


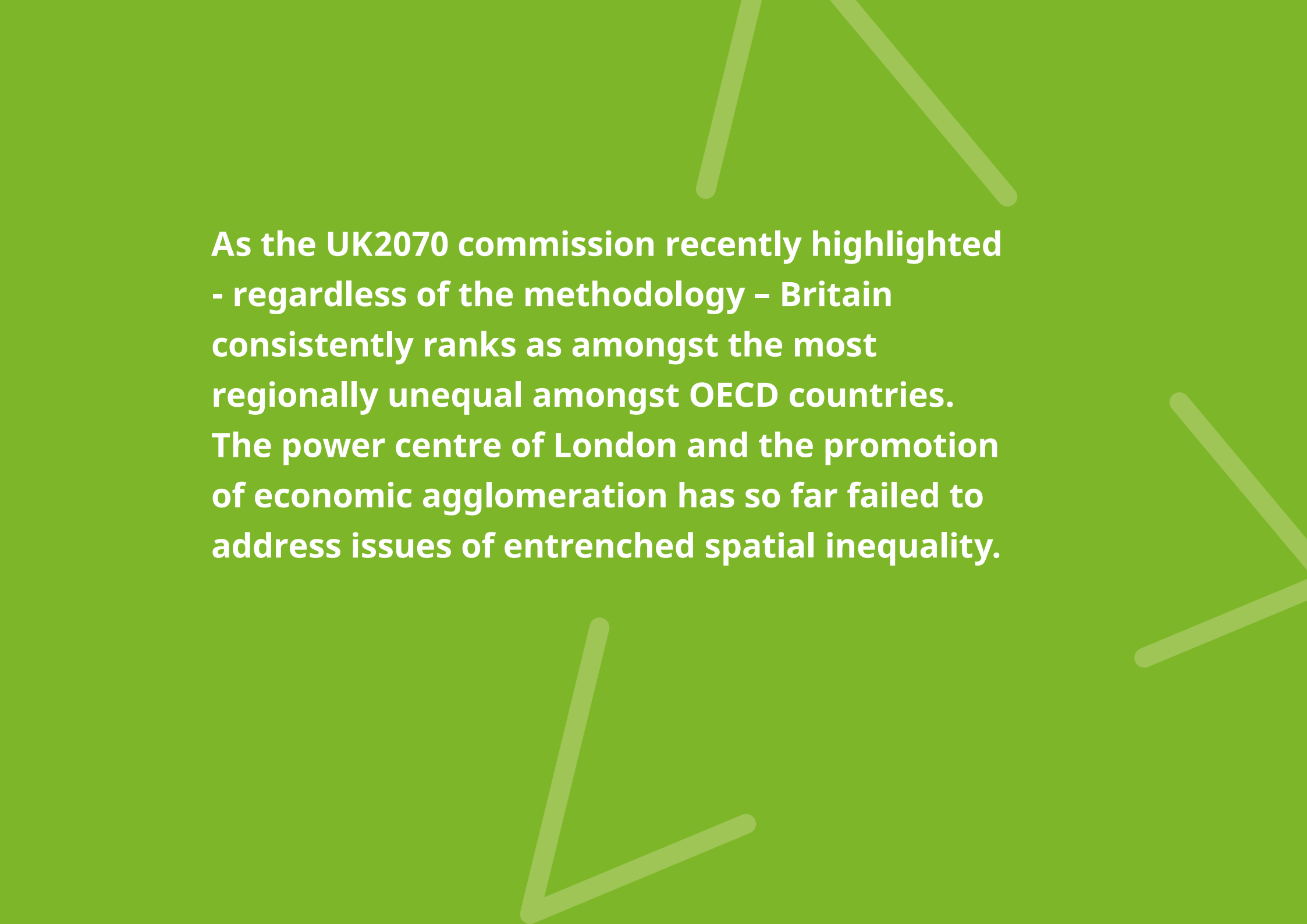
**Video
Conference**

16 December / 13.00 - 17.00

Peripheral Vision: Reimagining Regional Policy for a Greener Union



 britainsleadingedge@cornwall.gov.uk

The background features several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes. At the top, there are two overlapping triangles, one in a light green and one in a light blue. On the right side, there is a large, light blue chevron shape pointing to the right. At the bottom, there are two overlapping triangles, one in a light green and one in a light blue, mirroring the shapes at the top.

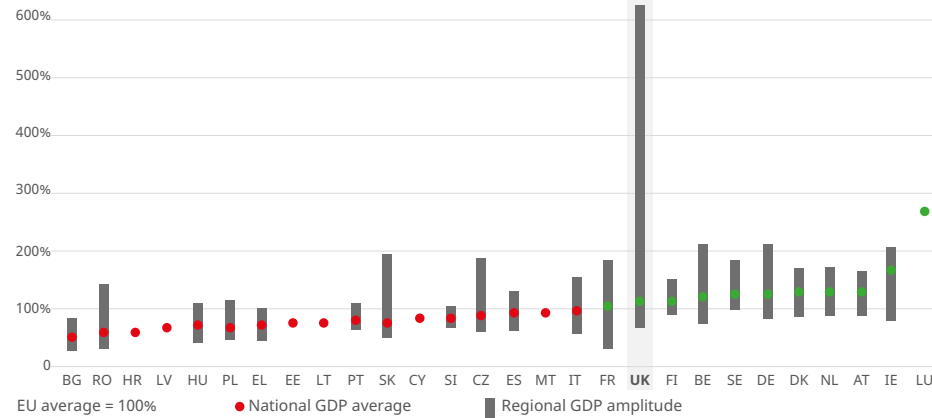
As the UK2070 commission recently highlighted - regardless of the methodology - Britain consistently ranks as amongst the most regionally unequal amongst OECD countries. The power centre of London and the promotion of economic agglomeration has so far failed to address issues of entrenched spatial inequality.

Introduction

To develop a modern low carbon and place-based policy agenda, a reimagining of sustainable development is needed that places the region at the heart of greener policy solutions.

Levelling up

With Covid-19 highlighting inherent regional imbalance, the new devolution white paper around the corner and the continued commitment to 'levelling up' all regions, the time is right to actively consider a revitalised approach to regional policy. The purpose of this conference is bring together academics, experts and policy makers to discuss the key issues, looking beyond conventional strategy and establishing a network of dynamic thinkers engaged in reconsidering regional policy.



Regional disparities in the EU

Source: Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (2010)
(Based on 2014, 2015 and 2016 regional GDP average, expressed as a % of the EU28 average)

In the UK, a major gap in political thought thus far lies in translating the distinct challenges peripheral regions without cities face into sustainable policy solutions. Policy making has long been spatially blind where the periphery in this regard is concerned; convoluted often by the application of the term 'rural' which despite being used interchangeably neglects the unique challenges affecting peripheral areas. As such, this conference seeks to challenge the narrative around the value of these peripheral areas, highlighting the distinct issues they face as well as showcasing what these areas have to offer to both the local and

national economy. Critical to this will be framing the periphery correctly, avoiding blanket statements like 'lagging' or 'backward' and reconceptualising the periphery as a distinct geography whose development trajectory should not solely be guided by urban principles.

Establishing a community of critical thinkers and academics committed to providing a fresh voice for peripheral regions without cities will be a crucial next step to re-engaging with the regional policy debate where the periphery is concerned.

Natural capital

A key feature of peripheral areas is their abundance of natural capital. In light of the UK's ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, securing the nation's natural capital resources will play a central role in underpinning the transition towards more sustainable forms of green economic development.

The Natural Capital Committee have highlighted the enormous value of natural capital when managed correctly, leading to welfare and growth that runs alongside its role as an essential component of

life sustaining ecosystem services. As such, it is right to now explore how the abundance of natural capital present in peripheral areas can be utilised to not just to promote national GDP or achieve emissions targets, but to act as the foundation for constructing a regional advantage. Moreover, in the context of sustainable development, many questions remain as to whether peripheral regions have the capacity, infrastructure, knowledge networks, investment and strategy to build resilience and sustainable growth through their abundance of natural capital.

