



Councillor Nick Ireland
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XJ

8 July 2026

To: Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Dear Secretary of State,

Britain's Leading Edge

It is with great pleasure that I write to you on behalf of Britain's Leading Edge, a national partnership comprising 13 predominantly rural local authorities, to introduce our recently published Manifesto.

As a long-standing and cross-political collaboration, Britain's Leading Edge champions the huge potential within rural and coastal places to underpin the nation's future prosperity.

Our Manifesto ([available here](#)) showcases how our places and communities help the country weather the impact and aftershocks of global instability. It demonstrates how we bolster the nation's resilience on several essential fronts:

- **We defend the UK** – hosting key defence infrastructure, military training grounds and bases, and critical defence manufacturing sites.
- **We power the UK** – our rich natural capital makes us the energy powerhouses of tomorrow, capable of generating clean, reliable, renewable energy for the whole country.
- **We feed the UK** – a major proportion of the UK's agriculture, fishing, and forestry business are in our regions.
- **We are the lungs of the UK** – our landscapes support active travel, clean our air, store carbon, and cool our towns and cities – essential mitigations to the challenges of climate change.

And with the right support, we can do even more. We want to work with government to further our contribution to national missions. Backed by policy and investment decisions that recognise the potential in our blue and green places, we can deliver further benefits to the whole of the UK whilst powering good, inclusive growth that improves the quality of life for our six million residents.

Our Manifesto sets out the opportunities to be seized, the challenges to overcome, and the commitments we are making to achieve this. The potential is significant, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how Britain's Leading Edge can help deliver your department's priorities and build a stronger UK.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Ireland'.

Councillor Nick Ireland
Leader of Dorset Council and Chair of Britain's Leading Edge

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www.britainsleadingedge.org