THE CAMBRIDGE TO OXFORD CONNECTION: IDEAS COMPETITION

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION
Malcolm Reading Consultants is an expert consultancy which specialises in managing design competitions to international standards and providing independent, strategic advice to clients with capital projects. With over twenty years’ experience of projects, we are enthusiastic advocates of the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration.

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THE CAMBRIDGE TO OXFORD CONNECTION: IDEAS COMPETITION
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All over the world, cities and towns are competing with each other to grow, attract and keep talent. Today, people can move between cities, regions, countries and continents with ease that was previously unimaginable. And in no sector is the competition greater than the knowledge economy.

Actively choosing a working and living environment is now the smart decision. The job may be great but this is just one factor among many. How does the environment measure up? What is the community like? Is this a place to settle and make a future, to live happily and healthily?

The corridor that spans Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Oxford defines one of the most productive and fastest-growing knowledge networks in the United Kingdom. Yet within this area significant housing and transport pressures exist: 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.

New infrastructure is coming in the form of rail and roads that will hugely improve connectivity, but new or reinvented places – really captivating, attractive places, which allow people to flourish – are rarely accidental. This is where the National Infrastructure Commission comes in.

We believe a strategy that integrates placemaking with infrastructure is essential to achieve sustainable progress that speaks to all communities and creates a sound basis for economic success. We’re acutely conscious that we need ideas and expertise from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, from people with insight, to help us promote and enable a joined-up plan covering housing, infrastructure and placemaking.

What already exists and might be enhanced? Where is there potential to build afresh in a sensitive manner, safeguarding the beauty and character of the existing natural and built environment? How can we achieve this at the necessary scale as speedily as possible? How can we create inclusive, liveable and well-connected settlements that enhance an area that is known for an unspoilt environment?
Currently, 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. Yes, greater east-west connectivity will inevitably change this. But, while eschewing a ‘one size fits all’ solution, are there patterns of new development that could maintain a unique sense of place while also giving the four centres a stronger cultural identity as a single knowledge-intensive cluster?

The need for fresh and visionary thinking is urgent: future generations, locally and nationally, depend on us to realise the potential of an area that is one of the engines of the UK economy – but to do so in a sustainable, creative and intelligent way.

The Commission will be publishing its Final Report in late 2017. The Report will make recommendations that include visions and design principles for coordinating placemaking with infrastructure, ensuring that new development is effectively integrated into the local environment and makes efficient use of resources whilst maximising the benefits of infrastructure investment. Importantly, it must meet the needs of residents and communities across the corridor.

This competition is focused on finding the very best ideas to guide us forward – we warmly invite you to enter.

**Lord Andrew Adonis**

**Chair, National Infrastructure Commission**
BACKGROUND

The National Infrastructure Commission (the Commission) was asked to provide the government with proposals and options to maximise the potential of the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor as a single, knowledge-intensive cluster that is globally competitive while protecting the area’s high-quality environment, and securing much-needed homes and jobs.

And this, The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition forms part of the Commission’s response to the government’s brief.

Stretching around 130 miles from Cambridgeshire, via the south-east midlands to Oxfordshire, the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor forms a ribbon around the north and west of London’s green belt. It is home to 3.3 million people and hosts some of the country’s most productive, successful and fast-growing cities, as well as world-leading universities, knowledge-intensive high-tech firms and highly-skilled workers. Though the corridor is comparable in population size to that of Silicon Valley California, physically it is just over twice its size.

But as the Commission identified in its Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor: Interim Report the region faces a lack of sufficient and suitable homes made worse by poor east-west transport connectivity. Oxford and Cambridge are two of the least affordable cities in the UK with house prices double the national average, and the area as a whole has consistently failed to build the number of homes it needs.

That shortage puts sustained economic growth at risk by increasing costs for businesses and diminishing their ability to attract and retain employees. To address this, the Commission has now made three key recommendations on infrastructure to government.

