

CORPORATE PLAN

2019-20 to 2021-22

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Introduction

The National Infrastructure Commission provides the government with impartial, expert advice on major long-term infrastructure challenges. It has been operating in interim form since October 2015 and was established permanently as an Executive Agency of HM Treasury on 24 January 2017.

The Commission aims to be the UK's most credible, forward-thinking and influential voice on infrastructure policy and strategy:

- **Credible:** producing reports and analysis of the highest quality, written in plain English, independent of government and all vested interests, and making clear recommendations based on rigorous evidence; and developing an evidence base which sets a gold standard in its quality and breadth.
- **Forward-thinking:** taking a strategic approach, which links long-term priorities with short-term action and considers infrastructure as a system, not as a collection of silos; maintaining an international perspective and engaging closely with leading edge expertise; and open to new approaches and ideas.
- **Influential:** building broad support for its analysis and recommendations, working across society, government, parliament and industry; producing work which is objective, fair and transparent; looking for deliverable solutions; and following up on recommendations.

This Corporate Plan sets out the Commission's key achievements from January 2017 to March 2019 and its corporate objectives and a high-level business activity plan up 2022.

Remit and Structure of the Commission

The Commission's relationship with government is set out in a published Charter.¹ This explains that it must carry out its work in accordance with a remit (and terms of reference for specific studies) set by the government, but in all other respects it has complete discretion to determine independently its work programme, methodologies and recommendations, as well as the content of its reports and public statements. A mutually agreed Framework Document² explains the working relationship between the government and the Commission in detail.

The Commission comprises a Chair and between four and 12 other non-executive commissioners.

¹ [National Infrastructure Commission Charter](#)

² [National Infrastructure Commission framework document](#)

The current members of the National Infrastructure Commission are:

- Sir John Armitt (Chair)
- Dame Kate Barker DBE
- Professor Sir Tim Besley CBE
- Professor David Fisk CB
- Andy Green
- Professor Sadie Morgan
- Julia Prescott
- Bridget Rosewell CBE

1. Strategic Objectives and Outputs

The role of the Commission is to provide advice and make independent recommendations to government on national infrastructure priorities. Its objectives are to: (i) support sustainable economic growth across all regions of the UK, (ii) improve competitiveness and (iii) improve quality of life.

The Commission's core responsibilities are to produce:

- a National Infrastructure Assessment once in every Parliament, setting out the Commission's assessment of long term infrastructure needs with recommendations to the government
- specific studies on pressing infrastructure challenges as set by the government considering the views of the Commission and stakeholders; these studies will include recommendations to the government
- an annual monitoring report, taking stock of the government's progress in areas where it has committed to taking forward recommendations of the Commission.

The Commission's operational independence is central to the credibility of its advice and the effective delivery of its responsibilities. To support this, it seeks to perform its duties objectively, transparently and impartially.

Milestones

Key Milestones from January 2017 – April 2019	
Date	Milestone
13 October 2017	Publication of the interim National Infrastructure Assessment – Congestion, Capacity, Carbon: Priorities for national infrastructure – which examined seven key areas and set out the vision and priorities for meeting the UK's infrastructure needs up to 2050.
17 November 2017	Publication of the Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Arc , which detailed how infrastructure development in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Arc could maximise the potential of the area.
14 December 2017	Publication of the Data for the Public Good report into how technology could improve infrastructure productivity.
16 February 2018	Publication of the Annual Monitoring Report 2018 which monitored the progress made by government on the six studies produced so far by the Commission and the twelve infrastructure priorities it identified in June 2017.

10 July 2018	Publication of the UK's first-ever National Infrastructure Assessment which set out a plan of action for how the identified infrastructure needs and priorities of the country should be addressed over the next 10 – 30 years.
21 December 2018	Publication of the Interim Freight Report which focused on the levers that government could use to influence the freight system and deliver a sustainable freight system which is fit for the future.
22 February 2019	Publication of the Annual Monitoring Report 2019 which set out the Commission's views on the government's progress over the past year in response to the six studies published by the Commission.
17 April 2019	Publication of the Better Delivery: the challenge for freight report which outlined the Commission's view on what action is needed to enable the UK's freight networks to meet growing demands for fast deliveries, while also reducing its impact on congestion and the environment

Achievements from January 2017 – March 2019

The key achievements in responding to the business delivery objectives as outlined in the National Infrastructure Commission's Corporate Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20 include:

Business Delivery Objective 1:

Delivering a programme of work consistent with the Commission's responsibilities under its Charter and remit letter, and agreed by the members of the Commission.

