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News

London falls behind Oxford and Cambridge on innovation
29/05/2015

By Daniel Hunter

Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Liverpool and Teeside are among the areas of the UK deemed more innovative than London.

A report by the Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) found that the UK has a clear 'arc of innovation' stretching from Cambridge and the south-east Midlands, along the M4 corridor to Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

The report, *Benchmarking local innovation — the innovation geography of the UK*, also found that areas like Liverpool, Teeside and Dorset have a higher proportion of businesses creating innovative good and services than London, which is listed 25th, and Manchester.

Businesses in Oxfordshire reported the most innovation activity followed closely by Greater Cambridge and Peterborough. South East Midlands (centred on Milton Keynes) and Gloucestershire follow relatively closely. ERC academics believe this could be explained by the concentration of high-end manufacturing companies in this belt, as well as a focus on research and development (R&D), particularly in areas with major universities.

Professor Stephen Roper, who led the ERC research, said: "For the first time, this research gives us a picture of which localities of the UK have the highest proportion of firms introducing new products and services. The findings run counter to the dominant narrative of a country dependent on London, with innovation being much more dispersed across the country than was previously thought.

"Innovation is strongly linked to growth, exporting and productivity - all areas in which the UK economy needs to improve if we want to boost our international competitiveness.

"The significant variation between different parts of the UK suggests that some localities are succeeding in creating a more innovation-friendly environment than others.

"Policymakers and researchers need to examine the local factors that could be contributing to this so that we can create the conditions for firms to become more innovative — creating jobs and growth - in every corner of the UK."

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