It is right to now explore how the abundance of natural capital present in peripheral areas can be utilised

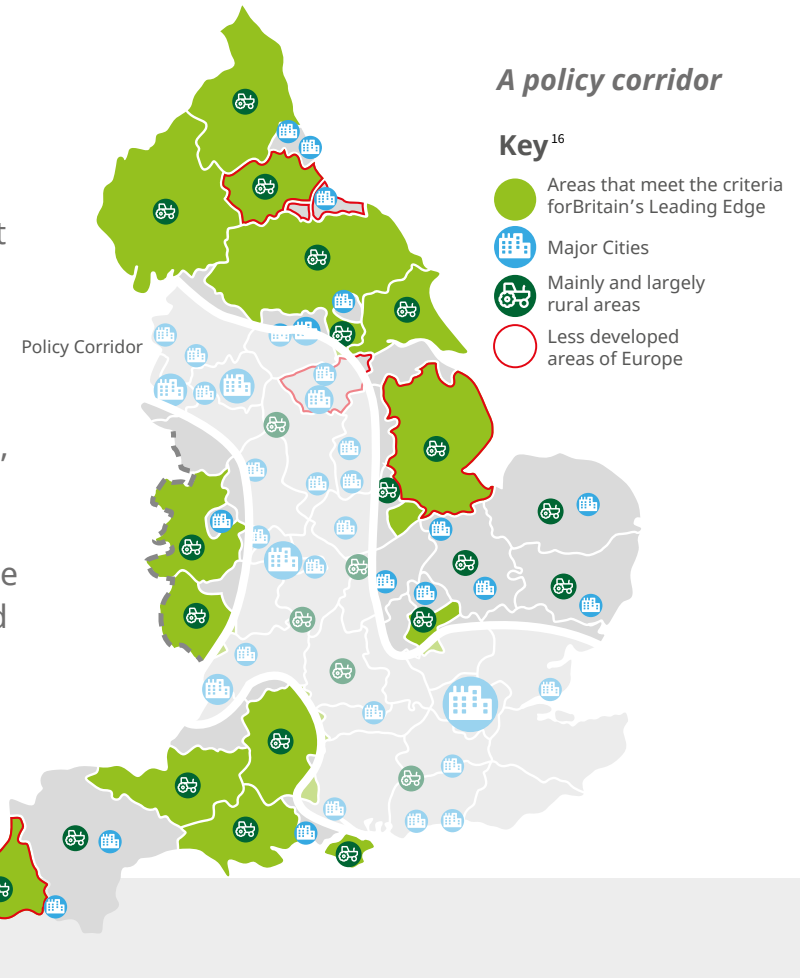


Reframing the debate

Britain's Leading Edge is a new initiative uniquely placed to answer many of these questions. A collaboration of 12 upper tier local authorities, Britain's Leading Edge seeks to reframe the debate around city-weighted funding decisions and provide a powerful new voice for peripheral regions.

Taking a critical view of central government's narrow approach to place leadership and emphasis on cities,

Britain's Leading Edge seeks to highlight the impact of historic funding decisions which have exacerbated the social and economic challenges facing many rural and coastal regions on the periphery. Yet due to their peripheral rural makeup, Britain's Leading Edge regions are rich in natural capital. In terms of clean renewable energy, Britain's Leading Edge offer secure supplies which will provided an essential component of a national move towards a decarbonised society.



As well as renewable technologies...

These regions play a major role naturally sequestering and removing carbon, via vegetation, to almost

40% (1.3 billion kg) of air pollution



As home to almost

65% of England's Areas of Outstanding National Beauty

these regions would also play an essential role in a revitalised ecotourism sector



Our regions host almost

40% of England's forestry, agriculture and fishing businesses

solidifying their importance in the nation's food exports and security.



Objectives

This event seeks to look beyond already established models of regional development, reimagining new spatially balanced policy solutions where the periphery is concerned.



The conference draws on the work already done by the UK2070 Commission, Natural Capital Committee, Britain's Leading Edge and others, pulling together these key ideas into innovative solutions that work for peripheral areas. Interactive discussion and the fruitful exchange of ideas will be crucial to achieving this vision of a revitalised approach to spatial policy. Over the course of four hours, this conference seeks to achieve the following:

Identify the knowledge gaps,

the shared priorities amongst academics and policy makers, and the spaces where new partnerships could be formed.

