

UK2070 COMMISSION**A UK INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN****An Inquiry into the Relationship of the Integrated Rail Plan
to the Levelling Up agenda****CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

The UK2070 Commission is an independent inquiry into city and regional inequalities in the UK, chaired by Lord Kerlake. It has set out a 10-Point Plan for Levelling Up the UK (see Annex 1). A key finding of the Commission was need for a Connectivity Revolution for the UK (see Annex 2).

This called for a UK-wide Connectivity Strategy would make the UK one of the best-connected countries in the developed world. The key components of this are summarised in Annex 1 including: a network of connected cities; sustainable mass transit systems within all major urban areas; enhanced connectivity beyond to the marginalised communities.

The need for transformative thinking is recognised by all parties based on:

- a long-term strategy covering several political cycles;
- redressing decades of underspending in the regions
- levelling up our country by transforming the prospects of the places
- focusing on outcomes linked to well-being, security, resilience and
- benefiting small towns alongside big cities sooner than previous proposals;

Such an approach is essential to give clarity to local areas about their future and confidence to those who want to invest in our country. This requires related programmes of investment brought forward and maintained through successive budgets.

A continuing barrier to progress however continues to be the political and programming challenge associated with re-engineering the rail infrastructure of the UK. This provides the backbone of connectivity in the UK in terms of local and strategic flows/ movements and is key to a sustainable economic development. It is reflected in recent reports – especially the IRP for the North and Midlands, the Hendy Review and the NIC National Infrastructure assessment. There have also been other related initiatives including the National Bus Strategy. They represent a range of thinking, policies and projects. These however have not been brought together and are being constrained or undermined by short term fiscal / budgetary horizons. The concern is that they are not only not comprehensive but may be not be consistent in their outcomes.

- Connecting the whole UK as a single global economic zone to maximise the effectiveness, capacity and combined power of the domestic market, labour supply and R&D Base;

- Ensuring a just transition to a zero-carbon economy, given the critical role of transport in energy demands; and
- Rebalancing the economic geography of the UK to deliver a fairer and stronger society which is no longer so dependent upon the success of London and the Wider South East.

A central challenge to delivering these goals lies in the way that decisions are taken in the UK. The current system is not fit for purpose. The key issues have been highlighted by the UK2070 Commission report *Make No Little Plans* (Section 2).

The UK2070 Commission has therefore set up an Inquiry in support of the long-standing aspirations for a Connectivity Revolution through an Integrated Rail Plan. Its focus is not on the detailed components of the Strategy that the UK needs, but on the capacity to make any coherent strategy – i.e., the way decisions are taken.

In order to help the Inquiry, the UK2070 Commission is making a Call for Evidence from all interested parties. All views are welcome. Contributions and evidence on the four key issues around how decisions are taken:

- **Long-term Commitment:** How can we best secure commitment to a long-term strategy, and what statutory or other status should it have to deliver this?
- **Immediate Priorities:** What actions need to be taken in the short term (within this parliamentary cycle and in the first years of any new administration, to commit action which is essential for any strategic framework and make sure future options are not foreclosed?
- **Wider Policy Relationships:** What wider policy inter-relationships need to be taken into account in promoting a National Integrated Rail Plan?
- **Institutional Barriers:** What are the barriers to more effective future relationships between industry, government and communities? What are the implications for further devolution to local government, especially Combined Authorities?

Submissions should be made by as an input to a report to be published, and submitted to Government, later this year.

Any person or organisation interested in submitting evidence to the Inquiry should do so by 30th June 2022 to the following email address UK2070Commisison@turntown.com and:

- State clearly who the submission is from, i.e., whether from yourself in a personal capacity or sent on behalf of an organisation
- As far as possible comprise a single document attachment to the email
- If more than 2000 words, please include a summary of the evidence

- Include a short summary in bullet point form and be in Word format
- Supply an email address so a copy of the Inquiry's report can be sent to you upon publication; and

For data protection purposes, individuals submitting written evidence would send their contact details separately in a covering email.

