

2019 09 23

Approved by APPG Officers following:
Sept 2019 _ Review Meeting



Inquiry into long-termism: Terms of Reference

Context

The UK has a world-leading policy system and many examples of good long term policy making, ranging from automatic pension enrolment to the capacity market. Yet there is evidence that short-termism is adversely affecting UK policy. The 2019 Lords Intergenerational Fairness Select Committee stated that *“successive governments have ... failed to plan for the long-term. This lack of foresight lies behind many of the problems we see in housing, education and the workforce.”*

This inquiry is coming at a time when the public are increasingly concerned about environmental risks, when Brexit has been dominating the recent political agenda and there is significant uncertainty about what this means for the UK, where long-term demographic and technological trends prove an ever increasing challenge to our democratic societies.

Topic

The inquiry is on: **how policy decision making today considers the long-term.**

The terms above should be understood as follows:

- **“policy”**: all UK government policy such as: spending, legislation, regulation, guidance, etc
- **“decision making”**: the culture, processes, accountability mechanisms and so on that feed into the creation of policy
- **“today”**: focused on producing recommendations that are immediately useful and impactful.
- **“considers”**: fairly balances long-term and short-term objectives, to the benefit of the public.
- **“long-term”**: beyond political cycles and expected length of time in power. We have not specified a specific ideal time scale as this will differ significantly in different policy areas.

The inquiry

The purpose of the Inquiry is to:

- Look for and understand examples areas of **best practice** in long-term policy making
- Look for areas where there are **systemic challenges** to long-termism in policy making
- **Make recommendations** to ensure that long-termism is integrated into UK policy systems.

The inquiry will build on the work already done, in particular the work of the Lord’s Intergenerational Fairness and Provision Committee ([link](#)), the paper on *Rights and Representation of Future Generations in United Kingdom Policy-Making* that led to the creation of the APPG and other existing academic research.

The Inquiry will cover, amongst other areas of investigation, a **general overview** of long-term decision making in UK policy, including consideration of **environmental** issues. The inquiry will look in depth at specific examples of **cyber** and **poverty** policy, including looking at past decisions made.

The inquiry will be run as a **critical friend** of government, recognising where there are excellent examples of good long-term policy making and making constructive and achievable recommendations.

The inquiry will host **evidence sessions**, inviting relevant experts to meet with MPs, in a similar manner to a select committee.

The inquiry will seek **submissions of evidence** from the public.

Resourcing and timing

The inquiry will be carried out by **Caroline Baylon and Sam Hilton** (with capacity equivalent to 0.5 full time staff). They will be responsible for fundraising as necessary to ensure ongoing resource and build additional resource if needed, for the inquiry.

Caroline Baylon and Sam Hilton are Research Affiliates at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at the University of Cambridge

The aim is to deliver a finished product in **10 months**, around mid June 2020.

Steering board

The initial combined steering board and inquiry panel for the inquiry is comprised of:

Chair: Bambos Charalamous MP (Lab)

Jeremy Lefroy MP (Con)

Daniel Zeichner MP (Lab)

Anna McMorrin MP (Lab)

Caroline Lucas MP (Green)

Lord Bird (CB)

Lord Balfe (Con)

Lord Rees (CB)

The steering board will receive an update roughly every 3 months and be asked to comment
The steering board will be invited to the evidence sessions.

The steering board be responsible for signing off the final recommendations and executive summary of the inquiry and will be listed in the inquiry document.

The steering board will have veto power over any new members of the steering board.

Disagreements among the steering board are to be resolved by a vote. If necessary the chair (currently Bambos Charalamous MP) will have the deciding vote.

Cobadging

The inquiry will be carried out jointly with the [Centre for the Study of Existential Risk](#) at the University of Cambridge.