Firstly, joint governance arrangements to deliver infrastructure involving local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, government departments and national delivery agencies, all working together. Secondly, that government should make a £100m+ commitment to delivering the Western Section of the East West Rail project before the end of 2024, and continue to develop plans for the Central Section. And thirdly, that government should commit £27m to the end of 2018/19 to fund the next phase of work on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway study.
Forecasting and analysis by the Commission has tracked current trends in development, population and local economic growth. Below, two of the scenarios are presented:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>34 Year Totals (2016 to 2050)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At current rate</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Brief - Transformational Scenario*</td>
<td>23,000 - 30,000</td>
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The potential – economically – within the area means that the ‘Transformational Scenario’, is very much a possibility.

However, achieving this ambitious economic growth is dependent on new infrastructure: roads and rail. These need to be integrated with place, to be part of a cohesive strategy that unlocks housing sites, improves land supply and supports well-connected and sensitively-designed new communities, whilst bringing productive towns and cities closer together.

*Includes an allowance for London Overspill. This is defined as ‘meeting need from land-constrained markets’ (The Property Market Within The Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor, pg.76).
BACKGROUND
Map of the corridor, with the main centres indicated and potential infrastructure routes overlaid.

The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition
The National Infrastructure Commission’s remit is to become the United Kingdom’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 Commission 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.

The Commission will deliver a long-term plan and assessment of national infrastructure needs early in each Parliament, setting out what government is expected to do over the next five years.

The Commission is chaired by Lord Andrew Adonis and has nine non-executive commissioners: Deputy Chair Sir John Armitt, Dame Kate Barker DBE, Professor Tim Besley CBE, Professor David Fisk, Andy Green, Dr Demis Hassabis, Professor Sadie Morgan, Julia Prescot, and Bridget Rosewell OBE.

For further information please see: https://www.nic.org.uk
Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Growth Corridor Project

In November 2016, the Commission published its *Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor: Interim Report*. The Report makes seven recommendations, both strategic and tactical, for the development of the corridor:

1. Local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, government departments and national delivery agencies, should work together to develop an integrated strategic plan for infrastructure, housing and jobs across the corridor.

2. The quality of infrastructure design and its impact on maintaining and enhancing the character of the built environment should be central to any strategic plan for the area.

3. Local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, government departments and national delivery agencies, should work together to develop proposals for the joint governance arrangements required to deliver coordinated planning.

4. The government should commit to delivering the Western Section of the East West Rail project before 2024. To achieve this, the government should bring forward £100m in funding.

5. The government should commit up to £10m in development funding to continue work on the Central Section of the East West Rail link.

6. The government should commit £27m to the end of 2018/19 to fund the next phase of development work on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway study, allowing the detailed design process to begin as soon as possible.

7. In order to maximise the benefits of new strategic infrastructure and to ensure that urban centres across the corridor continue to function effectively, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, government departments and national delivery agencies should work together in each centre to define a set of credible, coherent and co-owned city centre transport strategies.

In the second phase of this study, the National Infrastructure Commission will work with local and national government, and other stakeholders, to put this strategy in place. The Final Report will be published in autumn 2017.
THE COMPETITION

*The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition* is an open competition that is seeking conceptual proposals that creatively link new infrastructure with sustainable placemaking in one of the UK’s leading growth corridor.

The two-stage competition is comprised of:

**Stage One:**

An open call for submissions comprised of an emerging vision and details of the proposed team. The emerging visions will be judged anonymously.

Competitors are encouraged to form broad multidisciplinary teams of urban designers; architects; planning, policy and community specialists; landscape designers; development economists; and others with local knowledge and general insights. The Commission encourages local, national and international teams, and students, to enter.

The jury will review the submissions and select four entries to progress to the second stage. Successful and unsuccessful teams will be contacted by Malcolm Reading Consultants prior to the commencement of Stage Two.

**Stage Two:**

At the second stage of the competition, shortlisted teams will receive an honorarium of £10,000 to progress their emerging visions into creative concepts, developed on a specific location within the corridor.

An additional briefing document will be provided to shortlisted competitors at Stage Two.

