

Dear Colleagues,

2020-5 Infrastructure, Investment and Devolution

Thank you to everybody who participated in our consultation on the environment and animal welfare. This consultation paper continues our series considering the Government's programme for legislation, as presented in the Queen's Speech, by exploring another of its major sections—namely, infrastructure, investment and devolution.

As life begins to return to some semblance of normality, following the easing of the lockdown restrictions, the question of how we can level up across the UK becomes all the more pertinent.

Please send your responses to the questions to CPF.Papers@conservatives.com, using the associated response form published alongside this paper on the CPF website. The deadline for submitting your response is 13th September. We aim to publish our next discussion paper on 14th September, on workers and families.

As a new innovation, watch your inbox for occasional "snap polls" that we have begun to send to members on our mailing list. Your responses to these are helping us to communicate the views of the Party's grassroots in a more timely fashion on current policy issues.

A summary of responses to this consultation paper will be sent to the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, relevant Ministers, Party Chairman and CPF Chairman within a month of the closing date for submissions. We look forward to hearing your ideas as, together, we continue to unleash the country's potential.

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The Big Picture

"Only by having a plan for prosperity will we grow the economy. Only by having a growing economy can we invest in our public services. And only by investing in our public services, the people's priority, can we send a clear message to those who rely on them: You are our priority. Our public services are the one of the most important tools by which we, the government, can level up and spread opportunity—so that no matter who you are or where you were born, you'll have every chance to succeed in our modern dynamic economy."

(Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP)¹

As we emerge from the coronavirus lockdown, never has the Conservative Party and Prime Minister's agenda to level up and invest infrastructure been so important. To help communities across the country to prosper, we will continue modernising our roads and railways, and improving the everyday services that people rely on to get to work, visit friends and access local services. Strengthening these vital connections, ensuring journeys are quick, reliable and clean, is central to our ambition to level up the country and kickstart regional economies as we rebuild the economy.

This government has an ambition to deliver an "infrastructure revolution". This includes levelling up economic and social infrastructure, with an additional £640 billion investment commitment to ensure that all citizens across the UK will benefit. But too often we let the people of this country down, because our projects are late, cost more than planned, or fall short on their promised benefits.

We need to take action collectively across government, and indeed across the wider public sector and private sector too. We need to fix the project delivery system. To do this we need to focus on the three "P"s: people, principles and performance, to improve the effectiveness of delivery and provide better outcomes for citizens:

- Making sure our **people** have the tools, competence and skills they need to deliver.
- Being clear about the **principles** of delivery and getting the basics of delivery right.
- Driving a step change in **performance** so we can meet future challenges.²

Devolution aims to provide local areas with the levers they need to drive growth, boost productivity in local economies and improve and integrate public services. The Government is committed to giving communities more control over how investment is spent so that they can decide what is best for them. This will be set out in an English Devolution White Paper in 2020 providing further detail on the Government's plans for full devolution across England, increasing the number of mayors and devolving more powers, including doing more devolution deals.³

Questions for discussion

1. In what ways, if any, should our priorities be changed to reflect (i) the coronavirus lockdown, (ii) our commitment to "level up" and (iii) the green agenda?
2. To what extent should we invest in (i) different forms of infrastructure (e.g. transport, digital or power and utility networks), (ii) different areas of the country (e.g. those most affected by coronavirus or the lockdown) or (iii) different modes of transport (e.g. rail, bus, car, cycle or walking)?
3. What needs to change in our planning system to allow infrastructure to be built more quickly, cheaply and of better quality, yet without losing community input?
4. What additional powers do you think should or should not be devolved?
5. Is there any other observation you would like to make?

¹ Budget Speech 2020, HM Treasury, 11 March 2020, [link](#)

² Fixing the project delivery system, Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 29 January 2020, [link](#)

³ Devolution annual report 2018 to 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 22 April 2020, [link](#)