- Completion of the Commission's series of discussion papers on the drivers of future infrastructure demand, adding papers on economic growth (March 2017) and environmental change (June 2018) to those previously published on technological change (December 2016) and population and demographic change (February 2017).
- Completion of a wide-ranging programme of engagement to inform the interim assessment, incorporating a written call for evidence, as well as regional and sectoral stakeholder events and expert roundtables.
- Publication for consultation in October 2017 of the Commission's interim assessment, **Congestion, Capacity Carbon: Priorities for National Infrastructure**. The consultation closed in January 2018 with more than 200 responses having been received.
- Delivery of a two-phase programme of social research, including focus groups undertaken across a highly diverse set of urban and rural locations and national polling.
- Publication of the final **National Infrastructure Assessment** for the United Kingdom in July 2018. This was the first-ever of its kind in the UK and made recommendations for how the identified infrastructure needs and priorities of the country should be addressed. The government announced at Budget 2018 that it will formally respond by publishing a comprehensive National Infrastructure Strategy before the end of 2019.

- Announcement in September 2018 of the winners of the Roads for the Future competition run as part of the National Infrastructure Assessment process. This looked for innovative and creative ideas on how to deliver a world-class road network in the UK ready for connected and autonomous vehicles.
- Publication in March 2019 of a comprehensive **Lessons Learnt** report, reviewing the development of the National Infrastructure Assessment with the aim of informing and strengthening the Commission's future work programme.

Studies Programme

- Publication of the final report of the Commission's study into the future infrastructure needs of the region between Cambridge and Oxford, **Partnering for Prosperity – a New Deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc**. This made a range of recommendations focused on maximising the role of infrastructure in supporting new housing delivery, which was identified as the most important constraint to the region achieving its long-term economic potential.
- Announcement in December 2017 of the winners of the **Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition** which was run as part of the commission's Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford study and which sought inspirational visions for the future of development within the arc.
- Publication of **Data for the Public Good** in December 2017, which assessed how new technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning could help reduce costs, improve delivery and cut delays and disruptions across the UK's infrastructure network. The report examined the opportunities that these new innovations presented – and made recommendations to drive up the quality, consistency and availability of infrastructure data in order to make the most of them.
- Publication of **Better Delivery: the challenge for freight** in April 2019 (following an interim report in December 2018). This looked at the long-term challenges faced by the UK freight sector and the scope to use new technologies and processes to transform how freight moves by road and rail. The report made recommendations to set clear long-term targets to decarbonise road and rail freight, alongside measures to reduce the sector's impacts on congestion and improve how it is taken into account within the planning system.
- Announcement in October 2018 of a new Commission study into the future of utilities regulation and, in November 2018, alongside the Budget, of a second new study into infrastructure resilience.

Monitoring and Implementation

- Publication in June 2017 of twelve **Post-Election Priorities for infrastructure policy and delivery** identified by the Commission.
- Publication in February 2018 of the Commission's first **Annual Monitoring Report** which monitored the progress made by government in implementing its recommendations. This found encouraging developments in increasing digital capability and the delivery of a smart electricity system, but highlighted areas

in which more urgent progress was needed, particularly in relation to Northern Powerhouse Rail and Crossrail 2.

- Publication a year later of the Commission's **Annual Monitoring Report 2019**. This found that across the six reports that the Commission had published since it was established in 2015, 45 recommendations had been made to government, of which 42 had been accepted. Of those 42 recommendations, ten are now considered to have been fully met – including specific recommendations relating to the introduction of better metrics mobile connectivity and efforts to deliver a smart and flexible energy system – with good progress being made in a number of other areas. The report also identified, however, that more limited progress had been made where recommendations spanned departmental boundaries, or required a more significant break from current policy frameworks. It highlighted efforts to improve digital connectivity on major road and rail network as an area of particular concern.

Business Delivery Objective 2:

Developing and implementing operational and governance arrangements which will have enabled the NIC to operate as a responsible, effective and transparent Executive Agency, with a strong reputation and profile.

