

Geospatial Commission appoints four new Commissioners

Four Independent Commissioners will join the Board of the Geospatial Commission alongside its Chair, Sir Andrew Dilnot, and Deputy Chair, Nigel Clifford.

Dame Kate Barker, Kru Desai, Edwina Dunn and Steve Unger have been appointed by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP, in consultation with the Chair of the Commission.

The Chair of the Geospatial Commission, Sir Andrew Dilnot, said:

I am pleased to welcome Kate, Kru, Edwina and Steve to the Geospatial Commission. Their combined expertise and experience will be invaluable to the Commission's goal to unlock the potential of geospatial data and improve the UK's social, natural and economic environment.

The Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden added:

I'm looking forward to working with the new Commissioners and seeing the Geospatial Commission benefit from their expertise, which will help to ensure the UK remains a geospatial world leader.

The Commissioners will be responsible for providing expert, impartial advice to the government on geospatial data, including on strategic priorities and value for money, to inform the UK's Geospatial Strategy. The Board of Commissioners will meet formally up to nine times per year.

About the Commissioners:

- Dame Kate Barker served three terms on the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England. She was previously Chief Economist at Ford of Europe and Chief Economic Adviser at the CBI. She currently holds a number of private sector roles and is a member of the National Infrastructure Commission. Her appointment will help ensure the Geospatial Commission has a strong basis to approach the fundamental economic questions about the value of data and the wider economic benefits to the UK.
- Kru Desai has spent her career leading large and complex transformation programmes. She began in the public sector at Westminster City Council and went on to have a successful private sector career. Most recently she was a senior partner and Head of Infrastructure, Government and Healthcare at KPMG. Her experience will help the Commission shape workable solutions in a complex cross-sector context.

- Edwina Dunn OBE is an experienced leader, entrepreneur and pioneer in the field of data science and customer-centric business transformation. She is co-founder of dunnhumby, the company behind Tesco's Clubcard and other loyalty programmes around the world. She is now CEO at Starcount, a data science consultancy working with some of the UK's leading brands. Her strong background in commercial data analysis will add significantly to the Commission's strategy for accessing and providing insight from data.
- Dr Steve Unger was until recently a board member of Ofcom where he was responsible for setting regulatory strategy for the UK, representing the UK in international negotiations and leading Ofcom's technology programme. Previously, Steve spent several years in the private sector, working for Silicon Fen startups whose focus was the commercial exploitation of new wireless technologies. His regulatory experience will be of immediate use in the Commission's Underground Assets Register programme and for longer term consideration of the regulation of data markets.

The Geospatial Commission was created in April 2018 in the centre of government, as an independent, expert committee. It aims to unlock the significant economic opportunities offered by geospatial data and to reinforce the UK's geospatial expertise on the global stage.

It has been set up to:

- advise independently, making recommendations on how best to coordinate or adapt existing geospatial activities and structures; and
- deliver beneficial changes in partnership with others where there is evidence of value.

The Geospatial Commission has nine Commissioners:

- Sir Andrew Dilnot (Chair)
- Nigel Clifford (Deputy Chair)
- Dame Kate Barker (Independent Commissioner)
- Kru Desai (Independent Commissioner)
- Edwina Dunn (Independent Commissioner)
- Steve Unger (Independent Commissioner)
- Thalia Baldwin (Director of the Commission, from 1 August 2019)
- Michael Mire and Steve Blair are the two commissioners nominated by the six Partner Bodies of the Commission to represent them.

The Independent Commissioners were appointed through an open competition. They will commence appointment on 25 July 2019.

Detailed Biographies:

Dame Kate Barker

From 2017 Dame Kate Barker has been a commissioner at the National Infrastructure Commission – an executive agency of HM Treasury whose role is to provide impartial, expert advice on major long-term infrastructure

challenges. In this role, Kate leads on water-supply, flooding and on the relationship between housing development and infrastructure.

Kate was a Chief European Economist for Ford of Europe from 1985-94 and Chief Economic Advisor for the Confederation of British Industry from 1994-2001. In 2003 she was appointed by the government to conduct an independent Review of UK Housing Supply and subsequently was appointed as a board member of the Housing Corporation. She then continued on the board of the Homes and Communities Agency from 2008 – 2011. From 2010-2015, Kate was the Chair of the Northern Ireland Economic Advisory Group and was appointed as a non-executive member of the UK government's Office for Budget Responsibility from 2011-2017.

Kate was awarded a CBE in 2005 for services to social housing and a DBE in 2014 for services to the economy. She was educated at St Hilda's College, Oxford, where she received a degree in politics, philosophy and economics.

Kru Desai

Kru Desai has spent her career leading large and complex transformation programmes. She started out in the public sector as a business and policy analyst at Westminster City Council.

After 5 years, she left to join KPMG as a consultant for local government and then the public sector in East Africa. After a successful career at KPMG Kru left to become a Managing Director at Atos where she focused on public sector digital transformation work. She then joined Hedra and subsequently Mouchel where she helped to build up the public sector practice, securing large IT and workforce development contracts. She returned to KPMG in 2010 as a Partner and Head of Infrastructure, Government and Healthcare. In this role, she secured important digital contracts and won the first contract for the UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact to provide assurance and evaluation services on UK spending in international aid. As a member of the Mayor of London's Smart London Board Kru was involved in promoting the open data store to drive growth in SME led platform and apps businesses. She was also responsible for the early adoption and integration of cloud-based data analytic solutions for public sector clients through her leadership role as a member of KPMG's Government and Public Services Team.

Kru left KPMG in 2018 and has since been the Chair of Zinc Network, a communications agency that supports communities, brands and governments drive positive social change. Kru is also an Independent Council Member of City University.

Edwina Dunn

Edwina is co-founder of dunnhumby, the pioneering company behind Tesco's Clubcard and other loyalty programmes around the world. She is an experienced leader, entrepreneur and pioneer in the field of data science and customer-centric business transformation. She is now CEO at Starcount, a data science consultancy working with some of the UK's leading brands. She also champions women's stories and motivations as the Founder of The Female Lead campaign.

Edwina chaired a Government backed campaign “Your Life” to promote the uptake of Maths and Physics. She has served as a non-executive director on the HMRC board and was recently appointed to the board of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation. She studied Geography at University and started her career working for an American software consultancy that provided statistics for army recruitment. In 2019, Edwina was awarded an OBE for her services to Data and Business.

Steve Unger

Steve Unger was until recently an executive Board member at Ofcom, the UK regulator responsible for digital communications. He held a variety of roles, including Strategy Group Director, Chief Technology Officer and Acting Chief Executive. His responsibilities included setting the regulatory strategy for the UK, representing the UK in international negotiations and leading Ofcom’s technology programme.

At Ofcom, Steve led a strategic review of digital communications, which drove a step change in fibre investment in the UK. Recognising that this fibre deployment will take time to implement, and risks creating a new digital divide, he also led the initiative to give everyone in the UK the right to a decent broadband connection. He led a number of other initiatives with a more immediate consumer focus, including the introduction of automatic compensation for broadband customers, and a collaboration with network operators to reduce the volume of nuisance calls

Before Ofcom, Steve spent several years in the private sector, working for a variety of Silicon Fen start-ups whose focus was the commercial exploitation of new wireless technologies. More recently Steve was a board member for Cambridge Wireless and chaired their annual technology conference.

Since leaving Ofcom in 2018, Steve has been a Senior Advisor at Flint Global, a Board Member of the International Institute of Communications, as well as an Advisory Board Member at ASSIA Incorporated. Steve also has a part-time research position at the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge.