

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Who are the members of the Commission?**

The Commission has 20 members and is chaired by Lord Kerlake. The Commission and its Steering Group draws on collective extensive experience in local and national government, business, development, academia and independent think tanks, in the UK and internationally.

Its members bring a real depth of experience across the British Isles. This brings together a wide range of experience from across the UK, Europe and internationally, with recognised experience and knowledge in the economy, housing, infrastructure, and environmental issues, as well as planning and sustainable development.

The Commission is supported by a working research partnership involving the University of Manchester, University of Sheffield, and University College London with support from the Heseltine Institute at the University of Liverpool and the University of Cambridge.

Its members belong to a wide range of public and private bodies from across the UK, as well as the USA-based Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (Cambridge MA). These include the Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Core Cities Network, the Sir Hugh & Land Sykes Trust, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), the National Institute for Economic & Social Research (NIESR), the North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT), The RSA, the West Midlands Combined Authority, and the leading consultancies of AECOM and Barton Willmore. They also include members from seven leading UK universities (Cambridge, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Reading, Sheffield and UCL). The Commission is also supported by Turner & Townsend and the Common Futures Network.

For more information on the Commissioners click [here](#).

- **What is the purpose of the Commission?**

The Commission is carrying out an inquiry into the nature of the inequalities across the regions and nations of the UK, exploring the costs and consequences, identifying underlying causes, and making recommendations for new policies to tackle the problems of poorer places, whilst supporting the sustainable growth of successful places.

For more information on the work of the Commission click [here](#)

- **Won't there always be inequalities between regions and nations?**

Of course, there will always be differences between places. But Britain has some of the most extreme regional disparities in the developed world and these impose great costs on society and handicap our economy. It does not have to be like this – as many other countries demonstrate. Such inequalities often compound local development creating polarised neighbourhoods and significant differences in the quality of life (e.g. educational and health) and access to opportunities e.g. lack of affordable housing for key workers in the south east of England.

For more information see the Call for Evidence [here](#)

- **Aren't the UK's inequalities just the result of market forces, about which little can be done?**

In part the problems are caused by historic factors and the distribution of competitive and less competitive industries, as well as market failure, reflected in large tracts of vacant land alongside overheated housing markets. But they are also shaped by government decisions which have not been thought through, concentrating resources for growth and development in already successful and congested places and generating huge localised demands for new infrastructure, housing shortages and pressure on the environment potentially at the expense of other regions.

- **What is a national spatial framework and who would use it?**

It is a long-term vision for a nation in terms of social, economic and environmental goals, setting out priorities for development and can take a variety of forms. It would establish, guide and coordinate long-term government policies for development, infrastructure, regeneration and growth. It would set a context for plans and programmes produced by local government and other public agencies and for private investment. The UK Government has recognised the need for such plans and is a signatory to the UN's New Urban Agenda<sup>1</sup>. National frameworks have been prepared for Scotland Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Irish Republic but there is not one for England

For more information on other national spatial strategies click [here](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> Agreed 2017 and endorsed by the UK Government – link to document <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf> - refer paragraph 49.

- **What will be the relationship to the existing spatial strategies for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?**

The Commission will build on the experience of national spatial planning in Scotland, Wales and the island of Ireland. It will also consider the existing and potential interrelationships between these existing frameworks and a potential framework for England, for example in terms of the connections with England and North and South Wales.

For more information on the consistency of existing national frameworks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland click [here](#)

- **Aren't there also other UK-wide strategies for example, for Infrastructure and the Environment?**

Yes, there are, but they only narrowly focus on one sector and none of these have clear and explicit place-based components which are mutually consistent and the frequent lack of synergy may be exacerbated by different timescales and sequencing. The Commission will need to ask whether these currently operate as separate departmental programmes or as a properly coordinated suite of plans.

For more information on the consistency of existing strategies click [here](#)

- **Aren't there large scale spatial policies for parts of England?**

It is true that government has shown some commitment to promoting cross-regional cooperation and strategies in parts of England - the development concepts or branding exercise of the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/ Oxford corridor, the Transport for the North, the 'Northern Powerhouse' and the 'Midlands Engine, and the Commission will give careful consideration to the significance and coherence of these emerging policies. There are however no clear links between these various different strategies nor are there joint strategies for the wider South East or for the South West of England.

