# Out-of-plane heat transfer in van der Waals stacks through electron-hyperbolic phonon coupling

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Van der Waals heterostructures have emerged as promising building blocks that offer access to new physics, novel device functionalities and superior electrical and optoelectronic properties<sup>1-7</sup>. Applications such as thermal management, photodetection, light emission, data communication, highspeed electronics and light harvesting<sup>8-16</sup> require a thorough understanding of (nanoscale) heat flow. Here, using timeresolved photocurrent measurements, we identify an efficient out-of-plane energy transfer channel, where charge carriers in graphene couple to hyperbolic phonon polaritons<sup>17-19</sup> in the encapsulating layered material. This hyperbolic cooling is particularly efficient, giving picosecond cooling times for hexagonal BN, where the high-momentum hyperbolic phonon polaritons enable efficient near-field energy transfer. We study this heat transfer mechanism using distinct control knobs to vary carrier density and lattice temperature, and find excellent agreement with theory without any adjustable parameters. These insights may lead to the ability to control heat flow in van der Waals heterostructures.

Owing to its large in-plane thermal conductivity, graphene has been suggested as a material for the thermal management of nanoscale devices<sup>8</sup>. Graphene is also well known for its ability to convert incident light into electrical heat: hot electrons. These can be used to generate photocurrent, with applications in photodetection, data communication and light harvesting<sup>10,20,21</sup>. Understanding and ultimately controlling heat flow in graphene-van der Waals heterostructures is of paramount importance. For example, the short cooling time of graphene hot carriers is advantageous for thermal management and for the high switching rates of photodetectors for data communication, whereas a long cooling time is favourable for photodetection sensitivity<sup>10,20,21</sup>. Of particular relevance are heterostructure devices that contain high-quality graphene encapsulated by layered materials such as hexagonal BN (hBN) and MoS<sub>2</sub>, which have the potential to improve the performance of electronic and optoelectronic devices<sup>1,2</sup>.

A number of cooling pathways for graphene carriers have been proposed, involving, among others, strongly coupled optical phonons<sup>22-24</sup>, acoustic phonons<sup>25-28</sup>, substrate phonons<sup>29</sup> and plasmons<sup>30</sup> (Supplementary Section 1). Here, using several experimental approaches, we show that cooling in graphene encapsulated by hBN is governed by out-of-plane coupling of graphene electrons to special polar phonon modes that occur in layered materials (LMs)—hyperbolic phonon polaritons—where  $\varepsilon_{xx}\varepsilon_{zz} < 0$ ( $\varepsilon_{rr}$  and  $\varepsilon_{zz}$  are the permittivities parallel and perpendicular to the LM plane). As a result of this property, these materials carry deep subwavelength, ray-like optical phonon polaritons. In hBN, a large number of hyperbolic phonon modes with high momenta exist within the two Reststrahlen bands, far outside the light cone. The most notable modes occur at energies of ~100 meV and ~180 meV (ref. 17), so energy overlap with the graphene hot-carrier distribution is substantial. The unusual hyperbolic character gives rise to a very high density of optical states and thus large thermal energy densities<sup>17,18</sup>, thereby providing a potentially efficient cooling pathway for hot carriers in graphene. By near-field coupling between graphene and hBN, efficient energy transfer from hot carriers to hyperbolic phonon polaritons is possible<sup>31</sup>. Here, we show that the measured carrier dynamics of hBN-encapsulated graphene can be explained by this hyperbolic cooling process, as illustrated in Fig. 1a.

Ultrafast time-resolved photocurrent measurements were obtained from the hBN-encapsulated, Hall-bar-shaped, exfoliated graphene device shown in Fig. 1b. The device contains chemical-vapour-deposited (CVD) graphene split gates under the bottom hBN (thickness of 70 nm), generating a p-n junction in the middle of the device. A second hBN-encapsulated device with metallic split gates gave fully consistent results. With 800 nm light incident on the p-n junction, a photovoltage is generated by the photo-thermoelectric (PTE) effect<sup>20,21</sup> (photocurrent and reflection data are shown in Supplementary Fig. 1 and the characteristic PTE sixfold pattern in Supplementary Fig. 2). By varying the delay  $\Delta t$ 

