

MINUTES

Meeting: Commission Meeting

Date: 27 January 2021

Time: 1pm

Place: Video conference

Attendees

Commission Members:

Sir John Armitt	(Chair)
Professor Sir Tim Besley	(Commissioner)
Neale Coleman CBE	(Commissioner)
Professor David Fisk CB	(Commissioner)
Andy Green CBE	(Commissioner)
Professor Sadie Morgan OBE	(Commissioner)
Julia Prescott	(Commissioner)
Bridget Rosewell CBE	(Commissioner)

Secretariat:

James Heath	(Chief Executive)	
James Richardson	(Chief Economist)	
Giles Stevens	(Director of Policy)	
Hannah Brown	(Director of Policy)	
	(Head of Communications)	
	(Head of Private Office)	
	(Assistant Director)	
	(Senior Policy Adviser)	
	(Private Secretary to the Chair and Chief Executive)	(Items 6-9)
	(Assistant Director)	(Item 6)
	(Senior Policy Adviser)	(Item 6)
	(Policy Adviser)	(Item 6)
	(Senior Policy Adviser)	(Item 6&8)
	(Head of Economic Analysis)	(Item 8)
	(Facilities manager)	(Item 8)
	(Policy Adviser)	(Item 7)
	(Assistant Director)	(Item 9)
	(Monitoring and Implementation Manager)	(Item 9)
	(Programme Manager)	(Item 10)

Young Professionals Panel

Ann Zhang	(Young Professionals Panel Chair)	(Item 9)
Mike Davies	(Young Professionals Panel member)	(Item 9)

External guests

Charles Roxburgh	(Second Permanent Secretary, HM Treasury)	(Item 7)
John Staples	(Deputy Director, Infrastructure, Digital and Culture)	(Item 7)

1. Apologies and Welcome

1.1 No apologies were received.

2 Minutes and matters arising

2.1 No comments were made on the minutes of the last meeting. The Chair noted that the action in the action log had been completed.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 No interests were declared.

4 Chair's Update

4.1 The Chair updated on his activities since the last meeting. He noted a productive discussion with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Rail on the Rail Needs Assessment. Bridget Rosewell (BR) noted she was speaking to the APPG for Rail in the North in the next week.

4.2 Sadie Morgan (SM) and Tim Besley (TB) noted a meeting with Alok Sharma to discuss the Commission's potential role in COP 26. JH said a board paper would be brought to the next Commission meeting.

5 Chief Executive's Update

5.1 The Chief Executive (JH) provided an update on his activities since the last meeting. This included follow-up work on the Rail Needs Assessment, published on 15 December, which was being considered carefully by government ahead of its Integrated Rail Plan.

5.2 JH updated on discussions with HM Treasury about options for the next study to be undertaken by the NIC. He also noted that Commissioners would discuss the Commission's remit, purpose and workplan at an upcoming strategy day.

5.3 The Chair and BR thanked the secretariat for their work on the Rail Needs Assessment.

6 Behaviour Change

6.1 The Chair invited GM to introduce a paper on developing a framework for understanding the potential impacts of behaviour change on infrastructure demand as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. GM noted that the project would result in a drivers paper in advance of the second National Infrastructure Assessment. He said the project would outline a set of possible scenarios comprised of plausible combinations of infrastructure-related behaviour change and

their impacts on demand for infrastructure. Commissioners were asked whether the scenarios outlined captured the range of possibilities that should be considered, whether they should express a view on a most likely scenario, and whether they had views on the format and approach to the final report.

DECISION: Commissioners agreed they should not agree a ‘most likely’ scenario and agreed to progress the project.

7 External speaker – Charles Roxburgh

- 7.1 The Chair invited Charles Roxburgh (CR) to provide an update on progress with the national infrastructure bank.
- 7.2 CR welcomed further discussion of the relationship between the bank and the Commission. He noted that the search for a Chair would begin soon, followed by a CEO search. He hoped the bank would be operational by spring.

8 Distributional Analysis - scoping

- 8.1 The Chair invited CW to introduce a scoping paper on a project to design a framework to understand the distributional impacts of the Commission’s policies. CW said the project would try to understand distributional impacts across groups with varying characteristics including age, income, ethnicity, sex and disability status. CW proposed that the project would result in an internal discussion paper with analytical options and a recommended approach for future work. He noted that the project planned to return to the Commission in the summer with an executive summary of the discussion paper and options for taking the project forward.
- 8.2 CW asked if Commissioners agreed with the proposed objectives and scope of the project and whether they had comments on how distributional analysis could be used to inform recommendation choices in studies or the next NIA.

DECISION: Commissioners approved the proposed objectives and scope.

9 Annual Monitoring Report

- 9.1 The Chair invited AH to introduce a paper on the Commission’s Annual Monitoring Report 2021. AH noted that the Executive Summary would highlight priority areas for the government for 2021 and reflect on government progress in meeting the Commission’s four tests.
- 9.2 Commissioners were asked whether they had reflections on the proposed top ten priorities for 2021 and whether the assessment in the executive summary of government progress in meeting the Commission’s four tests matched their expectations.

DECISION: The Commission approved the messages set out in the draft executive summary and chapters.

10 Quarterly project portfolio update

10.1 The Chair invited JH to update the Commissioners on progress on existing projects. JH said despite the challenges posed by Covid, the current projects were on track.

11 AOB

11.1 No items of AOB were recorded.