Teams will be invited to attend a briefing workshop and a separate charrette, where they will receive feedback from the Commission and their advisers on their developing concepts.

The final concepts produced by the shortlist will be used in the Commission’s Final Report and will be fully credited to the authors. The teams may also be given a continuing role as the wider project develops.

The jury will meet again to assess and provide critical feedback on the Stage Two submissions, and award further prizes as appropriate.

**Competition Management**

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC), an independent expert organiser of design competitions with over twenty years’ experience, will lead and administer the two-stage competition on behalf of the Commission.
THE CORRIDOR

Introduction

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 on the southern end by Luton, Stevenage and the Aylesbury Vale. The area has a population of 3.3 million people and is approximately 3,900 square miles in area.

Towns and cities across the corridor are amongst the most successful and fastest growing in the UK, and make a substantial, and increasingly important, contribution to UK income and national tax revenues.

The corridor has a concentration of businesses in the scientific research and development, life sciences, pharmaceuticals, high-tech manufacturing, performance technology and motorsport sectors. An estimated 419,000 people across the corridor are employed in the knowledge economy. Whilst each area has specific qualities and strengths in particular industries, there is currently a lack of coordination across the corridor and links to London dominate.

The area largely does not function as a single corridor – politically, economically or physically. The Commission aims to make recommendations that strengthen governance and decision making across the corridor. This, along with the planned infrastructure, aims to consolidate the area as a single, knowledge-intensive cluster.

The area is notable for its high concentration of start-up businesses. In 2016, Northampton had the second highest number of new business start-ups per 10,000 residents of any UK area outside of London. In 2014, 102 patents per 100,000 people were granted by the UK Intellectual Property Office to businesses and individuals in Cambridge: the UK average is six.

The diagram on page 16 summarises the spread of particular industries across the corridor.
The corridor also contains some of the UK’s most significant Higher Education institutions. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge consistently rank amongst the very top universities in the world; Cranfield University (just outside Milton Keynes) is a global leader in engineering disciplines. The UK’s largest university, the Open University, is based in Milton Keynes. Across the corridor, 40% of residents are qualified to degree level – the UK average is 30% – and in Oxford and Cambridge, this rises to 60%. The universities across the corridor have an established track record of commercialising research and development into successful businesses, which has created ecosystems of interrelated industries. This is a key feature in encouraging companies to invest in the corridor.

The diagram on page 17 summarises some of the key educational economic and industrial sites across the corridor.
The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition

Selected sites of educational, economic and industrial importance across the corridor
Geology and Topography

Despite not operating as a functional economic, social and political corridor, the area has an underlying geological and topographical continuity – a relatively low-lying, predominantly clay landscape, bounded by more diverse, well-known and protected landscapes, such as the Cotswolds and the Chilterns.

The principal settlements along the corridor are located on a series of main rivers (the Cam, the Ouse, the Isis and the Cherwell), which drain into the Fens in the east, and the Thames Valley in the west. The rivers and their associated flood plains are often the defining characteristic of the urban morphology of the corridor.

The majority of land in the corridor is not constrained by Green Belts, National Parks or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); however, a notable exception to this is the land immediately surrounding Oxford and Cambridge, which are encircled by large Green Belts and, in the case of Oxford, a large flood plain.
The Future of the Corridor

The corridor has been identified as integral to the UK’s long-term economic prosperity.

Approximately 1.83 million people are currently employed across the corridor, contributing £90.5 billion to the UK economy. Analysis by the Commission suggests that, with current trends in development, population and local economic growth, the area could see job growth of 335,000 by 2050, increasing economic output by £85 billion. The actual potential is greater: a ‘Transformational Scenario’ could see the area support a further 700,000 jobs by 2050 and increase GVA (gross value added) by £163 billion.

This ‘Transformational Scenario’ should be seen in the context of historic growth patterns across the corridor over the past century, which have averaged at 0.95% per annum. The peak growth period for the area was between 1931 and 1971, where population grew 1.42% year-on-year. By comparison, the ‘Transformational Scenario’ would require growth of approximately 1.17% per year to achieve the projected population numbers.
Oxford

Oxford is a university city at the south-western extent of the corridor, characterised by its compact city centre with an exceptional collection of Medieval and university architecture.

