

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST FOR THE CAMBRIDGE TO OXFORD CONNECTION: IDEAS COMPETITION



*For image copyright see below

- This two-stage competition focuses on integrating placemaking with infrastructure in one of the UK's leading growth regions
- Four multi-disciplinary teams will now develop detailed concepts appropriate for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor
- Shortlist features creative collaborations and a mixture of established and emerging talent
- Jury of thought-leaders in infrastructure, economics, design and placemaking selected four finalists and awarded two honourable mentions from 58 concepts submitted anonymously at Stage One

*Images courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo, individual credits as follows (left to right, top to bottom): Dave Porter, Robert Stainforth, Julian Eales, Mark Pink, A.P.S. (UK), Cultura Creative (RF), Robert Stainforth, geophoto, Chris Deeney, David CC.

The National Infrastructure Commission and Malcolm Reading Consultants today [22 August 2017] announced the shortlist for *The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition*. This two-stage competition is seeking inspirational yet realisable visions for the future of development within the arc encompassing four of the UK's fastest-growing and most productive centres: Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Oxford.

The free-to-enter competition launched on 30 June 2017 and invited entries from broad multi-disciplinary teams made up of urban designers; architects; planning, policy and community specialists; landscape designers; development economists; and others with local knowledge and general insight. Fifty-eight teams from the UK and further afield entered at the first stage, anonymously submitting emerging concepts focused on a chosen form of development – ranging from the intensification of existing urban areas to new autonomous settlements – along with separate details on the composition of their team.

The high-profile jury of thought-leaders in infrastructure, economics, design and placemaking, chaired by Bridget Rosewell (Commissioner for the National Infrastructure Commission), judged the emerging concepts and team composition and selected a shortlist. For full details of the competition jury please see the *Notes to Editors* below.

The four shortlisted teams – all UK-based – feature creative, multi-disciplinary collaborations and a mixture of established practices and emerging talent. The shortlisted teams were led by the following practices (in alphabetical order):

- **Barton Willmore**
- **Fletcher Priest Architects**
- **Mae**
- **Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design**

The jury also wished to convey its appreciation for the distinctive thinking evident in a further two submissions, and honourable mentions were awarded to the teams led by:

- **O&H Properties**
- **OMMX**

Please see the *Notes to Editors* for full details of the teams above.

The shortlisted teams will each receive an honorarium of £10,000 to develop their initial first-stage submissions into design concepts for development typologies appropriate to the corridor. They will be asked to consider existing, planned or proposed infrastructure and how to integrate this with development to create sustainable and liveable places.

The competition jury will meet again in October to review the second-stage submissions, interview the shortlist and select a winner of the competition. The winner is expected to be announced in early November.

Bridget Rosewell, Commissioner for the National Infrastructure Commission and Competition Jury Chair, said:

“*The Commission and the jury were delighted with the quality and detail of submissions to the competition, and we would like to thank all those who offered their ideas and energies. The shortlisted teams produced particularly imaginative and stimulating responses to the first-stage brief and we look forward to seeing how their ideas and visions develop.*

At the second stage, we will be looking for proposals that are rooted in their context and understand the local character, environment and landscape. We have asked competitors to consider how places will be integrated with infrastructure, but above all, we want to see what the proposals will mean for the lives of the people living and working in the corridor.”

Lord Andrew Adonis, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission and Competition Jury Member, added:

“*Getting development right in the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor is vital for prosperity in the region and the UK at large. In order to maintain and build on the area’s economic success, we need to foster attractive and well-connected places that people want to live in.*

The challenge is urgent, but the 58 submissions to our ideas competition have shown there is a wealth of innovative thinking out there. This initiative has clearly resonated with a wide range of people, and will continue to do so as we enter the competition’s second stage.”

Malcolm Reading, Competition Organiser, said:

“*The Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor is one of the fastest-growing and productive regions of the UK, but there are also significant pressures – on housing, transport, connectivity, and much else – which call for imaginative, forward-thinking solutions from a broad spectrum of expertise.*

In throwing open this opportunity to the widest range of talent, the National Infrastructure Commission has secured a diverse shortlist and demonstrated its openness to new thinking from practices with different perspectives within the design community.”

The Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor stretches over approximately 130 miles around the north and west of London’s green belt, encompassing Daventry and Wellingborough to the north and bounded to the south by Luton, Stevenage and the Aylesbury Vale. The region is home to 3.3 million people and hosts some of the country’s most successful cities, as well as world-leading universities, knowledge-intensive high-tech firms and highly-skilled workers. Altogether, an estimated 419,000 people across the corridor are employed in the knowledge economy.

Presently, the corridor does not function as a single joined-up economic zone. Rather Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Oxford operate as distinct city economies, each positioned on different radial routes around 50-70 miles from London. The area is experiencing significant housing and transport pressures: the scarcity of suitable and affordable homes and difficulties in travelling within and between cities. These constraints are becoming obstacles to attracting and retaining talent and inevitably putting a break on economic growth.

The National Infrastructure Commission – as the United Kingdom’s leading independent voice on infrastructure policy and strategy and a key adviser to government – has recommended that the government implements the next phase of the highly-anticipated East West Rail project and the planned Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, both of which are set to transform connectivity within this part of England.

A Final Report from the Commission to government in late 2017 will present its findings on maximising the potential of the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor as a single, knowledge-intensive cluster. The four finalists’ proposals from *The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition* – fully credited to the competitors – will be published alongside the Commission’s Final Report.