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**Fig. 1 | Hot carrier cooling in hBN-encapsulated graphene. a**, Schematic representation of out-of-plane heat transfer in hBN-encapsulated graphene, with highly efficient near-field emission from graphene hot carriers into directional hyperbolic phonon polaritons of the encapsulating material. b, Schematic drawing of the hBN-encapsulated graphene device with graphene split gates. By applying different voltages to the two split gates we create a p-n junction in the encapsulated graphene layer, which we illuminate with two ultrafast pulses that arrive with variable time delay  $\Delta t$ . **c**, The resultant photo-thermoelectric photovoltage measured between the two contacts shows a dip when the two ultrafast pulses overlap. This is due to the nonlinear relation between hot carrier temperature and incident light intensity. The dynamics of the photovoltage dip  $\Delta V_{PTE}$  as a function of time delay  $\Delta t$  therefore correspond to the cooling dynamics of the hot carriers at the p-n junction.

between two subpicosecond pulses we extracted the carrier dynamics from the photovoltage signal  $\Delta V_{\text{PTE}}(\Delta t)$  (Fig. 1c). Because the PTE voltage scales with the light-induced increase in carrier temperature, the decay dynamics of  $\Delta V_{\text{PTE}}(\Delta t)$  closely mimic the cooling dynamics of the hot electron system (see Supplementary Fig. 3 for an analysis of the extent to which the experimentally observed decay dynamics correspond to the underlying cooling dynamics). In the case of exponential decay dynamics, which we observe above a lattice temperature of ~200 K, we extracted

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an experimental cooling timescale  $\tau_{\rm exp}$  by describing the decay dynamics with  $\Delta V_{\rm PTE}(\Delta t) \propto e^{-\Delta t/\tau_{\rm exp}}$ .

First, we electrically characterized our device using four-probe measurements (Fig. 2a) and found a mean free path of  $k_F \ell = 80-100$  at a carrier density of  $n = 1.7 \times 10^{12}$  cm<sup>-2</sup>, corresponding to a mobility of 25,000–30,000 cm<sup>2</sup>V<sup>-1</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> and momentum scattering time of 340–440 fs. As expected, this is much higher than SiO<sub>2</sub>-supported devices with a typical  $k_F \ell$  of <10, mobility of <5,000 cm<sup>2</sup>V<sup>-1</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> and momentum scattering time of <100 fs (for example, ref. <sup>27</sup>). In such devices, carrier cooling is typically ascribed to disorder-assisted cooling by scattering with graphene acoustic phonons<sup>26-28</sup>.

To study hot-carrier cooling in our high-mobility, encapsulated devices we examined  $\Delta V_{\text{PTE}}(\Delta t)$  while varying graphene's most characteristic parameter, carrier density n. In particular, we applied gate voltage  $V_{\rm L} = +V - V_{\rm D}$  to the left split gate and  $V_{\rm R} = -V - V_{\rm D}$ to the right gate, such that there was always either a p-n junction or an n-p junction, with equal electron and hole densities in the two graphene regions ( $V_{\rm D}$  is the gate voltage corresponding to the Dirac point). The incident laser fluence was typically 5-40 µJ cm<sup>-2</sup>. The data show that cooling becomes faster upon increasing the carrier density (Fig. 2b). We also varied the lattice temperature  $T_{\rm L}$  and observed faster decay for increasing lattice temperature (Fig. 2c, taken at  $n \approx 1 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ ). At low temperatures (below ~200 K), cooling is non-exponential, whereas at room temperature we observe exponential decay of the photovoltage dip, with a timescale of  $\tau_{exp} \approx 2.5 \text{ ps}$  (for  $n = 1.7 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ ). We independently verified this cooling time using two alternative measurement techniques that are both sensitive to electron-cooling dynamics, but in different ways (Supplementary Fig. 4). First, using ultrafast optical pumpoptical probe spectroscopy, which probes interband transitions<sup>24</sup>, we found  $\tau_{exp}$  = 2.55 ps for the decay of the absorption photobleaching. Second, using optical pump-terahertz probe spectroscopy, which probes intraband transitions<sup>13</sup>, we obtained  $\tau_{exp} = 2.2 \text{ ps}$  for the decay of the photoconductivity. For these two experiments we used excitation conditions (incident pulse fluence of 8-20 µJ cm<sup>-2</sup>) similar to those used in the photocurrent measurements, and the measurements were performed on two separate devices consisting of large-area, high-quality hBN-encapsulated CVD graphene, as in ref. 32. Thus, all three techniques consistently yield similar cooling times for hBN-encapsulated graphene.