The city has a high concentration of knowledge-intensive industries, which accounts for around 67% of jobs. Oxford’s jobs density ratio is 1.08 – meaning that there are more jobs than residents – and around 46,000 people commute into the city for work.

Oxford has many historic city parks and nature conservation areas (including a Special Area of Conservation and several SSSIs).

A compact city, constrained by its Green Belt and related river network and flood plain, opportunities for further physical expansion within the city are limited.

- **Population**: c. 158,000
- **Land Area**: 50 km²
- **Population Density**: 3,160/km²
- **Key Industries**: Health; education; research; technology; tourism; car manufacturing; publishing; high-tech engineering; electronics; and bioscience.
Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes was founded in the late 1960s, as part of the third wave of ‘New Towns’ created by the UK Government to ease housing shortages after the Second World War.

Taking its name from an existing village in the area, Milton Keynes has grown from an initial area population of 50,000 to around 250,000. Milton Keynes has doubled in size since 1980, a rate of growth nearly five times the English average. Milton Keynes is advantageously located on both the West Coast mainline and the M1 motorway.

With an urban form based on movement through personal car traffic, the city is particularly low density, covering a wide geographical area in relation to its population. As such, the city has struggled to implement public transport.

Milton Keynes has experienced consistently strong population growth over the past 20 years, as well as high levels of employment.

Employment grew by 51% between 1990 and 2013, and between 2004 and 2013, Milton Keynes experienced the strongest job growth of any UK city.

- **Population:** 261,800
- **Land Area:** 310 km²
- **Population Density:** 844/km²
- **Key Industries:** High-performance engineering; business support services; education; health; management consultancy; and IT services.
Northampton

Previously a significant Medieval settlement and a major manufacturing centre for the shoe industry during the Industrial Revolution, Northampton’s modern day development was defined in 1968 when it was designated a ‘New Town’ by the UK Government. This opened up development across the town, and new housing and industrial estates were built, largely to accommodate the overflow of residents from London. Northampton is now one of the largest towns in the UK.

The area in and around Northampton is home to a large number of high performance technology and motorsport companies, including Mercedes AMG Petronas, Sahara Force India and Cosworth. In addition, Silverstone hosts the annual Formula One British Grand Prix.

**Population:** c. 222,500

**Land Area:** 80 km²

**Population Density:** 2,781/km²

**Key Industries:** Motorsport; high-performance engineering; food and drink; logistics.
Cambridge
Cambridge is predominantly a university city, located on the River Cam, at the north eastern extent of the corridor.

Cambridge is one of Europe’s largest technology clusters, with around 57,000 people employed by more than 1,500 technology-based firms, with a combined annual revenue of £13 billion. The region surrounding Cambridge is known as the Silicon Fen, and is home to a large number of high-tech businesses in the software, electronics and biotechnology sectors.

- **Population:** c. 130,900
- **Land Area:** 40 km²
- **Population Density:** 3,272/km²
- **Key Industries:** Electronics; high-performance engineering; digital and ICT; biotechnology.
THE CHALLENGE

‘…in Oxford and Cambridge…. house prices prohibit the attraction and retention of staff and students. This, in turn, has adverse consequences for the businesses in the area who fail to employ and retain the necessary skilled staff.’

– Joint submission from six leading universities across the corridor, NIC call for Evidence.

The previous section has highlighted the many (considerable) successes of the corridor. To maintain this competitive advantage, and to support further economic growth and job creation, the corridor needs to attend to its pressing challenges.

Primarily, this focuses on housing. Although thriving, the main urban centres within the corridor each suffer, to a greater or lesser degree, from the related housing pressures of high demand, low supply and resultant high prices.