Re-frame to debate on regional policy

to outline specific opportunities for peripheral regions to harness their full political and economic potential.

Determine the challenges to building capacity for sustainable green growth in the periphery and the strategies needed to overcome them.

Establish a community of academics leading towards a new generation of thinking

Produce a report which summarises the key recommendations and next steps.

Agenda



Dr Stuart Dawley



Dr Gail Mulvey



Professor
Ian Bateman



Dr Jennifer Geroni

Continued >

Participants to
join zoom video
conference

12.45

Welcome
and
Introduction

13.00

**Jonathan
Werran**
*Chief Executive,
Localis*



Session I:
Peripheral
Development

13.00
-
13.50

In recent times, local economies have been subjected to a varied range of external shocks including financial crisis, the climate and ecological emergencies and the impact of COVID-19. These shocks only reinforced the need for more robust regional policy, bringing the regional dimension more prominently into the policy domain in order to foster resilient local economies. Peripheral areas without cities in England are characterised by many unique features, most notably for their richness of natural capital which is set to play a central role in underpinning the UK's transition towards more sustainable forms of economic development. What are the new forms of governance, political decentralisation or local control needed to facilitate sustainable regional development in the periphery?

Dr Stuart Dawley, *Newcastle University*
Dr Gail Mulvey, *University of Cumbria*

Short
Break

13.50
-
14.00

Session II:
Natural Capital

14.00
-
14.50

Our society and economy is dependent upon a healthy natural environment, underpinning everything we produce and consume. Natural capital offers a blueprint to sustainable environmental policy, critical to the goal of decarbonisation and to securing resources for future generations. Nevertheless, the natural world also represents an enormous amount of untapped economic potential. The abundance of natural capital in peripheral regions has thus far remained largely unrecognised by government, not just in relation to national targets, but in the context of constructing a regional advantage. Could greater investment in natural capital help to achieve a better balance of growth-enhancing spending to "level up" economic outcomes for peripheral regions?"

Professor Ian Bateman, *University of Exeter*
Dr Jennifer Geroni,
Environment Platform Wales

Short
Break

14.50
-
15.00



Dr Arianna Giovannini



Dr Mark Sandford



Jessie Hamshar



Jason Torrance

Session III: Governance and policy responses

15.00
-
15.50

Short Break

15.50
-
16.00

Session IV: Britain's Leading Edge

16.00
-
16.50

Concluding remarks

16.50
-
17.00

Finish

17.00

Despite a plethora of initiatives the vast majority of policies have historically proved ineffective in reducing spatial inequality, especially where the periphery is concerned. UK2070 analysis of the existing regional policies revealed how a vast majority of strategies have, instead of seeking out new areas of growth, often sought to only reinforce previously successful areas. Moreover, that the spatial concentration of economic policies, resources and funding has historically been propagated by an unconscious bias inherent in political strategy. Decentralising power away from the centre is a necessary step in order to allow regions have control over their own path. There is still much we need to know about how decentralisation and devolution has played out in the UK, and the beneficial effects it may offer. What are the policy and/or political drivers that are resulting in most growth-enhancing spending being allocated to areas that already have the highest levels of growth? What are the policy alternatives for sustainable regional development in the periphery?

Dr Arianna Giovannini, *De Montfort University*

Dr Mark Sandford, *Senior Researcher, House of Commons*

The distinctiveness of the periphery produces particular vulnerabilities in relation to the changing climate, where many coastal communities are highly vulnerable to flood risk, storms and erosion. Comparatively higher levels of economic deprivation, social inequality and dispersed populations will further exacerbate the negative effects of shocks like COVID-19 and the recession. Yet for regions in Britain's Leading Edge, capturing the advantages of a low carbon economy is one of the key opportunities for its residents, in turn increasing productivity and local growth while contributing to national energy emission targets. Britain's Leading Edge recognise the wealth of natural resources in their regions and the unique opportunity to build resilient local economies stimulated through new green practices and industries, rebalancing the system.

Jessie Hamshar,

Director of Strategy and Engagement, Cornwall Council

Jason Torrance,

Policy Director, UK100 / Countryside Climate Network

**BRITAIN'S
LEADINGEDGE**