- Agreement with HM Treasury of the commission's first multi-year financial settlement, as set out in the Framework Document, giving the Commission a delegated budget of £5.3m for 2018-19 and £5.7m for years 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- Strengthening of the Commission's governance structures through the establishment of an effective **Oversight Board** and **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** (as set out in the Framework Document) as well as internal programme and policy boards.
- Development and implementation of a robust quality assurance policy. In developing its evidence base, the Commission runs frequent consultations, engages with independent experts, stakeholders and the public, carries out scenario-based modelling and procures external analysis. It presents its analysis transparently and regularly seeks external challenge to improve the quality of its work.
- Agreement of a clear set of organisational values – creative, rigorous and supportive – with work underway to embed these throughout the organisation and its work.
- Smooth management of the transition between the Commission's first and second Chairs in early 2018, as well as changes in the overall membership of the Commission, with high standards of work maintained throughout.
- Establishment of the Commission's **Young Professionals Panel** in April 2018 to support and inform the Commission's work and to ensure a strong voice for the next generation of infrastructure leaders in the Commission's programme.
- Participation in international knowledge sharing events, such as in Canada and New Zealand, to keep abreast of developments in other countries, to inform and advance our thinking, and to provide benchmarks, evidence and access to case

studies and potential collaborations. In addition to this, the Commission is the UK's representative on the OECD International Transport Forum's Working Group on Strategic Infrastructure Planning and the Commission's Chief Executive has been appointed as the Working Group's Chair.

- Implementation of an extensive programme of ongoing engagement with key individuals and organisational stakeholders, which has built and maintained relationships, gathered insight, encouraged advocates and built awareness. This programme has included government departments, delivery bodies, regulators, business organisations, parliamentarians, and other independent bodies.
- Development of the Commission's communication function to raise the profile of the organisation amongst its key stakeholders and the wider public through both traditional and social media. Specifically:
 - Ongoing development of the website (nic.org.uk) to ensure easy access to individual chapters of the National Infrastructure Assessment as well as the full document, regular changes to the homepage and increased contributions from Commissioners and members of the Secretariat through blogs. A wider refresh of the website is planned.
 - Increased use of the [@NatInfraCom](https://twitter.com/NatInfraCom) Twitter feed, including live tweeting of events, tweeting of infographics from Commission reports, and the introduction of 'quote pics' to increase engagement rates – increasing followers from approximately 1,500 in July 2017, to approximately 4,740 in February 2019. New followers include government ministers, regulators, think tanks and academics.
 - The launch of a National Infrastructure Commission LinkedIn feed, which as of February 2019 has over 1,700 followers.

Media coverage highlights during this period included:

- Widespread national newspaper coverage of the Commission's 12 infrastructure priorities (June 2017) and interim National Infrastructure Assessment (October 2017)
- Page-lead coverage in The Guardian for the Partnering for Prosperity report into the Cambridge-Milton-Keynes Oxford Growth Arc – on top of broadcast interviews with the BBC (November 2017)
- The launch of the Roads for the Future competition on preparing roads for driverless cars was covered on Sky News; coverage of the finalists achieved front page coverage in the Telegraph (January 2018, May 2018)
- Set-piece profile interviews in Infrastructure Intelligence magazine of the 16 members of the new Young Professionals Panel (April 2018)
- Coverage in The Telegraph, The Times and The Guardian, and interviews with the Chair on the Today Programme and BBC Breakfast supporting publication of the National Infrastructure Assessment (July 2018).

Corporate Governance

The Oversight Board was established in July 2017 to supervise the Commission's financial management and administrative functions. It ensures the Commission has the staff and support it needs to enable it to provide high-quality advice to the government and to provide assurance that effective internal control and risk management systems are in place.

The Oversight Board consists of the Chair of the Commission, a representative of the Treasury, appropriate executive members including the Chief Executive, and non-executive members who may either be Commissioners nominated by the Chair, or external members appointed by the Chair. The current members of the Oversight Board are:

- Sir John Armitt (Chair)
- Philip Graham (CEO – Executive Member)
- Charlotte Goodrich (COO from May 2019 – Executive Member)
- John Staples (Treasury Representative)
- Michael Brodie (Non-Executive Member)
- Debjani Ghosh (Non-Executive Member)

The Oversight Board's functions relate to the corporate management of the Commission and it has no role in agreeing or reviewing its policy reports or recommendations. It held its first meeting on 31 July 2017 and has met approximately quarterly thereafter.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) of the Oversight Board was established on 3 October 2017 to support the board in discharging its responsibilities in relation to issues of risk, control and governance, and of associated assurances. The independent members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee are:

- Michael Brodie (Chair)
- Debjani Ghosh (Deputy Chair)

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held its first meeting on 3 August 2017 and has met approximately quarterly thereafter. The Commission's Chief Executive is Accounting Officer for the agency and responsible for managing the Commission.

The Chief Executive is supported by a senior management team comprising the Chief Economist, the Director of Policy and the Chief Operating Officer. The senior management team provides day-to-day oversight of the secretariat's activities.