We compared these observations with different cooling mechanisms and found that the data are qualitatively and quantitatively inconsistent with in-plane cooling by scattering with graphene acoustic phonons through normal<sup>25</sup> or disorder-assisted collisions<sup>26-28</sup> (Supplementary Section 1 and Supplementary Fig. 5). In-plane cooling of high-energy carriers can also occur by scattering to graphene optical phonons, which typically occurs on a subpicosecond timescale<sup>22,24</sup>. Reference <sup>23</sup> reports that for non-encapsulated graphene this channel gives picosecond decay dynamics for terahertz photoconductivity. However, these results deviate in several ways from our observations for hBN-encapsulated graphene (Supplementary Section 1). For example, we observed a twofold increase in cooling time by decreasing  $T_{\rm L}$  from 300 K to 200 K, whereas optical phonon cooling gives cooling dynamics that are independent of substrate temperature (for  $E_{\rm F} = 0.3 \, {\rm eV}$ ), as shown in ref. <sup>23</sup>. This indicates that, besides a fraction of hot graphene electrons possibly cooling through optical phonons, a different cooling mechanism plays an important role. Because we observe a striking effect of the hBN crystal slab thickness on the cooling dynamics (Supplementary Fig. 6 and Supplementary Section 2), we propose an out-of-plane cooling mechanism where hot graphene carriers lose their energy to remote polar phonons in the encapsulating layered material. The energy transfer can be understood from fluctuation electrodynamics, where any process that dissipates energy in the form of heat has a reverse process that is driven by thermal fluctuations and thus becomes stronger at higher temperatures<sup>33,34</sup>. An example of such

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**Fig. 2** | **Effect of doping and lattice temperature. a**, From four-probe transport measurements, we extract the dimensionless mean free path parameter  $k_F \ell$  as a function of carrier density for three different lattice temperatures. These data show that carrier scattering in our hBN-encapsulated graphene is much less efficient than in SiO<sub>2</sub>-supported graphene where  $k_F \ell$  is typically 10 or less and where disorder-assisted supercollisions constitute the dominant cooling mechanism<sup>26-28</sup>. Inset: Conductivity and mobility versus gate-induced carrier density. By comparing four-probe and two-probe measurements we find that each contact has a contact resistance of 5–8 k $\Omega$ . **b**,**c**, Dynamics of the photovoltage dip  $\Delta V_{\text{PTF}}$ , showing that hot-carrier cooling becomes faster upon increasing the carrier density (**b**) and upon increasing the lattice temperature (**c**). In **b**, measurements are taken at a lattice temperature of  $T_L$  = 300 K and in **c** at a carrier density of  $n \approx 1.7 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ . Solid lines are bi-exponential guides to the eye.

paired processes is light absorption and blackbody radiation, which means that graphene emits thermal noise due to the dissipative real part (indicated by  $\mathcal{R}$ ) of the frequency- and momentum-dependent optical sheet conductivity  $\sigma(\omega,k)$ . This thermal noise is efficiently absorbed by hBN, hBN being a lossy polarizable material, leading to an energy transfer rate of<sup>31</sup>

$$Q = \int \int \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{\mathrm{d}\omega \mathrm{d}k_x \mathrm{d}k_y}{(2\pi)^3} [n_{\mathrm{B}}(\omega, T_{\mathrm{e}}) - n_{\mathrm{B}}(\omega, T_{\mathrm{L}})] M(\omega, k), \qquad (1)$$