A snapshot of the pressures on the housing market within the corridor includes:

• The corridor needs to increase its annual supply of new housing by 65%, or 7,900 properties a year, just to meet current demand;

• The corridor contains some of the most expensive housing in the UK outside of London, with average house prices in Oxford and Cambridge at £429,000 and £443,000 respectively (with the national average at £218,000); and

• Consequently, housing in many areas of the corridor is simply unaffordable, with house prices to earnings ratios of 13:1 in Cambridge and 12:1 in Oxford, set against an already high national average of 8:1.

Many describe this, alarmingly, as a housing crisis. Most of the responses to the Commission’s Calls for Evidence, carried out in the first phase of this project, focus on this issue – summed up by the quote above, provided as a coordinated response by six universities in the corridor.
The Cambridge to Oxford Connection: Ideas Competition

THE CHALLENGE

Housing development is a complex and layered issue. Many constraints exist on increasing the supply of new housing in the corridor, a number of which are the subject of further work by the Commission. Most of the best connected sites have been, or are in the process of being, delivered (for example in south Cambridge). From the regulatory perspective, UK planning law – captured in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – sets out a strategy with a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. At the regional level coordinated planning strategy across local authority boundaries is limited, leading to a lack of strategy across the corridor. At a practical level many sites are locked in the vagarious development control process.

The Green Belts surrounding both Oxford and Cambridge make further expansion of the urban areas difficult, and hamper connectivity back to the main centres. Other landscape designations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are, quite rightly, determining factors in protecting the landscape character within specific areas of the corridor. Commercially, housing developers are also reluctant to flood the market with housing – with increased supply driving down prices and related profits. Finally, problems in delivering basic infrastructure (for example utilities) to support housing development is also hampering the rate of delivery.

Infrastructure can have an important role to play in releasing sites for development, and unlocking their potential.
Although the corridor, and the major urban settlements within it, are reasonably well connected and serviced north-south, too many gaps exist in the routes running east-west. This poor connectivity is restricting sustainable growth and the ability to function as an integrated corridor.

Two significant improvements are proposed to the matrix of transport infrastructure within the corridor. Both look to complete missing east-west links within the web of routes – one rail, one road – to create an integrated multi-modal spine across the corridor.

1. The **East West Rail** project builds on a largely disused existing route alignment that connects Oxford in the west to Bedford in the east. In a later phase, it is looking to re-establish the missing 67 miles of track between Bedford and Cambridge which was closed and lost in the late 1960s. Opportunities also exist to extend the route further eastward beyond Cambridge, connecting the growth corridor to the fast growing city of Norwich and east coast ports such as Ipswich and Harwich, though these are much less developed. This east-west route connects to a number of important and pre-existing north-south rail routes, radiating from London to the north as well as crossing the projected route for High Speed Two (HS2).

   East West Rail is planned to largely make use of pre-existing stations, though, subject to route choice, there is the potential for a small number of new stations (e.g. Winslow). It will be important to ensure that the railway connects into effective ‘first/last mile’ transport networks (such as bus services), ensuring the benefits of rail infrastructure are spread beyond the main stations.
THE OPPORTUNITY

Diagram showing East-West Rail, and how it fits into the national rail network © 5th Studio
2. An Oxford to Cambridge Expressway is being considered, although no firm plans or route alignments have been determined, particularly for the western section of the route between Oxford and Milton Keynes. As with the East West Rail project, the Expressway looks to complete missing ‘links’ in a national network which would connect the radial motorways of the M4 in the west to the M11 in the east, picking up both the M1 and A1(M) in the centre.

Elements of this project are already underway or completed, in particular between Bedford and Cambridge. The Expressway will make improvements at the national and cross-corridor level, with the aim of alleviating congestion around and within existing settlements.

Diagram showing the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, and how it fits into the national road network © Crown copyright and database rights 2015 Ordnance Survey 100030649, Creative Guildford S140851
These strategic projects, although in planning and development, have moved beyond the conceptual stage and could be delivered and operational within the next 15 years.

