

# New independent commissioner appointed by Geospatial Commission

The Geospatial Commission is delighted to announce that distinguished Professor Louise Heathwaite CBE of Lancaster University joined our Board of Commissioners on 1 April 2022 replacing Kru Desai.

The Chair of the Geospatial Commission, Sir Bernard Silverman, said:

I welcome the appointment of Professor Louise Heathwaite to the Geospatial Commission's Board of Commissioners. Louise brings a wealth of experience in environmental science and [land management](#) that will be invaluable in helping us set our priorities for improving the interoperability of land use data and advancing our scientific capability.

I would like to convey my gratitude to Kru Desai for her significant contribution to the Geospatial Commission since its near inception.

Professor Louise Heathwaite said:

I am delighted to be joining the Geospatial Commission at such an important time. It has huge potential to influence some of the pivotal challenges ahead of us relating to achieving net zero and ensuring we go beyond the government's levelling up agenda to deliver 'levelling out'.

The UK's geospatial data and our geospatial capabilities are first class and our success will depend on exploiting the potential of interoperable locational data that integrates the needs of government departments.

The Geospatial Commission sets the UK's geospatial strategy and promotes the best use of geospatial data to drive productivity, promote economic growth and improve the delivery of public services, while safeguarding considerations such as national security and intellectual property rights. The Geospatial Commission's Board of Commissioners are appointed through an open competition and provide impartial advice to the government.

The Board meets formally up to six times per year and has nine members:

- Sir Bernard Silverman (Chair)

- Nigel Clifford (Deputy Chair)
- Thalia Baldwin (Director, Geospatial Commission)
- Edwina Dunn (Independent Commissioner)
- Professor Louise Heathwaite (Independent Commissioner)
- Alex Notay (Independent Commissioner)
- Steve Unger (Independent Commissioner)

Karen Hanghoj (Director, British Geological Survey) and Peter Sparkes (Chief Executive, UK Hydrographic Office) are the two commissioners nominated by the Partner Bodies of the Geospatial Commission to represent them collectively.

### **Professor Louise Heathwaite Biography**

Louise is Distinguished Professor of Environmental Science and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise at Lancaster University. She is a hydrologist and hydrochemist by training. Her research has contributed to our understanding of how freshwater biodiversity responds to environmental pollution and has informed policy-interventions on land use and management designed to improve water quality.

Louise was awarded a CBE in 2018 for services to scientific research and scientific advice to the government and elected Fellow of The Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2015. Louise is a highly regarded leader in the environmental sciences, which is reflected in appointments to UKRI Natural Environment Research Council (2018-2021); the Royal Society Global Environment Research Committee (2018-) and election as President of the Freshwater Biological Association in 2017.

Louise was appointed Chair of Defra's Science Advisory Council in 2021 and to the advisory board of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund on Transforming Food Production in 2018, where she has helped develop a better understanding of the social as well as the financial barriers to the uptake of innovation in the UK food production sector.

She has direct experience of providing expert, impartial advice to government as Chief Scientific Adviser to the Scottish Government on Rural Affairs, Food and Environment from 2012-2017. In 2019 she led the Heathwaite Review: an independent review of the Scottish Funding Council's £0.5 Billion 15-year investment in research pooling of STEM disciplines.