where  $n_B(\omega, T) = \frac{\hbar |\omega|}{e^{\hbar |\omega|/k_BT} - 1}$  and  $M(\omega, k) = 4 \frac{\mathcal{R}\{Y(\omega, k)\}\mathcal{R}\{\sigma(\omega, k)\}}{|Y(\omega, k) + \sigma(\omega, k)|^2}$  ( $k_B$  is Boltzmann's constant). Heat transfer from hot graphene electrons to hBN hyperbolic phonon polaritons is thus governed by the Bose factor  $[n_{\rm B}(\omega,T_{\rm e}) - n_{\rm B}(\omega,T_{\rm L})]$ , which describes the energy disequilibrium between hot graphene carriers and the cold hBN phonon system and the impedance-matching function  $M(\omega,k)$ , which is non-zero when the surface admittance  $Y(\omega,k)$  has a non-zero real part. We calculated  $Y(\omega,k)$  as in ref. <sup>35</sup> (see Methods for details) and found that, near the hyperbolic hBN phonon frequencies,  $Y(\omega,k)$  is real over a large k-space area and a relatively wide frequency band. Because  $\sigma(\omega,k)$ , calculated using the random phase approximation<sup>36</sup>, also has a significant real part, this leads to an impedance-matching function M approaching unity. Due to this near-field coupling to hyperbolic modes, the heat conductivity exceeds Planck's law for blackbody radiation by orders of magnitude (Supplementary Fig. 7). The reason for this is that, in vacuum, the *k*-space for blackbody radiation is limited to  $k < \omega/c$  (where *c* is the speed of light in vacuum), whereas this restriction is lifted in the near-field interaction with hBN hyperbolic phonon polaritons. This super-Planckian coupling to hyperbolic hBN phonons thus provides a highly efficient cooling channel for hot carriers in graphene. Cooling to hyperbolic modes also occurs in materials such as MoS<sub>2</sub>, although there it is not as efficient as for hBN (Supplementary Fig. 7).

To compare our hyperbolic cooling theory with the experimental data, we examined the calculated energy transfer rate Q. Here, solving equation (1) gives cooling dynamics with a cooling timescale

$$\tau_{\rm calc}(T_{\rm e}, T_{\rm L}) = C_n \frac{T_{\rm e} - T_{\rm L}}{Q},\tag{2}$$

where  $C_n$  is the electronic heat capacity of graphene at constant *n* (ref. <sup>31</sup>). In the limit of weak heating, where  $T_e$  approaches  $T_L$ , we obtain exponential decay with the near-equilibrium timescale  $\tau_{calc}(T_e \to T_L) = \tau_{calc}^* = C_n \left(\frac{\partial Q}{\partial T_e}|_{T_e=T_L}\right)^{-1}$ , where  $\frac{\partial Q}{\partial T_e}|_{T_e=T_L}$  is the interfacial heat conductivity  $\Gamma$ . We compared the calculated near-equilibrium cooling time  $\tau_{calc}^{\star}$  with the measured exponential decay time  $\tau_{exp}$ (Fig. 3), although strictly speaking these experimental timescales correspond to the strong heating regime, where  $T_{e} \gg T_{L}$ . The reason for this is that our technique is not sensitive enough at low incident powers, which means that we cannot experimentally directly access the near-equilibrium cooling time  $au_{calc}^{\star}$ . Nevertheless, we find that our hyperbolic hBN cooling model semi-quantitatively reproduces the experimentally observed trends for the entire range of investigated carrier densities (up to  $1.6 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ ) and lattice temperatures (200-300 K). In particular, cooling slows down for lower lattice temperatures, which we attribute mainly to the smaller Bose factor in equation (1) and thus smaller energy transfer rate Q. The calculations also reproduce the observation of a longer cooling time around the Dirac point. This is the result of the energy transfer rate Q smoothly decreasing towards zero carrier density, while the electronic heat capacity C<sub>n</sub> flattens around the Dirac point towards its neutral graphene value (Supplementary



**Fig. 3** | Qualitative comparison with hyperbolic hBN cooling. a,b, Comparison between experimental decay time  $\tau_{exp}$  extracted from the dynamics of the photovoltage dip (**a**) and the predicted near-equilibrium cooling time  $\tau_{calc}^{*}$  for super-Planckian cooling to hyperbolic hBN phonons (**b**). Both in experiment and theory we vary the carrier density and lattice temperature.

Fig. 7). At higher carrier densities  $(n = 1 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2})$  the increasing energy transfer rate is compensated by the increasing heat capacity, leading to a weak dependence of cooling time on carrier density. Cooling to hyperbolic modes was also observed in a noise thermometry study<sup>37</sup>. We further note that the two distinct hyperbolic modes contribute almost equally to the overall cooling time, with the lower-energy mode slightly dominant (Supplementary Fig. 7). This can be attributed to more energy overlap in the Bose factor. We note that the hyperbolic cooling model reproduces the observed slower decay dynamics for encapsulation with very thin hBN flakes (Supplementary Fig. 6). In this case, cooling is slower because, overall, there is a lower density of hyperbolic modes to which to couple.