These infrastructure projects present a once-in-a-generation opportunity. By conceiving the area as a coordinated entity – the knowledge-intensive cluster – there is the potential to enhance its economic competitiveness. These projects also present a strong case to think strategically about the challenge (housing quality and supply) and linking it directly to the opportunity (transport infrastructure) in a coordinated, holistic and sustainable way, thereby maximising the use of the infrastructure investment. In fact, paragraph 29 of the NPPF notes the important role that transport has in ‘facilitating sustainable development’.

Successful places – from the Garden City movement of the late 19th century to Curitiba in Brazil – have understood, recognised and delivered on this; there is no reason why the Cambridge to Oxford Connection cannot do the same. In this way the cities, towns and villages within, and surrounding, the growth corridor will benefit from better connectivity and access to services and amenities.

To meet the challenge, and take advantage of the opportunities presented, the Commission has considered the forms of housing development, and related employment growth, that could best fit the needs of the corridor. The next section summarises the development typologies that have been identified.

For further details on the transformational infrastructure projects proposed and planned within the growth corridor, please see the Commission’s Interim Report.

Note: Although the competition links infrastructure to placemaking, it is not the purpose of the competition to critique or propose changes to the routing, nature or specifications of the East West Rail project or the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.
WHAT FORM COULD GROWTH TAKE?

Significant growth – in jobs and housing – is expected to be delivered across the corridor, given its strategic importance to the UK economy, the high demand and lack of supply in quality housing stock, and resultant strain on existing urban infrastructure. This is the challenge. The planned and proposed improvements in transport infrastructure within the corridor present the opportunity to consider an integrated, holistic and sustainable approach to its new development. This should look to coordinate the distinctiveness, and specifics, of location and the spatial form of placemaking with improvements in transport infrastructure (both the links between and within places, including ‘first last mile’ connectivity).

This type of transformational growth needs to be done sensitively, to protect and enhance the built and natural character of a place. As such there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to development; what is appropriate in one location may not be in another. As a result of this, the Commission has identified a range of forms that growth could take within the corridor. These development typologies can be categorised under three high-level groupings:

1. **Urban Intensification**: those developments that look to intensify existing urban settlements, either in the centre, suburbs or on the edge;

2. **Linked Places**: those developments that are linked to, and make use of the existing infrastructure of an existing urban settlement. These include, for example, satellite developments, urban extensions and small settlements, such as garden villages; and

3. **Autonomous Places**: new settlements of a sufficient scale to be self-contained in terms of requiring, maintaining and operating their own urban infrastructure.

These three high-level groupings represent and summarise the work done by the Commission to date; however, competitors are free to suggest hybrid or new typologies for the corridor, if deemed appropriate and if robustly presented.

By development typology, the Commission is referring to the spatial framework within which the physical development is planned and laid out. Although the focus is on spatial development typologies and related housing growth, there is an acknowledgement that successful places are made up of an appropriate blend and mix of functional land uses including, but not limited to, culture, public realm, retail and office. Competitors should consider this in their work, whilst linking this placemaking with infrastructure.
WHAT FORM COULD GROWTH TAKE?

The application of these conceptual typologies must sensitively balance a range of (potentially conflicting) criteria including, but not limited to: quality of life; impact on the character of existing places; urban form; land use; landscape; environment; sustainability; planning requirements and restrictions; heritage; deliverability; governance; and funding.

Importantly, framing all new development within the corridor are the infrastructure projects being developed.

Diagrams illustrating potential forms of growth across the Corridor © 5th Studio
The aim of the competition is to gather, showcase and promote imaginative responses to integrate placemaking (across a range of potential development typologies) with the proposed infrastructure projects, to help stimulate and deliver sustainable growth within the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor.

Competition entrants are invited to respond to the following overarching question:

**What is your vision for future development, and related development typologies, across the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford growth corridor, which creatively links existing, planned and proposed infrastructure with placemaking?**

Responses should be presented to illustrate their impact on place, and placemaking: the spatial and built environment development within the corridor. The response should be visionary – conceptual and creative – providing a strong set of visual assets, underpinned by credible analysis, for the project moving forward.

