

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

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2020-2023



**NATIONAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
COMMISSION**

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# Foreword

## **Diverse organisations, and diverse sectors, make better decisions and deliver better products.**

**Those planning and delivering infrastructure should more closely represent the diverse society we are proud to serve, and those seeking to encourage change should model it themselves.**

These statements should barely need to be reasserted in 2020. But the truth is – as the wider infrastructure sector recognises – however much we have understood these things, progress to effect real and visible change has not come fast enough.

That’s why we need renewed action and a sense of purpose now; with clear goals for charting our progress towards a more inclusive approach to planning and delivering infrastructure that helps improve the quality of life and economic prospects of people in every community in the UK.

For the Commission, that process must begin with getting our own house in order. We will take steps to build a more inclusive and diverse organisation, working with civil service colleagues to ensure that our recruitment, retention and promotion processes are genuinely inclusive and work to overcome structural barriers which may have hampered progress in the past.

We will use diversity as a lens through which to consider infrastructure challenges and ensure our policy recommendations take account of the needs of different users. We will also encourage the wider sector, championing the benefits of greater diversity and inclusion and using our convening power to share good practice.

The sector must heed the calls for change. We are pleased to express our commitment to playing our part in this, to help build national infrastructure which better reflects the needs and aspirations of all who use it.



**Julia Prescott**  
**Lead Commissioner for Diversity and Inclusion**



**Sir John Armitt CBE**  
**Chair**

# The Commission

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## The Commission's remit

The Commission provides the government with impartial, expert advice on major long term infrastructure challenges. Its remit covers all sectors of economic infrastructure: energy, transport, water and wastewater (drainage and sewerage), waste, flood risk management and digital communications. While the Commission considers the potential interactions between its infrastructure recommendations and housing supply, housing itself is not in its remit. Also out of the scope of the Commission are social infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals or prisons, agriculture, and land use.

The Commission's objectives are to support sustainable economic growth across all regions of the UK, improve competitiveness, and improve quality of life.

The Commission delivers the following core pieces of work:

- 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, taking into account the views of the Commission and stakeholders, including recommendations to 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 binding fiscal remit requires it to demonstrate that all its recommendations for economic infrastructure are consistent with, and set out how they can be accommodated within, gross public investment in economic infrastructure of between 1 per cent and 1.2 per cent of GDP each year between 2020 and 2050. The Commission's reports must also include a transparent assessment of the impact on costs to businesses, consumers, government, public bodies and other end users of infrastructure that would arise from implementing the recommendations.

When making its recommendations, the Commission is required to take into account both the role of the economic regulators in regulating infrastructure providers, and the government's legal obligations, such as carbon reduction targets or making assessments of environmental impacts. The Commission's remit letter also states that the Commission must ensure its recommendations do not reopen decision making processes where programmes and work have been decided by the government or will be decided in the immediate future.

The Commission's remit extends to economic infrastructure within the UK government's competence and will evolve in line with devolution settlements. This means the Commission has a role in relation to non-devolved UK government infrastructure responsibilities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (and all sectors in England).

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), a separate body, is responsible for ensuring the long term planning carried out by the Commission is translated into successful project delivery, once the plans have been endorsed by government.

## The Commission's members

**Sir John Armitt CBE** (Chair) published an independent review on long term infrastructure planning in the UK in September 2013, which resulted in the National Infrastructure Commission. Sir John is the Chair of National Express Group and the City & Guilds Group. He also sits on the boards of the Berkeley Group and Expo 2020.

**Professor Sir Tim Besley CBE** is School Professor of Economics and Political Science and W. Arthur Lewis Professor of Development Economics at the LSE. He served as an external member of the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee from 2006 to 2009.

**Professor David Fisk CB** is the Director of the Laing O'Rourke Centre for Systems Engineering and Innovation Research at Imperial College London. He has served as Chief Scientist across several government departments including those for environment and transport, and as a member of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority.

