

## MINUTES

**Meeting: Commission Meeting**

**Date: 29 July 2021**

**Time: 1pm**

**Place: Video conference**

### Attendees

#### Commission Members:

Sir John Armitt	(Chair)	(Items 5-9)
Professor Sir Tim Besley	(Commissioner)	
Professor David Fisk CB	(Commissioner)	(Items 1-7)
Andy Green CBE	(Commissioner)	(Items 8-9)
Professor Sadie Morgan OBE	(Commissioner)	(Items 5-9)
Julia Prescott	(Commissioner)	(Items 1-7)
Bridget Rosewell	(Commissioner)	(Items 1-7)

#### Secretariat:

James Heath	(Chief Executive)	
James Richardson	(Chief Economist)	
Giles Stevens	(Director of Policy)	
Hannah Brown	(Director of Policy)	
Mark Ardron	(Chief Operating Officer)	
	(Head of Communications)	
	(Head of Private Office)	
	(Assistant Director)	(Items 6 & 8-9)
	(Senior Policy Advisor)	(Item 8)
	(Senior Policy Advisor)	(Item 7)
	(Senior Policy Advisor)	(Item 7 & 9)
	(Senior Policy Advisor)	(Item 7)
	(Economic Advisor)	(Item 7)
	(Senior Technical Advisor)	(Item 7)
	(Assistant Director)	(Item 9)
	(Senior Policy Advisor)	(Item 9)
	(Senior Policy Advisor)	(Item 9)

#### External Guests

Chris Grigg	(Chair, UKIB)	(Item 6)
John Mahon	(CEO, UKIB)	(Item 6)
Suzannah Storey	(Director General, Digital and Media Policy, DCMS)	(Item 8)
	(Official, DCMS)	(Item 8)
	(Official, DCMS)	(Item 8)

## **1. Apologies and Welcome**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Neale Coleman. Sadie Morgan and Andy Green sent apologies for the first half of the meeting. Julia Prescott and Bridget Rosewell gave apologies for items 8 and 9.

## **2 Minutes and matters arising**

- 2.1 No comments were made on the minutes of the last meeting. The CEO (JH) noted that there were no actions in the actions log.

## **3 Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 JH noted on Andy Green's (AG) behalf that he had been appointed a NED at Bloc Ventures on 13<sup>th</sup> July and became Chair of Nominet on 21 July.

## **4 CEO's update**

- 4.1 JH noted that that morning's online launch of the Commission's study on greenhouse gas removal technologies had been a success with more than 70 participants joining the call.
- 4.2 JH noted that it was anticipated that the Commission would be asked by government to produce a short piece of work offering a view on future power sector scenarios, including the potential need for additional nuclear capacity beyond the proposed Sizewell C project.

## **5 Chair's update**

- 5.1 The Chair noted a productive meeting with representatives from the IPA on the roll of design champions in projects.
- 5.2 The Chair also noted that he had participated in a Public Accounts Committee session which had predominantly focused on project delivery.

## **6 UK Infrastructure Bank**

- 6.1 The Chair invited Chris Grigg (CG) and John Mahon (JM) to discuss their priorities for the UK Infrastructure Bank. CG noted that the bank was operating under an interim framework while primary legislation was progressed. He said its objectives would be to promote local and regional growth, support levelling up and to enable the achievement of net zero. Finally, he noted that the organisation was recruiting a permanent CEO to replace John Mahon who would be leaving in the autumn.
- 6.2 JM said the bank was currently focussed on five workstreams: standing-up the organisation; building banking systems; engagement with key stakeholders; developing a pipeline of deals; and developing a recruitment strategy.

## 7 Towns study

- 7.1 The Chair invited BM to present on the core narrative and draft recommendations of the towns study. BM noted that infrastructure was important for towns but that towns had diverse needs. He said growth and development would be mostly incremental but that there may be some opportunities for transformational growth. He noted the need for ambitious local strategies and highlighted that local government was in a position to make most infrastructure decisions, with central government stepping in only to add value or where authorities lacked capacity to deliver on their own. BM set out the draft recommendations.
- 7.2 BM noted the report would return to the Commission in August for approval of the executive summary ahead of approval by lead Commissioners of the report in September.

## 8 DCMS

- 8.1 The Chair invited Suzannah Storey (SS), Director General for Digital and Media Policy at DCMS to update on the department's progress against accepted Commission recommendations. SS noted that efforts to stimulate competition in broadband rollout had paid off and that DCMS was committed to supporting build in uncommercial areas including by local/regional procurements, deploying voucher programmes, and making use of gigahubs. She noted that the department aimed to deploy the shared rural network to increase mobile coverage. She also highlighted that the department would be exploring and highlighting the potential for take-up of new broadband networks.

## 9 NIA 2 baseline

- 9.1 The Chair invited JH to provide an update on the NIA2 baseline assessment's progress since the May Commission meeting including feedback from expert panels.
- 9.2 EB asked whether Commissioners were content to include a new project focused on how digital and data might support infrastructure supply and reduce demand, while maintaining a smaller project on asset management focusing on regulatory frameworks and incentives for asset maintenance.

**DECISION: Commissioners agreed to the data project subject to the above considerations.**

## 10 AOB

- 10.1 No items of AOB were raised.