



Infrastructure Commission

8th January 2016

Dear Lord Adonis,

National Infrastructure Commission – Call for Evidence

Atlantic Gateway welcomes the establishment of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) and the opportunity it provides to take a genuine independent long term approach to infrastructure planning in the United Kingdom. Atlantic Gateway is also delighted to see cross-party support for the work of the NIC which we consider to be critical to the successful planning of long term infrastructure.

Atlantic Gateway is a private sector led body focused on driving growth and rebalancing the economy. Its strategic vision is to maximise the investment potential within Atlantic Gateway and play a major role in the growth of the Northern Powerhouse. The geography of Atlantic Gateway is roughly that of the three Local Enterprise Partnership areas – Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington and Liverpool City Region – and includes strategic assets such as the cities of Liverpool and Manchester, Sci-Tech Daresbury and the international gateways of Manchester Airport and the Port of Liverpool. Atlantic Gateway is a cross-LEP body with representatives from each of its LEP areas and it also works with a range of other public and private sector partners.

One of Atlantic Gateway's key priorities and areas of focus is infrastructure, including grey, blue and green infrastructure. Atlantic Gateway believes that a long term view on all forms of infrastructure, including transport, energy, digital connectivity and environmental and water management, is critical in achieving long term sustainable growth. We are also passionate about developing great places for people and businesses. This requires a long term commitment to developing world-class infrastructure by the Government

Atlantic Gateway Infrastructure Priorities

Atlantic Gateway is currently in the process of establishing infrastructure priorities working in conjunction with the Atlantic Gateway Board, the area's LEPs and Local Authorities. These are based upon a number of key criteria including:

- priorities should be of pan-LEP importance;
- priorities should require coordinated action across the Atlantic Gateway area;
- priorities should unlock economic growth across the Atlantic Gateway area; and
- priorities should deliver the greatest economic benefit for the Atlantic Gateway area and the wider Northern Powerhouse.

It is anticipated that Atlantic Gateway Infrastructure priorities will be agreed in early 2016 and based upon the first phase of our work it is expected that a number of key infrastructure priorities and themes will emerge, including:

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- the critical importance of transport as the key driver of growth, including HS2 and HS3. Transport for the North is leading on developing the evidence and business case for transport investment and Atlantic Gateway fully supports the development of these proposals;
- infrastructure to support the growth of the Freight and Logistics sector including improving port access and associated local connectivity critical to improving traffic flows;
- enabling infrastructure to support the development of key Science and Innovation sites;
- enabling infrastructure to support the further development of the area's key international gateways of Manchester Airport and the Port of Liverpool;
- development of energy generation and distribution solutions to underpin long term growth and improve long term energy security; and
- a continued long term focus on green infrastructure, including flood resilience which is particularly important across the Atlantic Gateway and its surrounding areas of Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The Board will agree on a number of infrastructure priorities including specific projects which it believes are critical to growth or should be developed further to support decision making on a local and national basis.

The Infrastructure Commission's current focus on connectivity in the North of England and energy distribution has obvious synergies with the work we are undertaking across Atlantic Gateway. The Atlantic Gateway Board would be delighted to meet to discuss how our work can be used to inform the ongoing national debate on the future of infrastructure in the UK.

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As a strategic body we do not undertake the delivery of projects but we do work with key partners such as the Peel Group, United Utilities, Manchester Airport Group, transport authorities, central government departments, the three LEPs and the nineteen local authorities across the region to identify issues and opportunities where the scale and influence of Atlantic Gateway can add value to unlocking or bringing forward transformational projects.

In response to the specific questions set out in the call for evidence, Atlantic Gateway supports the work programme currently being undertaken by Transport for the North to identify a detailed set of investment priorities, and sees improved connectivity across the region as being key to delivering the ambitions of the Northern Powerhouse. However, it is imperative that transport investment on the scale proposed by Transport for the North is underpinned by the right evidence and that any prioritisation is based upon a consideration of the long term requirements of both passengers and freight. The freight and logistics sector is an Atlantic Gateway priority and we fully support Transport for the North's decision to develop its strategic case following the development of evidence of the growth of the freight and logistics sector. Any decision making has to be based upon the right intelligence and business case. Furthermore, it is also critical to take account of local

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connectivity issues and opportunities to ensure that the local transport networks are able to support the growth ambitions of the region.

The Infrastructure Commission is an excellent opportunity to raise the importance of long term strategic decision making and consider how we evaluate and fund major infrastructure projects in the UK. We would be delighted to work with, and support, the NIC through the work undertaken by Atlantic Gateway, its wider network and Board members.

We look forward to engaging with you further on this extremely exciting initiative.

With best wishes.

Carmel Booth
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