For more information on governments emerging trans-regional initiatives [click](#) here

- **How is it different from the National Plans that have been produced in the past?**

Unlike other European countries, the UK has only had one previous national plan, produced in the 1960s. It did not last long, had a specific economic focus, was not regarded as successful, and had no geographical component. However, the regional planning councils and advisory regional strategies which emerged from that national plan were helpful in reaching agreement on big planning decisions in the past. Currently there are no explicit regional plans or strategies in England.

- **Doesn't England have an Industrial Strategy already?**

Yes, it does, but like the environmental and infrastructure strategies it has no clear geographical priorities or policies except for the need to develop Local Industrial Strategies. These are currently at a very embryonic stage and the relationship between these and either the regional strategies or the wider national picture is unclear.

- **How is it different from the existing NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) produced by the Government for England?**

The NPPF sets out regulatory policies, which should be used to determine major planning applications and the content of local authority plans by providing a consistent basis for decision making by local planning authorities. However, it is limited in scope and does not give any guidance on 'what, where and when' development should take place. Nor does it set out a policy for development priorities of national significance, or for future national investment. There is no aspiration or development vision in NPPF.

- **Will it cost a lot of public money to produce?**

The Commission will consider the resources required to develop a national spatial framework. There are already considered to be significant national development costs arising from the current fragmented arrangements. These resource allocations might well be more efficient and effective by a clear national spatial framework. With the limited nature of strategic planning in the UK, decisions are generally ad hoc in comparison to most other densely populated and highly urbanised countries. There may therefore be significant benefits and efficiencies as well as reduced costs from a joined-up approach to national decisions, including a strong sense of direction and reduced delays in taking big national decisions.

A clearer spatial framework of priorities and vision also has the potential to increase private investor confidence. They allow programmes to be sustained over the long term, rather than 'stop-start' project-based initiative. New towns like Warrington and Milton Keynes are good examples of how long-term national commitments can deliver very high economic growth rates, alongside a better environment.

- **Will a national spatial framework for England create another layer of plans, as well as those being prepared by the metropolitan mayors and combined authorities?**

The Commission will seek to clarify the relationships between the plans and bodies that have been and continuing to be set up to secure greater devolution of powers and responsibilities. Any recommendations by the Commission will want to build on these initiatives and set a framework that provides a sound structure for further devolution of powers and responsibilities to the most appropriate level.

- **How would a national framework for England support of poorer and / or underperforming regions be also able to protect the global role of London and other current areas of economic growth in the Wider South East and Scotland?**

This a crucial issue. The Commission wish to consider and test how a national framework could support successful places, whilst uplifting less successful ones in manner consistent with many other countries. These cannot be seen as binary choices which might result in parts of the country are becoming 'left behind places.

- **What impact will leaving the EU have on the work of the Commission?**

The Commission will have regard to the outcome of current negotiations. It is already clear that the UK will lose important EU funding streams and institutions, including the European Investment Bank, the European Regional Development Funds, the European Social Funds, the European Rural Development Funds, and, the Objective One Programmes. England in particular will lose elected representatives with a regional rather than local constituency interest (i.e. the Members of the European Parliament), whilst the other home nations will still have elected members of their own parliaments and assemblies. A key issue for investigation will be the future need for a bespoke UK economic development programmes and institutions to replace those that will be lost

For more information on EU funding streams click [here](#)

## Contact Details

**UK2070**  
COMMISSION



### Website

Please complete the online form and upload any relevant material at:

<http://uk2070.org.uk>



### Email

Please download and complete the form at LINK and email this together with any relevant material to:

[uk2070@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:uk2070@sheffield.ac.uk)



### Post

Mail can be sent to:

**The UK2070 Commission**  
c/o Department of Urban  
Studies and Planning  
University of Sheffield  
Sheffield, S10 2TN,  
United Kingdom



### Twitter

[@UK\\_2070](#)

Desk Top Publishing and  
Graphic Design by Barton  
Willmore the UK2070  
Commission Partners