Ends

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES

National Infrastructure Commission

Sarah Southerton

Head of Communications

E: sarah.southerton@nic.gsi.gov.uk

T: +44 (0) 20 7270 1948

FOR COMPETITION MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Malcolm Reading Consultants

Oliver Finn

E: oliver.finn@malcolmreading.co.uk

T: +44 (0) 207 831 2998

NOTES TO EDITORS

National Infrastructure Commission

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)'s remit is to become the UK's most forward-thinking and influential voice on infrastructure policy and strategy.

It is an independent body that enables long-term strategic decision-making to build effective and efficient infrastructure for the UK. The NIC was set up on 5 October 2015 and will look at the UK's future needs for nationally significant infrastructure, help to maintain the UK's competitiveness amongst the G20 nations and provide greater certainty for investors by taking a long-term approach to the major investment decisions facing the country.

Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Growth Corridor Project

In March 2016, the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked the Commission to:

“*Make recommendations to maximize the potential of the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor as a single, knowledge-intensive cluster that competes on the global stage, whilst protecting the area's high quality environment and securing the homes and jobs the area needs. The commission will look at the priority infrastructure improvements needed and assess the economic case for which investments would generate the most growth.*”

In November 2016, the NIC published its interim report on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor. This report concluded that:

“*The corridor connecting Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford could be a world renowned centre for science, technology and innovation. But its future success is not guaranteed...*”

The corridor faces a chronic undersupply of homes made worse by poor east-west transport connectivity. Two of the least affordable cities in the UK lie within the corridor, and the area as a whole has consistently failed to build the number of homes it needs. That shortage puts sustained growth at risk. It is already increasing costs for businesses and diminishing their ability to attract employees at all levels.

Investment in infrastructure, including enhanced east-west transport links, can help to address these challenges, but it must be properly aligned with a strategy for new jobs, homes and communities, not developed in isolation. This means local authorities working in partnership, and with government, to plan places, homes and transport together. Current governance mechanisms are not sufficient to deliver the step-change in strategic leadership and collaboration needed.”

For further information please see: <https://www.nic.org.uk>

Full Team Details

Shortlist

- **Barton Willmore** – Robin Shepherd (Planning Partner); John Haxworth (Partner); Dominic Scott (Urban Design Partner); Gareth Wilson (Planning Partner); Michael Knott (Planning Director); Ben Lewis (Infrastructure Director); Peter Newton (Architecture Director); Carolyn Organ (Planning Associate); Vaughan Anderson (Urban Design Associate); Patrick Clarke (Associate Landscape Planner); Richard Webb (Associate Landscape Architect); Simone Gobber (Urban Designer); and Tom Carpen (Infrastructure Associate) – with Will Durden (Director, Momentum)
- **Fletcher Priest Architects** with Bradley Murphy Design and Ron Henry (Partner, Peter Brett Associates)
- **Mae** with One Works, AKT II and Planit-IE
- **Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design** – Jennifer Ross (Director) – with Annalie Riche (Co-Director, Mikhail Riches), Petra Marko (Co-Founder and Director, Marko&Placemakers), Sarah Featherstone (Co-Director, Featherstone Young) and Kay Hughes

Honourable mentions

- **O&H Properties Ltd** – Pippa Cheetham (Planning Manager) – with David Atherton (Partner, Peter Brett Associates), Bill Gush (Regional Director, Land & Water Group), James Russell (Chartered Environmentalist and Chartered Forester, Forest of Marston Vale Trust), Espen Østbye-Strøm (Chief Operating Officer, Floodline Developments), Simon Collier (Partner, David Lock Associates), James Clifton (Architect and Planner, Canal and River Trust), Jane Hamilton (Chair, Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust) and Gareth Barker (Anglian Water)
- **OMMX** – Hikaru Nisanke (Director) and Jon Lopez (Director) – with Paul Toplis (Partner, Price & Myers)



Competition Jury

The full jury for *The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition* comprises:

- **Bridget Rosewell OBE FICE (Jury Chair)**, Co-Founder, Volterra Partners and Commissioner, National Infrastructure Commission
- **David Lock CBE MRTPI**, Strategic Planning Adviser, David Lock Associates
- **Georgia Butina Watson BA MA PhD FRSA**, Professor and Research Director of Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University
- **Hilary Chipping**, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Strategy and Operations, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- **Lord Andrew Adonis**, Chairman, National Infrastructure Commission
- **Sadie Morgan D.Des (LSBU) FRSA**, Founding Director, dRMM Architects and Commissioner, National Infrastructure Commission
- **Tim Broyd FEng CEng FICE FRSA**, Professor of Built Environment Foresight and Honorary Professor of Civil Engineering, University College London
- **Tom Holbrook**, Director, 5th Studio and Professor of Architecture and Industry Fellow, RMIT University

Malcolm Reading Consultants

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic consultancy that helps clients to imagine and define contemporary environments, both built and natural. MRC is the leading specialist in devising and managing design competitions internationally. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration.

Recent work includes competitions for the Illuminated River Foundation, Science Island (Lithuania), Tintagel Castle Bridge, the Mumbai City Museum and new buildings for New College, Oxford and Homerton College, Cambridge.

MRC is currently advising the British Council for Offices Ideas Competition for the future of workspace, and is working with the British Library to establish the Design Brief for the major northern development of its St. Pancras site.

<https://malcolmreading.co.uk>