**Andy Green CBE** holds several chair, non-executive director and advisory roles, linked by his passion for how technology transforms business and our daily lives. He chairs Lowell, a major European credit management company and has served as Chair of the Digital Catapult, an initiative to help grow the UK's digital economy.

**Bridget Rosewell CBE** is a director, policy maker and economist. She served as Chief Economic Adviser to the Greater London Authority from 2002 to 2012 and worked extensively on infrastructure business cases. She has served as a Non-executive Director at Network Rail and Non-executive Chair of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. She is currently Chair of the Atom Bank and the M6 Toll Road.

**Professor Sadie Morgan OBE** is a founding director of the Stirling Prize winning architectural practice dRMM. She is also Chair of the Independent Design Panel for High Speed Two and one of the Mayor of London's Design Advocates. She sits on the boards of the Major Projects Association and Homes England.

**Julia Prescott** is a co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer of Meridiam and sits on the Executive Committee of Meridiam SAS. She has been involved in long term infrastructure development and investment in the UK, Europe, North America and Africa. Since 2019 she has sat on the board of the Port of Tyne.

# Developing our strategy

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**The National Infrastructure Commission has developed its first diversity and inclusion strategy to drive improvements both within our organisation and to lead and challenge across the whole of the infrastructure sector.**

We want the UK's infrastructure to be universally accessible and usable by as many people as reasonably possible. Diverse and inclusive organisations are more likely to deliver inclusive infrastructure and services.

## Stakeholder and staff engagement

In order to understand what we need to do, it is important to build a picture of our current performance in this area - and that of the wider infrastructure sector. To this end, we gathered diversity data on our staff, through existing monitoring mechanisms and held a number of informal roundtable discussions, inviting staff to confidentially put forward and discuss their views on the inclusiveness of the National Infrastructure Commission. We also invited staff to feedback anonymously through a number of communication methods. The findings from these sessions have been reflected in the aims and ambitions we now have as an organisation.

In addition to this, we undertook a programme of stakeholder engagement and met with a number of government and infrastructure stakeholders including; BEIS, Cabinet Office, Treasury, Balfour Beatty, Network Rail, Thames Water, National Grid and the GLA to understand what measures they had put in place to address diversity and inclusion, progress they are making and what role they thought the Commission could play in this area.

## Next steps

This strategy is our first to address this issue and it is important to be both stretching and realistic in our aims. The Commission has a clear role in convening and challenging the sector to work together and improve their diversity and inclusion performance for all of their employees and customers. In order to do this effectively, the Commission must first ensure that we are challenging ourselves and subsequent strategies will review and build on this work to further lead and challenge the sector. We have set ourselves three aims and will develop a comprehensive action plan to achieve them. The aims in brief are:

1. To diversify our organisation to better represent the communities we serve
2. To embed an inclusive organisational culture in everything we do
3. To champion diversity and inclusion across the infrastructure sector.

# Making diversity and inclusion our priority

**There is a clear moral, social and economic case for why diversity and inclusion matter. We all need infrastructure to work for us on a daily basis and it is essential for infrastructure providers to know their customers and respond to their diverse needs to deliver an effective service.**

For example, in digital communications, whilst older consumers (aged 75+) have increased their broadband ownership in the last few years, just under half do not have home broadband, and less than four in ten older consumers are confident that they understand the language and terminology used by providers, compared to the 75 per cent average.<sup>1</sup>

Providers must consider who is using, and needs to use, their services and plan and design them to meet specific needs. Women use local bus services more than men at all ages and the highest usage is by 17-20 year-olds and 70+,<sup>2</sup> while men, on average, take slightly more rail journeys per year than women.<sup>3</sup> People with limited mobility use rail less than people without mobility disabilities and the barriers they face can range from blocked or absent wheelchair ramps to inaccessible toilets, to shops and platforms without step-free access. All providers must understand vulnerability and offer additional support in relation to access, communication and/or safety in regard to the essential services they are offering. For example, by understanding how certain mental health conditions may impact on a customers' ability to engage with utility providers or willingness to have work carried out in their homes.

