

23rd March 2016

Dear Party Leader,

Science and engineering are crucial to Northern Ireland's future. It makes sense to build on the nation's world-leading capability in science and engineering to deliver a competitive edge in the global economy. As the leading independent advocacy group for the science and engineering sector across the UK, we encourage you in the run up to the election to articulate your party's ambition for Northern Ireland's scientific future and the policies you have developed that will underpin success.

The public are increasingly interested in science and engineering, not least because of the vital role that these sectors play in creating a strong economy, high value jobs, and healthier, happier lives. By the time people cast their votes, they need to know how each party would respond to the challenges facing the sector. Therefore, we would like to publish a written response from your party on its policies that are relevant to the science and engineering sector, including how it would:

- Ensure that a high quality science, technology, engineering and maths education is sustainably funded and open to all; at school, in further and higher education
- Improve and embed the use of research and scientific advice to inform policy-making in government
- Ensure that Northern Ireland has the diverse pool of talented people it needs to drive future success
- Nurture an environment that encourages industries based on science and engineering to locate in Northern Ireland, and that encourages higher levels of investment in research and development

We would be delighted to work with your party as your science and engineering policies are developed and communicated. Please find enclosed a briefing note with more detailed questions supplementary to those above. We've also enclosed a UK-wide briefing on why policy makers need to champion science and engineering.

We have written to all parties with at least one MLA. We will publish all responses on our website with accompanying comment and analysis. In order to include your party's response, please reply by Monday 18th April.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sarah Main
Director