To make a more quantitative comparison, we took into account that the measurements are typically carried out in the strong heating regime, where  $T_e \gg T_1$ . We first measured the cooling dynamics for increasing laser power and estimated the electron temperatures that correspond to each power from the characteristic powerdependent photoresponse (Supplementary Fig. 8 and Methods), thus obtaining the exponential decay time  $\tau_{exp}$  versus  $T_e$  (Fig. 4a). In the experimentally accessible regime ( $\Delta T_e = T_e - T_L > 200 \text{ K}$ ),  $\tau_{\rm exp}$  increases with increasing  $T_{\rm e}$  (measured for  $n = 1.2 \times 10^{12} \,{\rm cm}^{-2}$ ). We compared this with the calculated cooling time  $au_{
m calc}$ , which describes the 'instantaneous' cooling time at a certain  $T_{\rm e}$  and found quantitative agreement without any adjustable parameters. The reason for the increasing cooling time with increasing  $T_e$  can be seen from equation (2) and by noting that  $Q/(T_e - T_1)$  scales roughly linearly with  $(T_e - T_L)$ . At the same time, the electronic heat capacity  $C_n$  increases more than linearly with increasing  $T_e$  for large  $T_e$ . This leads to a net increase in the cooling time with increasing  $T_{\rm e}$ . The agreement between experiment and calculation prompted us to make a more quantitative comparison for varying carrier density *n*. Figure 4b shows  $\tau_{exp}$  for three different laser powers  $(P=21, 47 \text{ and } 94 \mu \text{W})$ , corresponding to three different initial hot electron temperatures ( $\Delta T_{\rm e} = 650$ , 950 and 1,250 K), together with the calculated near-equilibrium cooling time  $\tau_{calc}^*$ . The comparison between experimental results in the strong heating regime  $(\tau_{exp})$  and theoretical results close to equilibrium  $(\tau_{calc}^*)$ is justified in Fig. 4a, where we show that the cooling time at  $T_{\rm e} \approx 1,000 \, {\rm K}$  is similar to  $\tau_{\rm calc}^*$ . Again, we find agreement between experiment and theory without any adjustable parameters.

Finally, we compared the calculated time-domain cooling dynamics in the strong heating regime directly with the measured photocurrent dynamics. The calculated cooling dynamics describe cooling from an initial  $T_e$  down to  $T_{L}$ , as constructed from the

electron temperature-dependent cooling time  $\tau_{calc}$  in equation (2). We compared these calculated cooling dynamics directly with the measured photovoltage dynamics  $\Delta V_{\text{PTE}}(\Delta t)$  for six different lattice temperatures at a low carrier density of  $n = 0.06 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ (Fig. 4c). Using the initial temperature (at the p-n junction) as a fit parameter, we found that the hyperbolic cooling model can describe the experimental data very well. At room temperature, the initial temperature is similar to the one we calculated (Supplementary Fig. 8), whereas we find a lower initial temperature at lower lattice temperatures. This is due to the increased mechanical vibrations of the sample and lateral heat diffusion out of the laser spot at lower  $T_1$ , which both lead to a larger photocurrent spot size and thus a lower effective initial  $T_e$  at the p-n junction (Supplementary Fig. 9). For a lattice temperature of 50 K, we furthermore see an increasing discrepancy for a delay time 15 ps, which most probably indicates that hBN phonons alone do not account completely for the cooling dynamics. Similarly, we find that at a higher carrier density of  $n = 1.7 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ , the hyperbolic cooling model has already begun to deviate from the experimental data for  $T_{\rm L}$  < 200 K (Supplementary Fig. 10). Most probably, at sufficiently low lattice temperature and sufficiently high carrier density, cooling through optical phonons<sup>22,23</sup> and momentum-conserving cooling to acoustic graphene phonons<sup>25,38,39</sup> become the dominant channels.