Public and private organisations should reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. This is a moral imperative. Diversity and inclusion should also be central to an organisation's business strategy. By reflecting the communities we serve, infrastructure organisations can attract employees and design infrastructure that is useful to everyone. As an example, women make up 23.3 per cent of employees in the water and energy sectors and these sectors have just 7.1 per cent Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees. This is not representative of the 12.9 per cent of individuals from a BAME background who aged 16 – 64 are currently economically active in the UK workforce.<sup>4</sup> And we need to make sure the sector is diverse at all levels; with just five per cent of manager/director roles in the water and energy sectors being held by women (and only 2.1 per cent in the construction sector),<sup>5</sup> there is a long way to go.

By first addressing diversity and inclusion within our own organisation, the Commission will make recommendations for infrastructure that better reflect all who need to use it. In this, our first diversity and inclusion strategy, we will focus on diversity regarding protected characteristics, and in particular those characteristics which have historically been underrepresented within the Commission.

We will also use our convening powers to bring the sector together to agree how we can work together to put diversity and inclusion at the heart of all our businesses and services.

## What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?

A diverse organisation is one that encompasses all similarities and differences, from the individual to the organisational. This applies both within the National Infrastructure Commission and the wider infrastructure community, and includes experiences, backgrounds, beliefs, behaviours and preferences.

An inclusive environment is one that treats everybody fairly and with respect, giving equal access to opportunity and ensuring that everyone can contribute and have their voice heard. An inclusive organization creates a culture which celebrates the intersections of diversity that each individual brings. This applies both to organisations across infrastructure and the design and delivery of infrastructure itself.

## Our mission

In assessing the country's long term infrastructure needs, the Commission's objectives are to support sustainable economic growth across all regions of the UK, improve competitiveness, and improve quality of life. Infrastructure must be accessible and useable by as many people as reasonably possible to meet these objectives. At the heart of this diversity strategy, is our mission to:

*“Create a diverse, inclusive workplace that is representative of the public we serve – and ensure that infrastructure planning, design, decision-making and implementation reflects the needs of the entire population.”*

In line with this mission, the Commission has set three key aims for this diversity and inclusion strategy:

**Aim 1: We will attract, develop, retain and engage with staff from a range of backgrounds and with a range of mindsets, in order to better represent the communities we serve, and better deliver our organisational objectives.**

**Aim 2: We will create an organisational culture in which inclusion is embedded in everything we do, to ensure our staff and stakeholders feel valued, secure, and can maximise the contribution they make.**

**Aim 3: We will champion the opportunities and benefits of greater diversity and inclusion across infrastructure, to meet the diverse needs of its users.**

These aims are set out in greater detail throughout the rest of this document.

## Aim 1

**We will attract, engage with and retain people from a range of backgrounds and with a range of mindsets, in order to better represent the communities we serve, and better deliver our organisational objectives.**



To meet this aim, the Commission will undertake the following actions:

**We will measure and monitor diversity data to enable us to assess how effectively we reflect the communities we serve.**

- Though a small organisation, the Commission will set itself targets for staff representation across gender, ethnicity and disability, with reference to the most recent census data. We will work with HM Treasury to address the diversity of our Commission to ensure we contribute to government wide diversity targets for public appointments.

**We will review our HR processes to ensure we put diversity at the heart of our ways of working.**

- The Commission will undertake a review of HR arrangements such as recruitment, performance management, and learning and development to ensure that they meet the needs of a diverse workforce. These will be championed and led by senior staff objectives. In addition to our current gender pay gap reporting, we will also report on our ethnicity pay gap.

**We will work to support individuals from diverse groups to develop within the Commission and reach their goals.**

- The Commission will take positive action to support and sponsor individuals whose backgrounds are currently underrepresented in the Secretariat and across the wider sector to access career and development opportunities. To help drive this, we will sign the Race at Work Charter.

## How will we know if we've been successful?

- Staff representation to achieve nationally representative levels, with targets achieved as follows:
  - **Gender:** 50 per cent
  - **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME):** 14 per cent
  - **Disability:** 13 per cent
- Increased staff satisfaction with inclusion and discrimination in the annual Civil Service Staff Survey
- Positive diversity audits across the Commission's secretariat, panels and boards with sustained improvements.

