to address any related challenges.<sup>1</sup> This included the need to: identify the technologies that are likely to be of critical importance to the UK's prosperity and security over the next ten to twenty years; assess the potential opportunities and risks associated with those technologies; and propose measures to seize those opportunities and mitigate those risks.

In its response, the Government told us that a "critical new function will be instituted in the Government Office for Science providing information, analysis, and insights to inform strategic decisions across Government Departments" to address the issues we identified.<sup>2</sup> In relation to this new 'critical function', I would be grateful if you could provide some further information on this new function, including:

- when this new critical function is expected to be operational;
- what resources (staff and budget) the new function will have, and if the Government Office for Science has been allocated additional funding to cover the entirety of this new work;
- how the new function will identify critical and emerging technology areas, as well as the potential threats, opportunities and means for dealing with them; and
- what powers the Government Office for Science will have to instigate work across Government to implement any necessary measures identified by the new function.

I would be grateful if you could provide us with this information by Friday 11 June. As is usual with the Committee's correspondence, I will place this letter and your response in the public domain.

With best wishes,

**Rt Hon Greg Clark MP**  
*Chair*

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<sup>1</sup> [Second Report](#) of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, HC 450, published 4 February 2021, paras 82–109

<sup>2</sup> [Fifth Special Report](#) of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, HC 1377, published 29 April 2021, pp 11–16