In summary, we have addressed the issue of out-of-plane heat transfer in a device comprising hBN-encapsulated graphene. Combining experiments with microscopic theoretical calculations, we have shown that the dominant cooling channel is the one in which heat transfer from hot graphene carriers to the hBN polar substrate occurs via near-field coupling to hyperbolic phonon modes. This efficient mechanism explains the observation of a lower-than-expected cooling time in clean hBN-encapsulated graphene. We note that the observation of slower cooling for thin hBN encapsulation could have important implications for photodetection applications. In addition, we predict that significantly slower cooling can be achieved using alternative layered dielectrics, such as MoS<sub>2</sub>. Furthermore, the near-field coupling we studied in this work between hot graphene carriers and hyperbolic hBN phonons may pave the way to novel approaches in fields such as nanophotonics, ultrahigh-resolution microscopy and nanoscale thermal management.

### Methods

Methods, including statements of data availability and any associated accession codes and references, are available at https://doi.org/10.1038/s41565-017-0008-8.

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#### Author contributions

K.-J.T. and F.H.L.K. conceived the experiment. K.-J.T. and N.C.H.H. performed the time-resolved photocurrent experiments and performed data analysis. A.P., M.P. and M.B.L. developed the theory and performed calculations on hyperbolic cooling. E.A.A.P. performed the optical pump-probe spectroscopy measurements. Z.M. and K.-J.T. performed the optical pump-THz probe spectroscopy measurements. N.C.H.H., M.B.L., L.B., M.M., P.S., D.D., D.G.P., I.G., G.S. and A.L. fabricated devices. K.W. and T.T. contributed hBN material. M.B., D.T., C.S., A.C.F., G.C., M.P. and F.H.L.K. supervised the work and discussed the results. K.-J.T., F.H.L.K. and M.P. wrote the paper, with input from all authors.

#### **Competing interests**

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

#### Additional information

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## **NATURE NANOTECHNOLOGY**

# LETTERS

### Methods

**Extraction of the initial hot carrier temperature.** The measured photovoltage  $V_{\rm PTE}$  scales with the time-averaged increase in electron temperature  $\langle T_e - T_L \rangle$ . In the case of cooling length smaller than the laser spot size (which is the case at room temperature) the relevant heat equation gives a simple linear scaling between peak and average increase in  $T_e$ , governed by the interfacial heat conductivity F. We assume that T and the Seebeck coefficient are constant with power<sup>40</sup>, so that the photovoltage as a function of power directly represents the peak  $T_e$  increase as a function of power P is  $T_e = \sqrt[3]{T_L^3} + bP$ , where b is a constant that depends on laser repetition rate f, absorption coefficient  $\eta_{abo}$ , heating efficiency  $\eta_{heat}$  and spot size  $L_{spot}$ . The cube root comes from the  $T^2$  scaling of the electronic heat capacity for undoped graphene (we apply this analysis to a low carrier density of  $0.06 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ ). By fitting  $V_{\rm PTE}$  as a function of P, we extract the constants a and b, which allows us to recover the power-dependent peak  $T_e$  (Supplementary Fig. 7). We verify the obtained constant b and find good agreement when using

an absorption of  $\eta_{abs} = 1\%$  (due to the layered dielectrics), a heating efficiency of  $\eta_{heat} = 80\%$  and a spot size  $L_{spot}$  of ~ 2 µm.

**Numerical calculations.** Theoretical curves were obtained by numerically integrating equation  $(1)^{31}$ . The non-local conductivity is connected to the density–density response function of graphene,  $\chi_{mn}(k,\omega)$ , by the formula  $\sigma(\omega,k) = ie^2\omega\chi_{mn}(k,\omega)/k^2$ . Within the random-phase approximation, we approximate  $\chi_{mn}(k,\omega)$  with its non-interacting expression, which is given in refs <sup>41-44</sup>. Neglecting retardation effects, the surface admittance is connected to the screened Coulomb interaction between two electrons in graphene,  $V(k,\omega)$ , by the formula  $Y(\omega,k) = -ie^2\omega V^{-1}(k,\omega)/k^2$ . The expression for  $V(k,\omega)$  is given for graphene embedded into slabs of hBN and in the presence of non-hyperbolic dielectrics and metallic gates in ref. <sup>45</sup>.

**Data availability.** The data that support the plots within this paper and other findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.