## Aim 2

**We will create an organisational culture in which inclusion is embedded in everything we do, to ensure our staff and stakeholders feel valued, secure, and can maximise the contribution they make.**



To meet this aim, the Commission will undertake the following actions:

### **We will create an inclusive working environment**

- The Commission will take action to support different ways of working and ensure that everyone is treated fairly and can contribute. For example, by consulting staff and networks across government on their needs and preferences and embedding remote working practices.

### **We will adopt a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment**

- The Commission will act to prevent bullying and harassment, promoting positive workplace behaviours and tackling behaviour which falls short of this standard to protect all our staff and stakeholders.

### **We will safeguard the wellbeing and mental health of all of our staff and stakeholders**

- The Commission will create a working environment and culture that is supportive of individuals' wellbeing and mental health, for example through maintaining a group of trained mental health first aiders in the secretariat.

### **How will we know if we've been successful?**

- Higher scores on inclusion measures in the annual Civil Service Staff Survey, to reach 85 per cent positive response for inclusion and fair treatment
- Reduced reporting of bullying and harassment in the annual Civil Service Staff Survey
- Raise the profile of mental wellbeing and take steps to embed good mental health practices, for example by ensuring that the secretariat maintains at least five mental health first aid trained individuals who receive ongoing training
- The Commission will gain external accreditation as an inclusive employer.

**Aim 3**

**We will champion the opportunities and benefits of greater diversity and inclusion across infrastructure to meet the needs of its users.**



To meet this aim, the Commission will undertake the following actions:

**We will actively consider diversity and inclusion in all our work.**

- The Commission will make diversity and inclusion a key consideration in all of its policy and analysis work, ensuring that we account for the impact of infrastructure planning on diverse groups and consider the effects of inaction.

**We will engage external stakeholders to assess the impact of diversity and inclusion on infrastructure decision making and review the impact of evaluation frameworks.**

- The Commission will research the role of diversity and inclusion in governance structures and consider how it impacts decision making processes in infrastructure development and delivery, alongside the effectiveness of existing evaluation mechanisms. The Commission will do this as part of their future work programme.

**We will take an active convening role for diversity and inclusion in the wider infrastructure sector.**

- The Commission will assume a convening role for diversity and inclusion in the sector, bringing together experts and practitioners and encouraging organisations to share best practice and expertise through summits and knowledge-building workshops.

**How will we know if we've been successful?**

- Future policy recommendations made by the Commission will address the needs of diverse users of infrastructure
- The Commission will report key findings on the impact of diversity and inclusion on decision making in our sector
- The Commission will report key findings on the impact of existing diversity and inclusion infrastructure measurement frameworks to help understand what works
- The Commission will host at least one diversity and inclusion summit or knowledge building session each year for infrastructure providers over the course of the strategy.

## Case study examples

To inform our strategy, we carried out stakeholder engagement with a range of infrastructure providers and bodies. The case studies below demonstrate some of the expertise and innovation that already exists in the sector, which we can learn from and build upon.

### Balfour Beatty - Reverse Mentoring Programme

Two years ago, Balfour Beatty held an *Inspiring Women* conference for women across their projects and senior male leaders, plus other external guests. During this conference, they invited a partner and one of his associates from PwC to share their insights from their reverse mentoring programme. During this event, they had a series of round-table discussions and gained invaluable insights from female colleagues about the culture of Balfour Beatty.



This prompted the company to launch a reverse mentoring programme and 19 women who attended the conference were partnered with members of the leadership teams to increase the latter group's understanding of the challenges facing women and to help them become more inclusive leaders. Team members provided feedback on this initial programme, discussed how they could develop it and subsequently rolled it out more broadly to address other under-represented groups in addition to women.