If you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact UK2070Commisison@turntown.com

ANNEX 1: UK2070 10-Point Plan (Taken from the [UK2070 Report October 2020](#))

- **A Spatially Just Transition to Zero-carbon** to seize the opportunity to tackle climate change and re-balance the economy, ensuring there is an explicit spatial dimension to the UK's plan to become zero carbon by 2050.
- **Delivering a Connectivity Revolution** investing in a new connectivity revolution, transforming the connections between cities, within cities and beyond cities to poorly connected towns through increasing infrastructure investment to at least 3% of GDP per annum.
- **Creating New Global Centres of Excellence** harnessing increased investment in research and development to create 'hub and spoke' networks of excellence and growth across the country comparable to the economic impact of the 'golden triangle' of London, Oxford and Cambridge.
- **Strengthening the Foundations of Local Economies** by strengthening economies in disadvantaged towns and empowering local leadership to develop economic capacity and promote resilience and wellbeing.
- **Rethinking the Housing Crisis**, recognising housing as part of national infrastructure and ensuring that the supply of new housing is aligned with the needs of the economy.
- **Harnessing Cultural & Environmental Assets** increasing the focus of policy and funding on assets outside of London.
- **Implementing a Comprehensive Devolution** shifting power and funding away from Westminster and Whitehall through a radical programme of devolution and allowing different places to progress through different levels of devolution according to local ambition, need and capacity.
- **Future Skilling the UK** tackling the historic under-performance of the UK on skills through national plans to raise attainment levels, especially in those skills needed to achieve the levels of the best performing places.
- **Levelling UP Access to Funds** tripling the size of the Shared Prosperity Fund for 20 years, with clear spatial priorities, delivering an extra expenditure of £200bn over that already planned.
- **Shaping the UK2070 Future. A National Spatial Plan for England** tasking the National Infrastructure Commission with creating a national spatial plan for England and linking to those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to guide investment and to support local and regional spatial plans.

Changing the Way Decisions are Made

In order to deliver the above actions a powerful ministerially led cross- government committee needs to be established with a dedicated team, to oversee delivery and embed levelling up, supported by spatial analysis, flexible funding and new measures of success, including a review of the Green Book appraisal methodology on the way major projects and local priorities are funded and assessed.

ACTION 2

Delivering a Connectivity Revolution

A 50-year vision for a re-connected Britain is needed to meet the national zero-carbon target in 2050 and to reconnect all the communities in the UK, whether they are the major metropolitan centres or remoter rural communities.

A study for the Commission of the future transport investment requirements, highlights the fact that a fully de-carbonised system if it continues to be based on the current balance of transport modes requires a doubling of the nation's electrical power generation – for which there is no investment plan.

As recognised by the Government, investing in transport links is essential to levelling up access to opportunities across the country, ensuring our regions are better connected, local economies flourish and more than half a century of isolation undone. A revolution in the public transport network capacity and quality is required between cities, within cities and beyond cities, potentially building up to 3000 km of new and upgraded rail lines.

Action 2 therefore sets out the steps by which a Connectivity Revolution could be achieved through the following components:

- A renewed standard of excellence in the level and quality of public transport connections between the core network of towns, cities and regions, comparable to that which they have with London;
- Higher levels of mobility within city regions and other urban areas through new multi-modal and integrated transport systems – extending into their rural hinterlands – especially through green bus, tram and metro systems expanding of existing systems in the metropolitan areas to other cities and towns;
- New levels of connectivity beyond core regions to address the absence of sustainable links to marginalised communities and towns and remoter rural areas; and enhance their access to services such as hospitals and further education and to wider economic prospects.



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ACTION 2**Delivering a Connectivity Revolution**

It is recommended that the UK Government should commit to working with the Scottish and Welsh Governments to plan, fund and deliver a Connectivity Revolution for Connecting Britain over the next 25 years, to make the UK one of the best-connected countries in the developed world through a UK-wide Connectivity Strategy to deliver:

- A network of connected cities;
- Sustainable mass transit systems within all major urban areas;
- Enhanced connectivity beyond to the marginalised communities, and the reopening or upgrade of up to 3000 km of rail line.

This should include a related programme of investment brought forward through a Comprehensive Spending Review and related Budget.