The Commission has identified a range of potential development typologies that are applicable within the growth corridor. These are identified on page 30. These three high-level groupings represent the work done by the Commission to date; however, competitors are free to suggest hybrid or new typologies for the corridor, if deemed appropriate.

In preparing their response, competitors may wish to address the following questions:

1. How can development make efficient and effective use of existing, proposed and planned infrastructure? Specifically, in relation to East West Rail and/or the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway?
2. How could the development typology minimise impacts on congestion?
3. How could the typology integrate public transport and active transport modes as much as possible?
4. How could the typology contribute to and complement the overall character of the corridor while maintaining and/or enhancing the corridor’s environmental and cultural assets?
5. How could the typology be scaleable and able to grow sustainably through time, or be replicated at a number of locations within the corridor?

The scope of team for the competition is naturally broad. Competition proposals can encompass a number of interrelated disciplines including, but not limited to, urban design; architecture; planning, policy, community; landscape design; and development economics. Interdisciplinary teams are strongly encouraged.
The competition jury will assess all submissions received at both stages of the competition.

The jury has been assembled by the Commission and includes representatives from the worlds of architecture, urban design, infrastructure, design, and key project stakeholders.

Whilst the final composition of the jury is yet to be determined, confirmed members include:

Lord Andrew Adonis
Bridget Rosewell OBE
Professor Sadie Morgan

The full jury will be announced during the first stage of the competition.

MRC will act as the competition secretariat.
At the first stage, competitors are asked to set out their high level concept ideas for potential solutions of one of the broad development typology groupings – or, if appropriate suggest a new or hybrid typology.

Where appropriate, the submission should be both well written and highly visual. Competitors should submit using the provided Emerging Concept, Team Details and Registration Information templates which are available to download from the competition website.

1. Part A – Emerging Concept

Competitors should focus on one of the three identified development typologies (see page 30) or, if appropriate, suggest a new or hybrid typology, and their rationale for doing so.

Please present a visual representation of the emerging concept for the selected development typology. This should clearly illustrate how it will deliver on the Commission’s objectives for the corridor – encapsulated by the following question:

What is your vision for future development, and related development typologies, across the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford growth corridor, which creatively links existing, planned and proposed infrastructure with placemaking?

Please use the template provided. The template should be submitted anonymously, identified only by the competitor’s project title, which should be filled in on the template where shown. It should also note the typology grouping chosen, again filled in where shown. The response should be both in narrative and visual form and should not exceed the two A3 sides of the template.

Competitors should include a concept abstract (up to 250 words) on the template – a space for this, and required font type and size, has also been shown. The design and layout for the rest of the template is at the discretion of the competitor.

Note: The template may be shown in a digital exhibition on the competition website.
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

2. Part B – Team Details

Please complete the Team Details form (downloadable from the competition website). For each team member, please provide the following information:

• Name
• Role on Project (50 words)
• Company Profile / Biography (150 words)

Please note, the Team Details element will be assessed separately from Part A – Emerging Concept, and should therefore not include the project name.

3. Part C – Registration Information

Please complete the Registration Information form (downloadable from the competition website), which requests contact information for your team. You are also asked to identify any potential conflicts of interest within this form.
The first stage submissions will be reviewed by the jury, with advice taken from representatives of the Commission and their advisers where appropriate.

The jury will also review the second stage submissions, advised by a Supporting Panel, who will conduct a peer review of the submissions. The Panel will be comprised of internal and external advisers to the Commission, including local stakeholders.

**Stage One Evaluation Process**

The Stage One submission is in three parts: Emerging Concept, Team Details, and Registration Information.

The Emerging Concept and the Team Details elements will be assessed separately. The Emerging Concept will be judged anonymously. The Registration Information element is for administrative purposes only, and will not be assessed by the jury.

Scores for the two quality criteria will be collated to achieve an overall assessment.