Balfour Beatty believe this Reverse Mentoring Programme has had a transformational impact on the culture within its Major Projects and Highways business and on account of its success, the programme has been expanded across the wider Balfour Beatty Group. The Group CEO is now participating in the programme, along with all his direct reports, and they have expanded the programme to the next layer of leadership within the Major Projects and Highways business. Balfour Beatty believe that their Reverse Mentoring Programme is helping develop inclusive leadership which is positively impacting on their culture. This is reflected in their annual Pulse survey results and progress against their equality, diversity and inclusion objectives generally.

### Network Rail – Built Environment Accessibility Panel (BEAP)

The purpose of Network Rail's Built Environment Accessibility Panel is to make sure that their major building works, station designs and other facilities across Britain are accessible and as inclusive as possible. It assists Network Rail to deliver a built environment based on inclusive design principles that put people at the heart of the built environment. This means benefits for disabled and older passengers, and people of all cultures, faiths and ages.



The BEAP has been likened to the 'Dragon's Den' and acts as a critical friend, using the lived experience for disabled passengers to offer advice and information to Network Rail and other stakeholders, including Train Operating Companies, in relation to inclusive design standards and built environment proposals for stations, footbridges and other projects associated with the rail industry. Made up of disabled people, some of whom are access consultants, the BEAP gives technical advice on the design of Network Rail's built environment proposals and plans. Its stakeholders include the Department for Transport, the Office of Rail Regulation and planning authorities. HS2 Ltd has been using BEAP to guide its own work and is now setting up its own panel, as has TfL.

## Thames Water – Diversity scenarios

Thames Water’s award-winning inclusion cards help promote open and honest conversations.

They are literally a deck of cards, developed by the diversity and inclusion champions across all of the employee networks within Thames Water.

Each deck consists of three scenarios per ‘protected characteristic’, which are designed to stimulate discussion and crucially consider what else each and every member of the team can do individually and collectively to ensure that Thames Water is a diverse and inclusive great place to work, delivering life’s essential service so our customers, communities and the environment can thrive.

As an example, participants consider the following scenario:

*You’re preparing a ‘RAG’ (Red, Amber, Green) status report but are conscious that some of the audience you need to share the report with or interested parties may be colour blind*

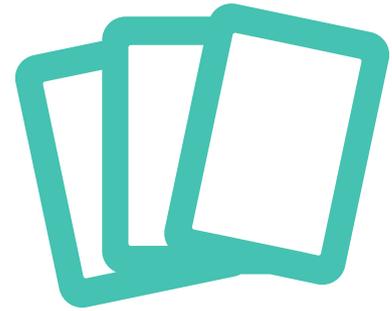
One possible mitigating action would be to add the letters R, A or G to the report as opposed to using colours only. This could make a significant difference to the accessibility of the report: by thinking through such scenarios, Thames Water has encouraged its staff to consider how such actions can make improvements to better support colleagues and customers.

Since their launch to coincide with National Inclusion Week in September 2018, hundreds of teams across Thames Water have used the inclusion cards, considering different views and ideas for how every employee and team can help make a difference.

Thames Water reports that, internally, 100 per cent of participants who used the inclusion cards found them impactful and 100 per cent recommended the inclusion cards to colleagues. A senior team manager commented: “The cards prompted new ways of thinking about situations we may encounter at work. Some may seem simple on the surface but behind each card is another person’s point of view. The cards challenge perceptions and encourage people to understand their impact on others. You may feel everyone shares your way of viewing the world, but these cards may open up another way of looking at things.”

Externally, the inclusion cards have been a phenomenal success too, with other organisations using the cards in their own team meetings. A partner of Thames Water said,

“The inclusion cards have been really well received by the senior management team. They are thought provoking and make us as a leadership team think about situations and how our actions may be perceived by others.”



## Endnotes

- 1 Ofcom (2018), **Access and Inclusion in 2018**
- 2 National Travel Survey (2018), Factsheet
- 3 Department for Transport (2018), Rail Factsheet
- 4 Office of National Statistics (2019), **EMPI3 Employment by Industry** (Sections B, D, E,)
- 5 Office of National Statistics (2019), **EMPI3 Employment by Industry** (Sections B, D, E, F)

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