To ensure the Commission operates as a responsible and transparent Executive Agency, the following governance arrangements are maintained:

- Programme Board - supporting the SMT on delivery of its portfolio of projects.
- Policy Board – supporting the SMT on challenge and consistency across policy projects.
- Operations Board – supporting the SMT on organisational development and business policies.

2. Corporate Activity and Business Plan

The Commission has four business delivery objectives for 2019-20.

Business Delivery Objective 1:

Deliver a programme of work consistent with the Commission's responsibilities under its Charter and remit letter, and agreed by the members of the Commission.

This will be achieved by:

- Publishing reports in line with the Commission's core responsibilities, namely:
 - The final report of its Regulation Study in autumn 2019
 - The scoping report for its Resilience Study in summer 2019
 - Its third Annual Monitoring Report in early 2020
 - Raising awareness and understanding of its advice and recommendations, including the underpinning evidence base, with government and a wider audience, with a view to becoming a recognised source of expertise, informing the public debate and influencing government policy, such as the forthcoming National Infrastructure Strategy.
 - Responding to future requests for advice from the government, including through the formal commissioning of further studies.

Business Delivery Objective 2:

Laying foundations for the Commission's second National Infrastructure Assessment

This will be achieved by:

- Stakeholder engagement and communications activity to build consensus around the recommendations in the first Assessment and secure a positive response in the National Infrastructure Strategy, which establishes them as government policy.
- Taking forward work in a number of the areas for additional analysis and development identified in Chapter 8 of the first National Infrastructure Assessment, including:
 - analysing the link between infrastructure and housing delivery

- establishing a National Infrastructure Design Group and developing clear principles to underpin improved infrastructure design
 - further work on performance measures for infrastructure and on cost-benefit analysis
 - analysing public and private partnerships to better evaluate the cost and benefits of the different procurement approaches
 - working with a number of city authorities on the development of effective urban transport strategies
 - exploring new approaches to public engagement, focusing initially on road congestion
 - exploring new approaches to strategic transport planning, particularly in the light of connected and autonomous vehicles.
- Initial scoping and development work for the second National Infrastructure Assessment focused on four themes: Climate Change and Environment; Place and Geography; Infrastructure and Society; and Technology and Efficiency.
 - Developing the Commission's analytical methodologies and modelling capability

Business Delivery Objective 3:

Develop and implement governance and operational arrangements which will enable the Commission to operate as a responsible, effective and transparent Executive Agency, with a strong reputation and profile.

This will be achieved by:

- Being transparent about the organisation's ways of working and how it spends public funds by:
 - publishing accurate Annual Reports and Accounts in line with nationally mandated timeframes and the Government Financial Reporting Manual.
 - ensuring adequate financial reporting and accounting arrangements are in place in line with HM Treasury's Managing Public Money.
 - maintaining an appropriate internal control and governance framework, subject to external scrutiny from both internal and external audit.
- Maintaining a security policy, business continuity plan and risk management plan. - Embedding a matrix management system and actively seeking staff feedback on the effectiveness of this new structure by Q2 2019/20.
- Developing a Data Hub as a repository for infrastructure metrics and data by Q4 2019/20.
- Agreeing a new multiyear budget with HM Treasury through the Spending Review process during 2020.

Business Delivery Objective 4:

Develop and implement corporate and human resources policies which facilitates the attraction, development and retention of a skilled and motivated workforce

This will be achieved by:

- Further strengthening our high-quality learning and development offer, through the promotion of our Infrastructure School and utilisation of Civil Service Learning.
- Developing and implementing a programme to ensure the Commission's access to the best talent, by ensuring all vacancies are filled through open competition and through utilisation of a wide breadth of advertising.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system by Q4 2019/20.
- Continually reviewing our staff structures against the Commission's work programme to ensure any resource pressures are quickly identified and dealt with.

Objectives for 2020-21 and 2021-22

In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Commission's core business delivery objectives are expected to remain broadly as set out above. This will include publishing the final report of its study into infrastructure resilience in the first half of 2020, but the subject matter of any future NIC studies is not yet known. The Commission also expects to begin work in earnest on the second National Infrastructure Assessment over this period, including establishing its proposed scope and methodology, and to continue to publish an annual assessment of the government's progress in delivering its recommendations, where these have been accepted.

In 2020-21, a number of individual Commissioners' terms of office will come to an end, and the Commission will work with the government as it considers the options for reappointment and/or for the recruitment of new Commissioners. In addition, as the Commission continues to establish itself as a permanent body, future areas of focus in developing and strengthening its corporate processes will be identified and agreed with its Oversight Board.