**Assessment Breakdown:**

**Part A – Emerging Concept – 80%**

*Including vision for placemaking; integration with, and effective utilisation of, infrastructure; scalability; environmental protection; delivery; and quality and clarity of presentation*

**Part B – Team Details – 20%**

**Part C – Registration Information – For information only – not scored**
HOW TO ENTER

Registration

This competition contains an anonymous design element. In order to maintain anonymity, competitors are requested to register on the competition website in order to receive a unique reference code, in the format NIC-XXXX.

Deadline for Entries

Entries will be received up to 14:00 BST Thursday 3 August 2017.

Please ensure that your entry is submitted no later than the appointed time. The Commission will not consider your submission if it is received after the deadline.

Please note: Competitors are responsible for ensuring their entry has been received.

How to Submit

Entries for the first stage of this competition should be submitted via email (including a link to a file transfer site) to the following address:

cambridgeoxfordconnection@malcolmreading.co.uk.

Your entry should contain the following parts, within the structure of the templates described on page 36:

1. Part A: Emerging Concept (pdf, max 20 MB)
2. Part B: Team Details (pdf, max 2 MB)
3. Part C: Registration Information (pdf, max 1 MB)

The files should be named using the following format:

Project Name_Part A: Emerging Concept
NIC-XXXX_Part B: Team Details
NIC-XXXX_Part C: Registration Information

Please note: Parts A and B will be judged separately, and a score collated at the conclusion of the assessment. Therefore, Part B should contain no information (such as the project name) which might allow it to be identified alongside the Part A submission. Part C is for information only, and will not be shared with the jury.
COMPETITION DETAILS

Anticipated Competition Programme

All dates 2017

Stage One Launch
Stage One Deadline 14:00 BST Thursday 3 August
Shortlist Announced Mid-August
Stage Two Launch Mid-August
Briefing Workshop Late August
Charrette Early September
Stage Two Deadline Late September
Jury Interviews Late October
Winner Announced Early November
COMPETITION DETAILS

Honorarium
An honorarium of £10,000 will be paid to all shortlisted teams on completion of the second stage of the competition. No other payment of any kind will be made in respect of any costs associated with, or incurred in, the preparation and submission of any entry or as part of the competition.

Competition Enquiries
All enquiries relating to the competition should be addressed to Malcolm Reading Consultants, the independent competition organisers appointed to manage the process. During the competition, no contact should be made with the Commission or members of the competition jury. Failure to comply with this restriction may compromise your position within the competition.

Questions should be emailed to: cambridgeoxfordconnection@malcolmreading.co.uk.

A question and answer log will be compiled and uploaded to the website on a weekly basis. Questions received before 14:00 BST on a Wednesday will be addressed in the Q&A log on a Friday.

Please note that telephone enquiries will not be accepted, and the latest date for submitting enquiries is 14:00 BST Wednesday 26 July 2017.

Permissions
The Commission and MRC reserve the right to make use of all presentation materials submitted in any future publication about the competition, exhibition or website. Any use will be properly credited to the competitor and the competitor warrants that the material submitted comprises solely their own work or that of any member of a team submitting a response. This non-exclusive licence is irrevocable, shall survive the competitor’s exit from the competition, and is royalty-free.

Competition Publicity
Competitors should note that any or all of the materials submitted during any stage of the competition may be used for publicity purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, a public exhibition of the shortlisted competitors’ design concepts, an online gallery of the shortlisted design concepts, and media releases relating to the competition or project in a more general sense.
Language

The official language of the competition is English. All entries must be in English, including all additional information.

Conflict of Interest

Competitors should declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest concerning the commercial, financial or other interests of the Commission, within their response to the competition, as requested in Part C – Registration Details.

The Commission reserves the right to reject responses from applicants where an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified. Competitors are under a continuing obligation to notify the competition organisers, MRC, if circumstances change during this procurement process and any statements given during this procurement process become untrue.

No staff, or family member of staff of the Commission (including the Commissioners) or a member of the competition jury is permitted to enter the competition.

Insurance of Entries

The Commission and MRC will take reasonable steps to protect and care for entries but neither organisation will insure the proposals at any time. Competitors are urged to maintain a complete record of their full entries and be able to make this available at any time should adverse circumstances require this.