

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES WINNER OF CAMBRIDGE TO OXFORD CONNECTION: IDEAS COMPETITION



© Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design, Mikhail Riches, Featherstone Young, Marko and Placemakers, Expedition Engineering and Khaa

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) and Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) today announced the 'VeloCity' team led by Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design as winners of *The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition*.

Their vision was chosen for its low-impact blueprint for delivering much-needed new homes while maintaining a person-centred scale and retaining the existing character of the area.

The all-women 'VeloCity' team included Jennifer Ross from Tibbalds, along with Sarah Featherstone (Featherstone Young), Kay Hughes (Khaa), Petra Marko (Marko and Placemakers), Annalie Riches (Mikhail Riches) and Judith Sykes (Expedition Engineering).

The competition sought inspirational visions for the future of development within the arc encompassing Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Oxford, one of the UK's fastest-growing and most productive regions. It informed the NIC's report *Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc*, published last month.

In the Budget, the Government backed the Commission's vision to build up to one million new homes across the arc by 2050, and announced plans to complete both a new East-West Rail link and an Oxford-Cambridge Expressway by 2030.

The Commission will showcase the winner's and finalists' work along with all earlier submissions at a conference and related public exhibition in early 2018.

Bridget Rosewell, Commissioner and competition jury Chair, said:

The jury was drawn to VeloCity's human scale approach to sensitively and incrementally accommodating new homes, alongside the team's commitment to ensuring new settlements would be communities from the get-go. Creating effective new settlements can be challenging: the team's flair and imagination in addressing this shows how good design can translate into liveable communities.

Lord Andrew Adonis, National Infrastructure Commission Chair and competition jury member, said:

The competition focused on essential challenges facing the UK, including how to accelerate the supply of affordable homes without sacrificing the quality of the environment, how to engage and enthuse the public in making the choices ahead, and to showcase how new infrastructure can creatively enable new communities to flourish over the coming decades.

The visions and imagery generated by the competition are tools that will inspire a new approach to achieving sensitive, infrastructure-enabled development over the next half century.

Jennifer Ross, VeloCity team leader, said:

We're absolutely thrilled to win. The six of us met taking part in women's cycling events and became friends through a shared interest in designing places that put the pedestrian and cyclist first. We wanted to work together and the competition was the perfect opportunity. We spent a lot of time discussing density and place-making and how the implementation of new public transport infrastructure can change the way we plan for and think about building successful communities.

Malcolm Reading, Competition Organiser, said:

We would like to thank everyone who followed and entered the competition and, in particular, the four finalists who all worked extremely hard. This was the first ideas competition we've run and it was hugely exciting to see the contribution made by the design profession to national issues that have profound implications for future generations.

Key features of the winning vision include:

- generously-sized common land at the heart of each development providing a focus for encouraging communities to interact and shared amenities
- integrated public transport connections with expanded pedestrian and cycle routes, limiting the need for car use
- small-scale construction and local utility networks designed to reduce the environmental impact of new housing

Clustered around six villages south-east of a new station on the Oxford to Cambridge rail link, VeloCity's vision could be replicated across the arc to support a substantial number of new homes.

The Commission launched the two-stage competition in June, and received 58 first-stage submissions from multidisciplinary teams including urban designers; architects; planners; landscape designers and economists.

The jury invited four teams led by Barton Willmore, Fletcher Priest Architects, Mae, and Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design to produce detailed strategies for integrating infrastructure with placemaking in the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford arc.

The jury interviewed the shortlisted teams and selected the VeloCity team as winners. The four finalists each receive an honorarium of £10,000.

The Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford arc is home to 3.3 million people. The region hosts some of the country's most successful universities and high-tech manufacturing hubs and has a highly-skilled workforce. Its future success is threatened by significant housing constraints and transport pressures. The Commission's report identified how well-designed and planned infrastructure could enable authorities across the region to overcome them and ensure the region's long-term prosperity.

Ends

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FOR IMAGES

Images from the winning team can be downloaded from:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8tkxmonznxistmc/AADt2BN1FU5z8EARbCuym4aPa?dl=0>

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NOTES TO EDITORS

National Infrastructure Commission

The National Infrastructure Commission aims to become the UK's most forward-thinking and influential voice on infrastructure policy and strategy.

Set up in October 2015, the Commission produces a National Infrastructure Assessment once in every Parliament, setting out its assessment of long-term infrastructure needs with recommendations to the government. It also produces in-depth studies into the UK's most pressing infrastructure challenges and monitors the government's progress in delivering infrastructure projects and programmes recommended by the NIC.

More information on the Commission's work is available on its website: <https://www.nic.org.uk/>

The shortlisted teams

- **Barton Willmore** with Momentum
- **Fletcher Priest Architects** with Bradley Murphy Design and Peter Brett Associates
- **Mae** with Oneworks, Planit, AKT II, Tyrens and Max Fordham
- **Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design** with Mikhail Riches, Featherstone Young, Marko and Placemakers, Expedition Engineering and Khaa

The shortlisted entries are available to view in the competition's [online gallery](#).

The competition jury

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

- **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



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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, the M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre (Lithuania), Tintagel Castle Bridge, the Mumbai City Museum (India), Gallaudet University (US), Adelaide Contemporary (Australia), the Royal College of Art and new buildings for New College, Oxford and Homerton College, Cambridge.

<https://malcolmreading.co.uk>