3. Resourcing and Budgets

Finances

The Commission has a delegated budget of £5.3m for 2018-19 and £5.7m for years 2019-20 and 2020–21. This has given the Commission reasonable assurance regarding its future funding and the ability to plan across a number of years. Ensuring that the Commission has the resources necessary to carry out its role is essential to its independence. Use of these funds is monitored by the Commission’s Oversight Board.

The Commission’s next multiyear financial settlement will be agreed during the government’s forthcoming spending review.

The Commission has prepared a detailed financial plan as part of its financial management and governance activities for the coming year. Performance against this plan is reviewed monthly by the Commission on a monthly basis. Alongside this, the Commission provides Treasury with monthly financial and non-financial information to satisfy reporting requirements.

In all its activities, the Commission operates in line with the principles set out in Managing Public Money and seeks to obtain value for money from its expenditure.

Sharing services is important in reducing costs, and as a small organisation it makes financial sense to pool resource to achieve scale. The Commission has therefore purchased administrative support services, where possible, from HM Treasury.

The remuneration of the Chair and Commissioners is published on our website.

The Commission publishes an Annual Report and Accounts detailing the organisation’s main activities and performance. These include the audited accounts and financial statements for the stated period. The Commission’s first annual report and accounts covers January to March 2017 and was published on 31 January 2018; with its second report covering April 2017 to March 2018 which was published on 21 November 2018.

Staffing

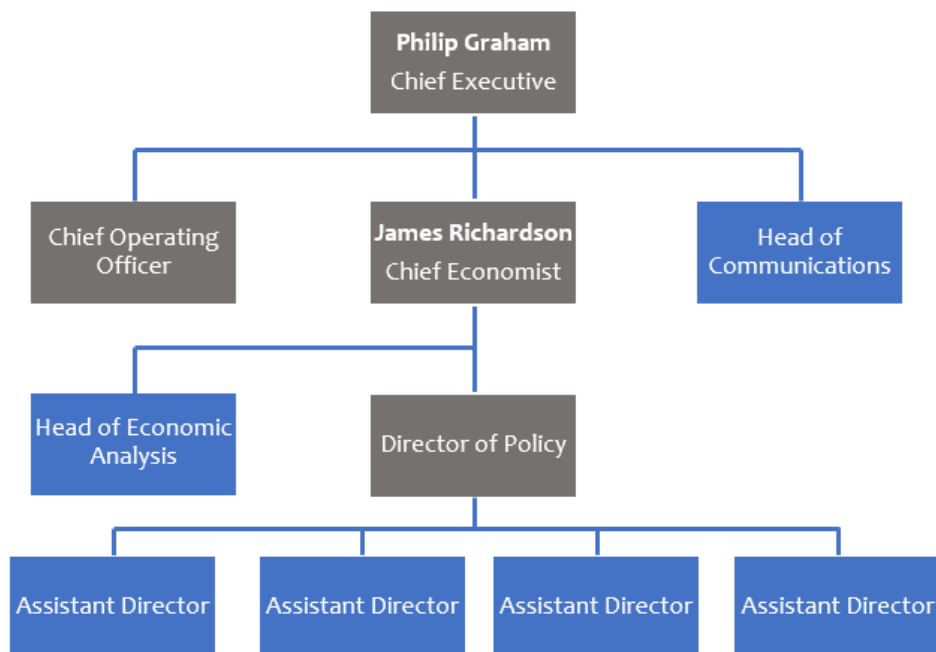
When the Commission was first established, a number of staff were transferred from HM Treasury and other government departments, under Cabinet Office guidelines governing machinery of government changes.

Since then, Commission staff have been recruited from the wider Civil Service, as well as local authorities, regulators and the private sector. The Commission has also loaned and seconded members of staff from other government departments and public authorities. These measures have granted the Commission access to a wide range of external skills and expertise enabling it to remain credible and influential with its stakeholders, while ensuring it is equipped to respond effectively to the needs and priorities of the organisation.

From the Commission's inception in 2015 until the publication of its first National Infrastructure Assessment in July 2018, there was an upward trajectory in headcount in order to build capability within the Commission in preparation for that Assessment. After its publication, headcount fell back to ca. 30, from a high of over 40. In late 2018, the Commission underwent a recruitment drive to rebuild capacity to carry out the studies requested by government. As of 26 April 2019, the Commission was supported by 41 staff members.

All members of the Secretariat are managed, and have their performance appraised, in accordance with Civil Service standards.

The diagram below provides an overview of how the Commission's Secretariat is structured as of April 2019.



The Commission is introducing a review process for Commissioners which is to be conducted prior to any consideration for reappointment.

NATIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMISSION
