

## The Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Timeline

**1)** In December 2014 the **Department for Transport** (DfT) published its Road Investment Strategy (RIS1 2015-2020)<sup>1</sup>, RIS1, which included the statement that:

*“Transport connections between cities such as Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford are notably poor and create an artificial barrier between hubs of knowledge based growth. With better links, the synergies between these cities would be stronger, and would do more to drive growth in nearby towns.”*

The RIS1 instructed Highways England (HE), a Government Company, to undertake a study to “*examine the case for creating an Expressway to connect the towns and cities of the ‘Brain Belt’ together*”.

An ‘expressway’ is defined in RIS1 as: “*An A-road that is as well-designed as a motorway and is able to offer the same standard of journey to users. At a minimum, Expressways will be largely or entirely dual carriageway standard roads that are safe, well-built and resilient to delays, have junctions that are largely or entirely grade separated (RIS 1, December 2014).*” (‘grade separated’ means roads join and leave the expressway via slip-roads, and not at T-junctions).

**2)** In July 2016 lead consultants **WSP and Parson Brinckerhoff**, together with **ch2m** and **steer davis gleave**, commissioned by Highways England, produced a report titled Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Study: Deliverable 1 – Examination of the Strategic Case for New Expressway East-West Road Links<sup>2</sup>, putting forward a ‘*strong case for transport interventions within the broad arc defined by the study area*’. The Report name checks both England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) and the study area’s Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) as being interested in strategic transport infrastructure in the region. The Report recommends improved road connections across the region and identifies the A34 and the non-expressway sections of the A421 and A428 as particular constraints at present, “*restricting functional economic area labour catchments, regional connectivity and economic growth.*”

**3)** In August 2016 **5<sup>th</sup> Studio, SQW and Peter Studdert** (three separate spatial design and town planning consultancies), again commissioned by Highways England, produced a document titled Greater Cambridge: Submission to the National Infrastructure Commission’s Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford: ‘growth corridor’ call for evidence<sup>3</sup>. This was one of six such studies of the RIS1 proposals. The authors of the report had all lived and worked in Cambridge for a very long time and had become frustrated by the ‘*absence of a clear narrative for the long term growth of Cambridge and its hinterland*’. The rest of the Report shows that, in the authors’ view, the Cambridge hinterland spreads as far as Oxford. Only 16 of the 1144 pages of the Report were produced by the 5<sup>th</sup> Studio partners, the remainder being taken up by one proposal or another from Local Councils across the Arc (all the way to Oxford’s City and County Councils) and from developers or agents acting on behalf of land-owners *en route*. The 5<sup>th</sup> Studio itself kicks off this very long list with its own proposal for a major development at Calvert, where East West Rail crosses HS2. Proposals for development of green-field sites, such as at Calvert, are necessary, it says, because “*In Britain’s ancient landscape the best*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-for-the-2015-to-2020-road-period>

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/545354/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-strategic-study-interim-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/545354/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-strategic-study-interim-report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Cambridge-Milton-Keynes-Oxford-Phase-1-call-for-evidence-responses.pdf>

*sites for settlement have long been occupied. New locations need to be created with vigour.”* The contrary argument is given by various Wildlife Trusts, branches of CPRE and by Peter Headicar (Reader in Transport, Dept of Planning, Oxford Brookes University) (Headicar’s response on pp 817 to 823 is especially recommended).

It is clear that much was happening ‘behind the scenes’ a considerable time before this document appeared. Many of the development proposals in it are accompanied by quite detailed plans and graphics that must have taken some time to produce.

**4)** In November 2016 the **National Infrastructure Commission** (NIC), a Treasury ‘think-tank’ on major infrastructural challenges, produced a document titled Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor: Interim Report<sup>4</sup> that identified the Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Oxford corridor as a potential Silicon Valley for the UK. It pointed out that a lack of housing and connectivity were holding up this vision, and proposed a joined-up strategy linking infrastructure and homes. *“Planning for East West Rail and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway should be taken forward urgently. These are once-in-a-generation investments that will deliver substantial national benefits”*

**5)** Also in November 2016 **Highways England** published the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Study Stage 3 Report<sup>5</sup> outlining the case for an expressway connecting Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge. This document talked about a ‘missing link’ between the M1 and the M40 and proposed three options for it:

1. a northern option, roughly following the existing A421 to the south of Bicester and via Buckingham to the east of Milton Keynes
2. a central option, following the east-west rail corridor; and
3. a southern option via Aylesbury, linking to the M1 south of Milton Keynes

The Report showed two rather different maps of these options (Fig. 1, Fig. 2), neither very helpful.

One of the stated benefits of the expressway was to increase the area over which a 45-minute journey-time could ‘deliver’ workers to Oxford, Cambridge or Milton Keynes (Fig. 3). Thus workers could live farther away from their jobs, but still arrive at work in the same journey time (a perfect example of Headicar’s criticism<sup>3</sup> of roads connecting low density development, leading to greater car use and congestion).

The Strategic Study Report concluded that *“initial assessment of the three short listed Expressway options showed that the benefits were promising enough to take them forward to the next stage of assessment.”*

Importantly, the Report also concluded that *“the next stage of this study will also include further analysis of the potential interaction between the short listed Expressway schemes and EWR to better understand the complementary benefits both schemes could provide.”* EWR is East-West Rail, a project that involves modernisation and re-opening of the old ‘Varsity Line’ between Oxford and Cambridge, a train service first opened in 1845 and finally closed to passengers in 1967<sup>6</sup>.

Highways England has a fixed Project Control Framework (PCF) for delivering major road infrastructure (Fig. 4). There are 8 Stages (from Stage 0, Strategy Shaping, to Stage 7, Close Out when the completed road is opened) in 4 phases, from the Pre-Project phase (Stage 0 only) to the Construction Phase (Stages 6 and 7).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Cambridge-Milton-Keynes-Oxford-interim-report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-strategic-study-stage-3-report>

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varsity\\_Line](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varsity_Line). This is a fascinating record of the history of the Varsity Line. During World War II the Varsity Line was used as a strategic freight route avoiding London. The Ox-Cam expressway is today also regarded as a means to relieve the motorway network – specifically the M25 around London – of strategic HGV freight movements.

The 2016 Strategic Study appears to have made a convincing enough case for the Government to commission further work by Highways England for Phase 1, Option Identification (Fig. 4) in mid 2017.

6) In November 2017 the **National Infrastructure Commission** (NIC) produced a report titled Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc<sup>7</sup>. The Report stated that although the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford arc contains some of our most productive and innovative places, delivering growth and prosperity for the whole country, *“the continued success of these places is not guaranteed. Without swift and determined action to overcome the area’s housing crisis, it will fall behind its international competitors and fail to attract and retain the talent and skills it needs.”* The Report continued *“If the arc is to maximise its economic potential, current rates of house building will need to double –delivering up to one million new homes by 2050.”* It recognised that infrastructure is the key to making this proposal work, and recommended both EWR and the expressway as a means of ‘enabling new settlements’.

7) A whole raft of other reports appeared at the same time as the above report, all available now on the NIC website at <https://www.nic.org.uk/publications><sup>8</sup>. A number of these concerned the ‘First-mile, Last-mile problem’ of traffic arriving at a town’s outer ring-road and heading for the town centre. Each city approached this task with different levels of enthusiasm. Oxford’s response amounts to less than 3 pages; Greater Cambridge’s to 104 pp.

8) One of the more important reports released at the same time was the 5<sup>th</sup> **Studio SQW Report** NIC Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford Future Planning Options Project: Final Report<sup>9</sup> (February 2018-REV A). This report examined briefly the growth areas across the Arc and proposed nine different spatial arrangements (‘scenarios’) of new settlements, from urban intensification (i.e. at the centre of existing towns) to brand new cities, giving a real Case Study for each example (the Big City example was for Calvert). Importantly this Report gave a map (p. 21) showing the distribution of houses by administrative region across the Arc. The grand total of houses across the Arc in this diagram is just over one million; this total includes houses already in Local Plans; ‘development accommodated due to pressures from land constrained markets’ (this appears to be catch-up houses that should have been built previously but have not been, because of land shortages); and ‘additional development required to meet the Transformational Scenario’s Housing and Population Targets by 2050’ (i.e. expressway-unlocked houses). The majority of the one million houses (553,000) fall in this last category. Interestingly, the mean number of persons per house in this graph is about 1.9, significantly below the current national average of between 2.3 and 2.4 people per household (thus, at the current density of people per house, we would need ‘only’ 790,000 homes, not one million, to accommodate the same total number of people). One-person households are predicted to increase in the future, however, reducing the mean number of people per household to 2.16 by 2033<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/publications/partnering-prosperity-new-deal-cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Oxfordshire-First-Last-mile-strategy-report-2017.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Northants-First-Last-mile-strategy-report-2017.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Greater-Cambridge-Partnership-First-Last-Mile-Strategy-Report-2017.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Milton-Keynes-First-Last-mile-strategy.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/AECOM-Planning-and-Delivery-Analysis.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/First-Last-mile-Strategy-Assessment-Reports-Transport-infrastructure-Assessment-First-Last-mile-Strategy-Assessment-Report-SDG-2017.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/First-Last-mile-Strategy-Assessment-Report-Oxford-Milton-Keynes-Cambridge-and-Northampton-Growth-Corridor-SDG-2017.pdf>  
<https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Strategic-planning-and-governance-consultation-responses.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/NIC-FinalReport-February-2018-Rev-A-optimised.pdf> The first version of this Report, released in November 2017, contains significant errors. These were corrected in the February 2018 version.

<sup>10</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6395/1780763.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6395/1780763.pdf)

**9)** During 2018 **Highways England** completed the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway: Strategic Outline Business Case<sup>11</sup> (SOBC) for the three expressway corridor options (the only maps in this report are the same as those in the November 2016 HE Report). It calculated that the expressway benefit:cost ratio would be between 1.1:1 (Options C1 and C2) and 1.3:1 (Option B3) and concluded that building the 'missing link' would provide '*some value for money*'. All of these figures are in fact very low, falling below those of 25 other major road building schemes assessed in the same way (range 2:1 to >14:1)<sup>12</sup> and also falling below the threshold that requires the project to be referred back to Government for re-evaluation (1.5:1)<sup>13</sup>.

**10)** In September 2018, **Highways England** produced its report Oxford to Cambridge expressway: Corridor Assessment Report 2018<sup>14</sup> (the 'CAR'). This document with its 9 Appendices is over 1,000 pages long. The Report assessed the suitability for the expressway of three broad corridors (Fig. 5) between Oxford and Cambridge under seven headings; Connectivity, Strategic Transformation, Economic Growth, Skills and Accessibility, Planning for the Future, Environment, and Innovation. The Report concluded by identifying Corridor B as the 'preferred Corridor', and selecting Corridor sub-options B1 (passing West of Oxford City) and B3 (East of Oxford City) for further study (Fig. 6). Despite the promise made in the earlier Strategic Study Stage 3 Report<sup>5</sup>, rather little mention is made of EWR in the CAR, beyond saying that travellers by rail would 'free up' some spare capacity on expressway junctions, so that more houses could be built near them. The **No Expressway** Group has produced a document explaining the thinking behind the distribution of expressway junctions, workers and jobs modelled in the Corridor Assessment Report ([link to NEG CAR document](#)).

**11)** In October 2018 the **Government**, in a document titled Government response to 'Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc'<sup>15</sup>, gave its official response to the NIC Report<sup>7</sup> of the previous year, beginning with the statement "*The government supports the National Infrastructure Commission's ambition to build up to one million high quality homes by 2050 to maximise the economic growth of the Arc.*" The document announced significant funding for both EWR and the expressway, and indicated future commitments to local partners, including universities, and to the appointment of an independent business Chair for the Arc, and a Ministerial champion, to '*facilitate co-ordination across Whitehall*'.

There was also a promise to "*Continue to engage with local communities on the Expressway, East West Rail and other schemes across the Arc, to inform our decision-making process and to maximise opportunities for the environment and mitigate impacts.*" In fact, even well beyond this time, there was little or no engagement with local communities beyond a road show to which Parish Councils were invited.

**12)** A few weeks before the release of the Highways England CAR Report<sup>14</sup>, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Kit Malthouse, then Minister of State in the **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** (MHCLG) issued a now notorious letter to Local Authorities reminding them of the NIC's ambition to build one million homes and asking them to '*bring forward ambitious proposals for transformational housing growth, including new settlements*'<sup>16</sup>. He wanted to see '*swift action*', and requested proposals by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September, just seven weeks from the date of his letter. Most Local Councils appear sensibly to have ignored this impossible request (the MHCLG later apologised to them for 'causing confusion'). Local Plans take months or even years to

<sup>11</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/739893/strategic-outline-business-case.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739893/strategic-outline-business-case.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/411417/ris-economic-analysis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411417/ris-economic-analysis.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.transport-network.co.uk/10-of-RIS-1-schemes-shelved-on-value-for-money-grounds/15817>

<sup>14</sup> <http://assets.highwaysengland.co.uk/roads/road-projects/Oxford+to+Cambridge+expressway/Corridor+Assessment+Report.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc-study-government-response>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.cuddesdonanddenton.org/images/misc/malthouseletter.pdf>

formulate, and involve a fraction of the number of homes envisaged for the expressway. Nevertheless, the letter marks the interest of the MHCLG in expressway matters.

**13)** In March 2019, the **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** (MHCLG) released a report titled the Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Government ambition and joint declaration between Government and Local Partners<sup>17</sup>. This Report, with a Ministerial Foreword from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment (then Thérèse Coffey, MP), the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (then Robert Jenrick, MP), the Minister of State for Housing (then Kit Malthouse, MP) and the Minister of State for Transport (then Jesse Norman, MP), announced the establishment of the Arc Leaders Group (ALG), the Chair of which is Barry Wood, leader of Cherwell District Council in Oxfordshire. The structure of this Group is shown in Fig. 8, and includes Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and 10 Universities across the Arc. The Report stresses that to realise the full economic potential of the Arc significantly more homes will have to be delivered, and states that the ALG is organising itself across four thematic areas to do this : productivity, place-making, connectivity and the environment. The Report offered *'a broad, joint, public engagement exercise over Summer 2019. This will engage with the public across the four themes above and will be used to help inform our future plans for the Arc and ensure they benefit existing and new communities and businesses.'*

**14)** In May 2019 appeared a document titled Oxford-Cambridge Arc Universities Group<sup>18</sup>, produced jointly by the ten Universities along the Arc, with the byline 'Underpinning the UK's Global Leadership in Innovation'. The document showcases each University in turn, without saying anything at all about the benefits of synergy between them, or explaining how this might be brought about; which is probably just as well. Cranfield and the Open University (two of the ten) do not feature in most University performance league tables, but the other eight do. Despite this small group including two of the supposedly best Universities in Western Europe, and with very high ranks globally, the average rank of the cluster of eight Universities was 67<sup>th</sup> out of 121 in **The Guardian's** 2020 table (that combines teaching excellence and overall student satisfaction) and 77<sup>th</sup> out of 126 for research excellence in the 2020 **Complete University Guide** (and 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 131 for student satisfaction in the same guide). Overall, therefore, those eight Universities (including Oxford and Cambridge) 'could do better'. The only thing the eight Arc Universities have in common is location. "Weaker Together" springs to mind.

**15)** In July 2019 **England's Economic Heartland**, Chaired by Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council, released a document titled Outline Transport Strategy: framework for engagement<sup>19</sup>. The EEH area completely encompasses the Arc, from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and from Peterborough to Hertfordshire. EEH concentrates on delivering digital infrastructure, utilities and a regional transport strategy through responsibilities devolved from Government, but does not appear to be directly responsible to any particular Ministry. The document considers the present growth areas across the Arc, and suggests developing several public transport 'modes' (trains, rapid shuttles, buses), and dedicated cycle routes, to connect them better. As is necessary for any successful public transport system, the emphasis is on high density development, with 'greenway' routes both within and between communities, each surrounded by considerable areas of farmland or green spaces. The word 'expressway' is mentioned only five times in the >100page document and the private car is clearly seen as 'part of the problem' rather than 'part of the solution'.

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<sup>17</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799993/OxCam\\_Arc\\_Ambition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799993/OxCam_Arc_Ambition.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.arcuniversities.com/downloads/ARC\\_singlepages.pdf](http://www.arcuniversities.com/downloads/ARC_singlepages.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Documents/Outline%20Transport%20Strategy%20Framework%20for%20Engagement.pdf>



**16)** Also in July 2019, the **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy** (BEIS) released a series of documents, each authored by one of the Local Enterprise Partnerships along the Arc and outlining its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)<sup>20</sup>. For example, the LIS for Oxfordshire has the ambition *‘to be a top three global innovation ecosystem by 2040’*. The LIS *‘sits alongside the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth deal, a commitment to deliver 100,000 new houses across the county before 2031’*. Much is promised in the LIS, apparently at absolutely no cost to the environment; for example, *‘Oxfordshire’s communities themselves have the opportunity to become exemplars of contemporary living - preparing for technological and environmental change, whilst retaining natural landscape and a high-quality living experience’*. The LIS which, in Oxon’s case, is linked with the productivity strand of the Housing and Growth Deal, recognises five foundations of productivity; ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment, and places. There is an understandable emphasis on business development, but this must take place among *‘thriving communities’* that must be healthy, sustainable, affordable, well-connected and have a *‘vibrant community and cultural offer’*. Both EWR and the expressway are mentioned, as is the idea that Oxfordshire *‘will work with industry partners to develop pioneer communities that act as living labs, preparing communities for technological and environmental change including the advent of connected and autonomous travel, all electric energy, smart homes and sustainable living.’* There is a chance this could all go horribly right.

The programme also has its sights on Bicester with the aim of making the town *‘a place where healthy behaviour is easy, fun and affordable’*. Working with Cherwell District Council *‘the programme aims to improve both the physical and mental health of everyone in Bicester’*. Only folk named Winston Smith need apply.

Buckinghamshire’s LIS is more modest in its ambitions to grow centres of excellence at Westcott Space Cluster, Pinewood Studios, Silverstone Park and the Buckinghamshire Life Sciences Innovation Centre. Again both EWR and the expressway get equal but slight mention.

**17)** At time of writing (August 2019) we await the announcement by Highways England of the six or more potential expressway routes for public consultation over the subsequent 10 weeks. What to expect of this consultation and the one following in Autumn 2020 is described in another NEG document ([link to our HE meeting document](#)). Once a single route has been selected, its details are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), a process covered by the **Planning Act**

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-cambridge-arc-local-industrial-strategies>

Bucks:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818874/Buckinghamshire\\_SINGLE\\_PAGE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818874/Buckinghamshire_SINGLE_PAGE.pdf)

Cambs & Peterborough:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818886/Cambridge\\_SINGLE\\_PAGE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818886/Cambridge_SINGLE_PAGE.pdf)

Oxon: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818928/Oxfordshire-SINGLE-PAGE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818928/Oxfordshire-SINGLE-PAGE.pdf)

SE Midlands:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818893/South\\_East\\_Midlands\\_SINGLE\\_PAGE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818893/South_East_Midlands_SINGLE_PAGE.pdf)

2008<sup>21</sup>. **The Campaign for Better Transport**<sup>22</sup> has produced a helpful printed guide to the NSIPs process<sup>23</sup> and there is also a video on the **National Infrastructure Planning** website<sup>24</sup>.

18) Such a large infrastructure project as the Oxford-Cambridge expressway draws a lot of attention and criticism. **Need Not Greed Oxon**<sup>25</sup> is an Oxfordshire based charity planning for real need not spectacular greed in Oxfordshire.

The **Campaign to Protect Rural England** (CPRE)<sup>26</sup> produces periodic articles and reports challenging various aspects of the expressway. There is also a campaign website.<sup>27</sup>

The **Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust**<sup>28</sup> has taken all the way to the High Court of Justice a Judicial Review challenge over the failure of Highways England to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) (both required under international law to which the UK is a signatory); and lost<sup>29</sup>.

The **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** (RSPB) supported this appeal and is concerned at further loss of valuable wildlife sites.<sup>30</sup>

One of the most useful analyses of the expressway idea was produced by **Smart Growth UK** in February 2019. The Overheated Arc – a critical analysis of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford-Newbury “Growth Corridor Part 1”<sup>31</sup> covers the background to the expressway idea and challenges the notion that the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is special in any sense other than that the two Universities have produced a large proportion of the Expressway supporters in Government. Part 2 in the same series is due soon, and will offer alternative regions for development in England that have far more going for them than the over-heated Arc area.

At the western end of the Arc a number of groups have organised themselves to investigate the expressway plans and to protest against them. A guide to these is found elsewhere on this website ([link to the NEG document on EAG, NEA BEAG etc.,](#)).

A group of transport and planning professionals named **Planning Oxfordshire’s Environment and Transport Sustainably** (POETS) has called to scrap the expressway.<sup>32</sup> It will not ease congestion on local roads and will contribute to the climate emergency. The POETS suggest an alternative ‘package’ of rail, bus, road and cycling enhancements that will increase the county’s transport capacity, will be quicker to implement and will cost a great deal less than Oxon’s share of the £4.5 billion expressway scheme.

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/pdfs/ukpga\\_20080029\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/pdfs/ukpga_20080029_en.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://bettertransport.org.uk/roads-nowhere>

<sup>23</sup> <https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/companion-planning-process.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/sound-bites/item/4959-cpre-reaction-to-selection-of-preferred-route-for-oxford-cambridge-expressway>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/campaigns/itemlist/category/964-ox-cam-expressway-growth-corridor>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/wildlife/nature-matters/oxford-cambridge-expressway>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/news/environment-loses-out-expressway-judicial-review>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/our-positions-and-casework/casework/cases/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway/>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.smartgrowthuk.org/resources/downloads/Arc\\_Report\\_1.pdf](http://www.smartgrowthuk.org/resources/downloads/Arc_Report_1.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/item/2761-scrap-the-expressway-say-poets?highlight=WyJwb2V0cyJd>

Fig 1

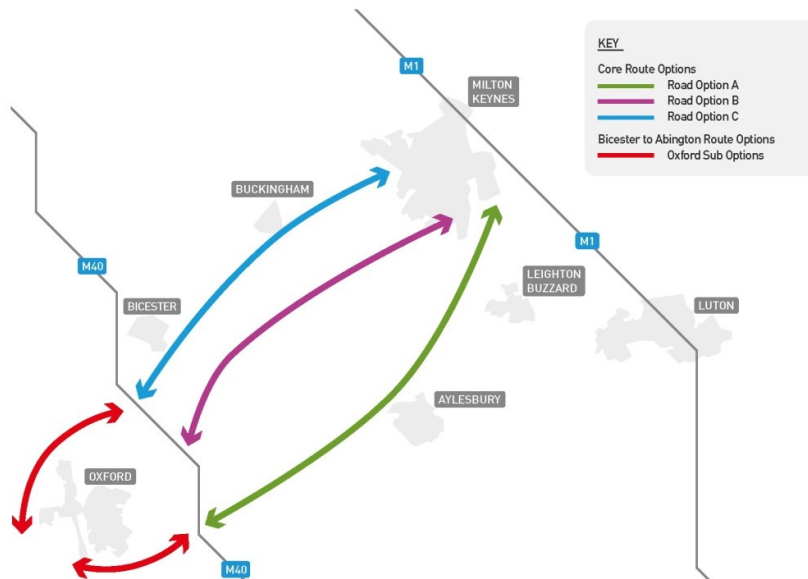


Figure 0-1: Short Listed Expressway Options

Fig. 2

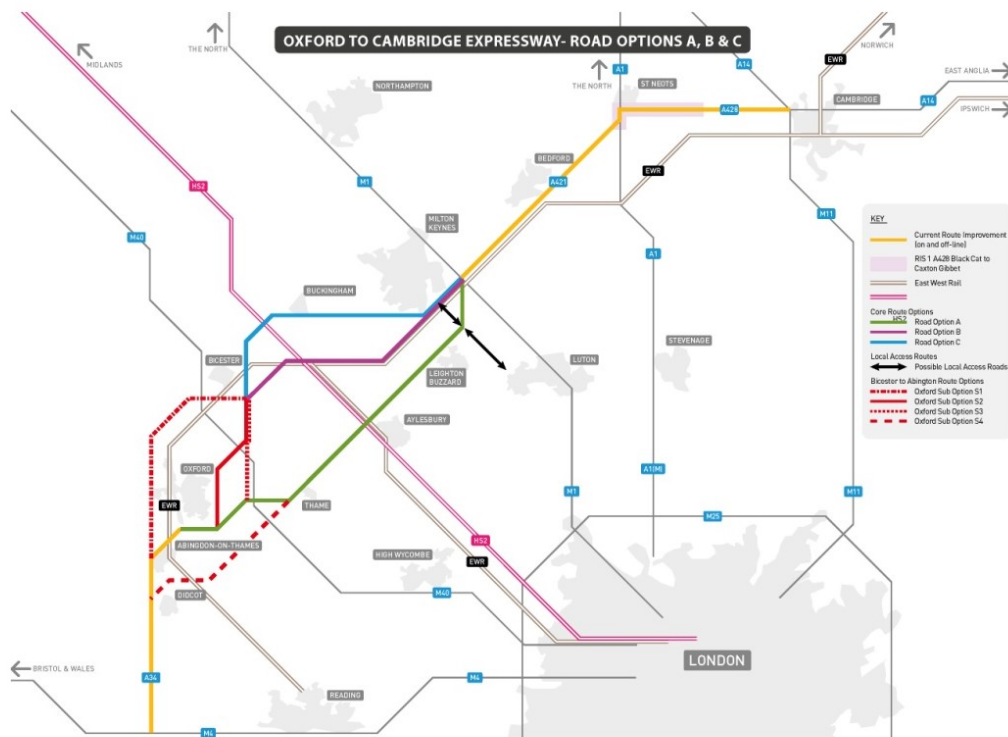


Figure 5-2: Shortlisted Intervention Options



Fig. 3.

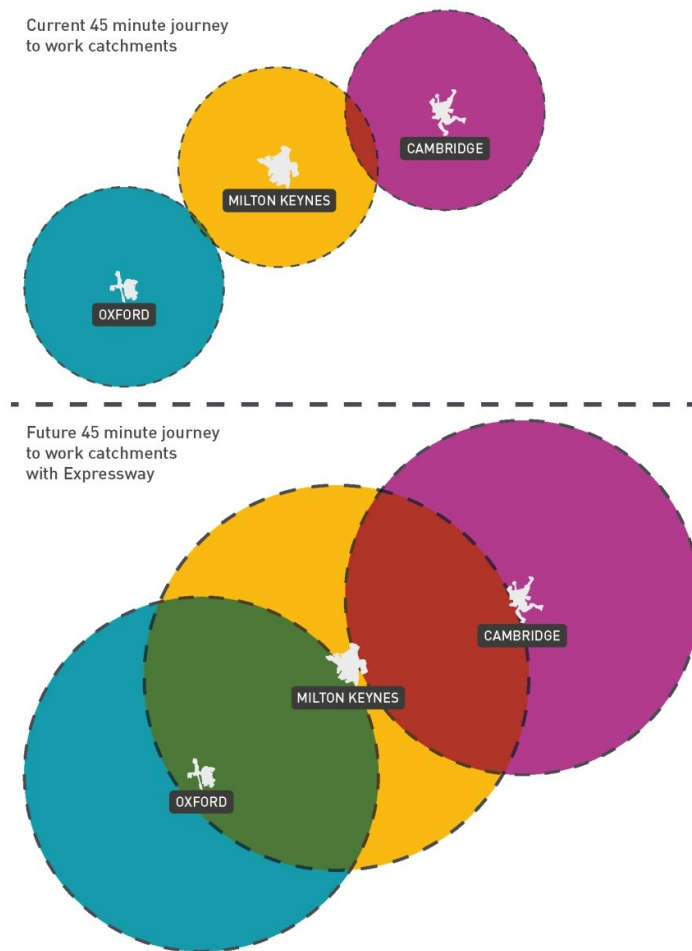


Figure 6-3: Summary of the Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge 45 Drive-Time Catchments

Fig. 4

## Major Project Milestones & Lifecycle

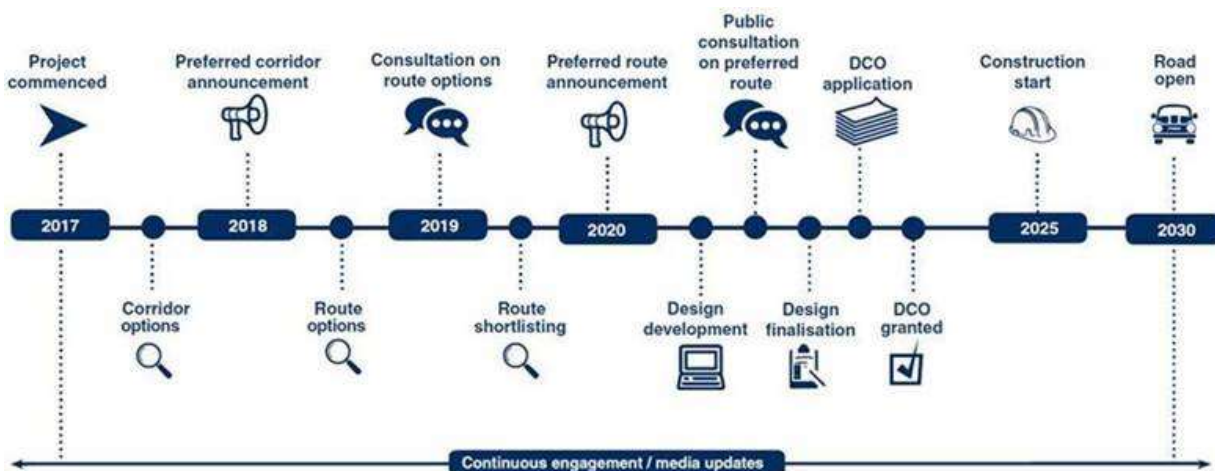
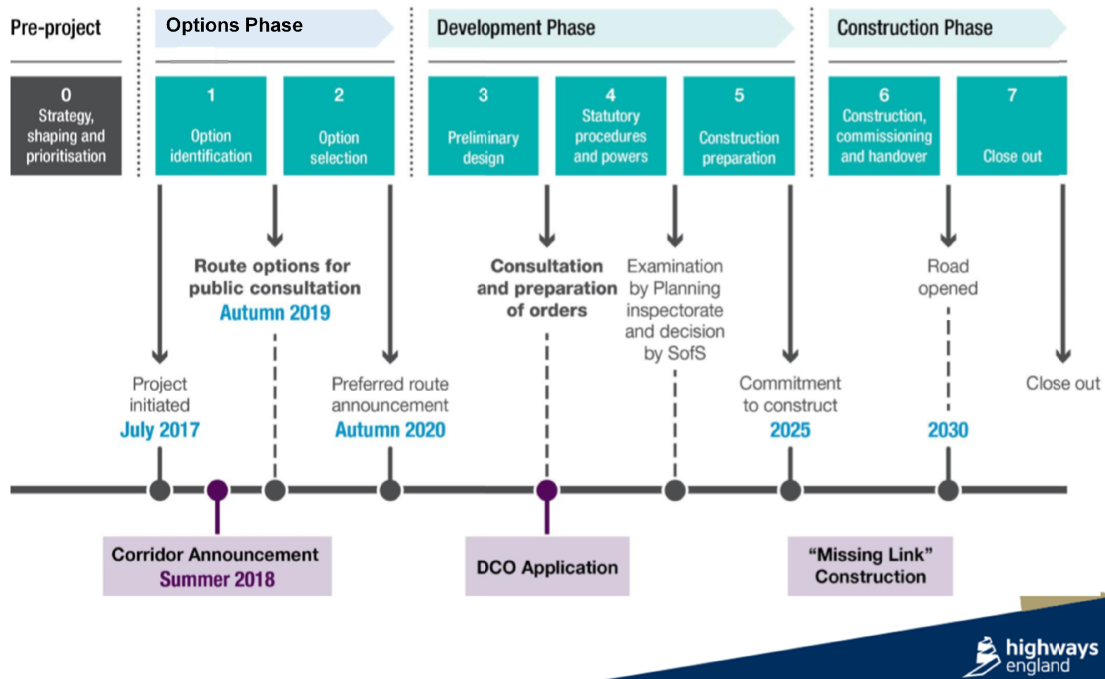


Fig. 5 Three expressway Corridors, A, B & C. The first map shows areas common to all three corridors.

Figure 0.3: Common Corridor areas

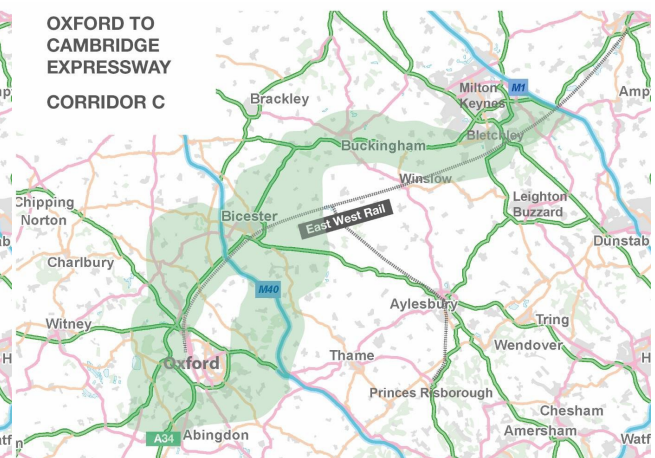
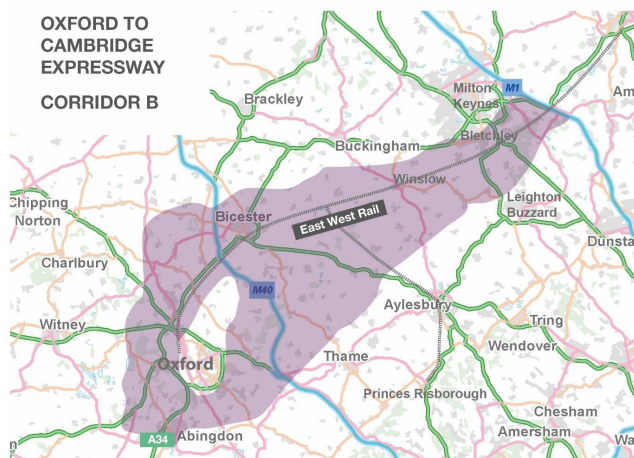
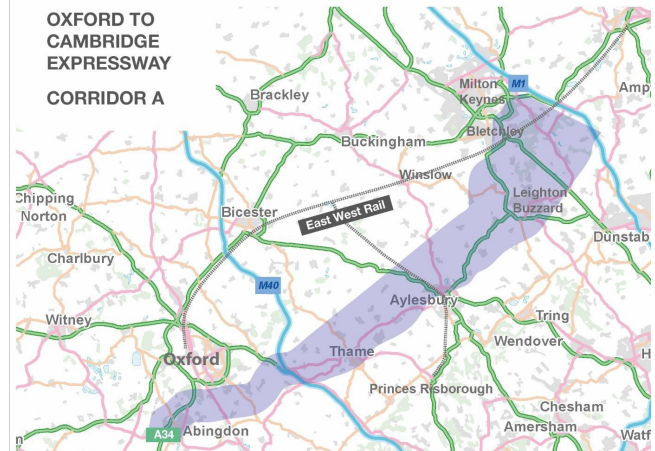
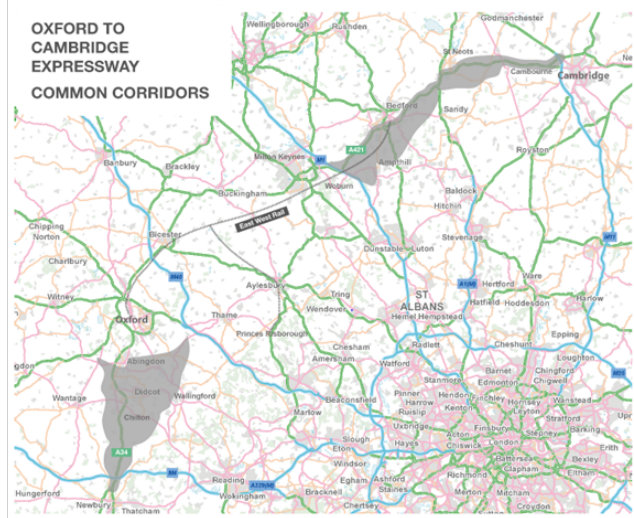




Fig. 6

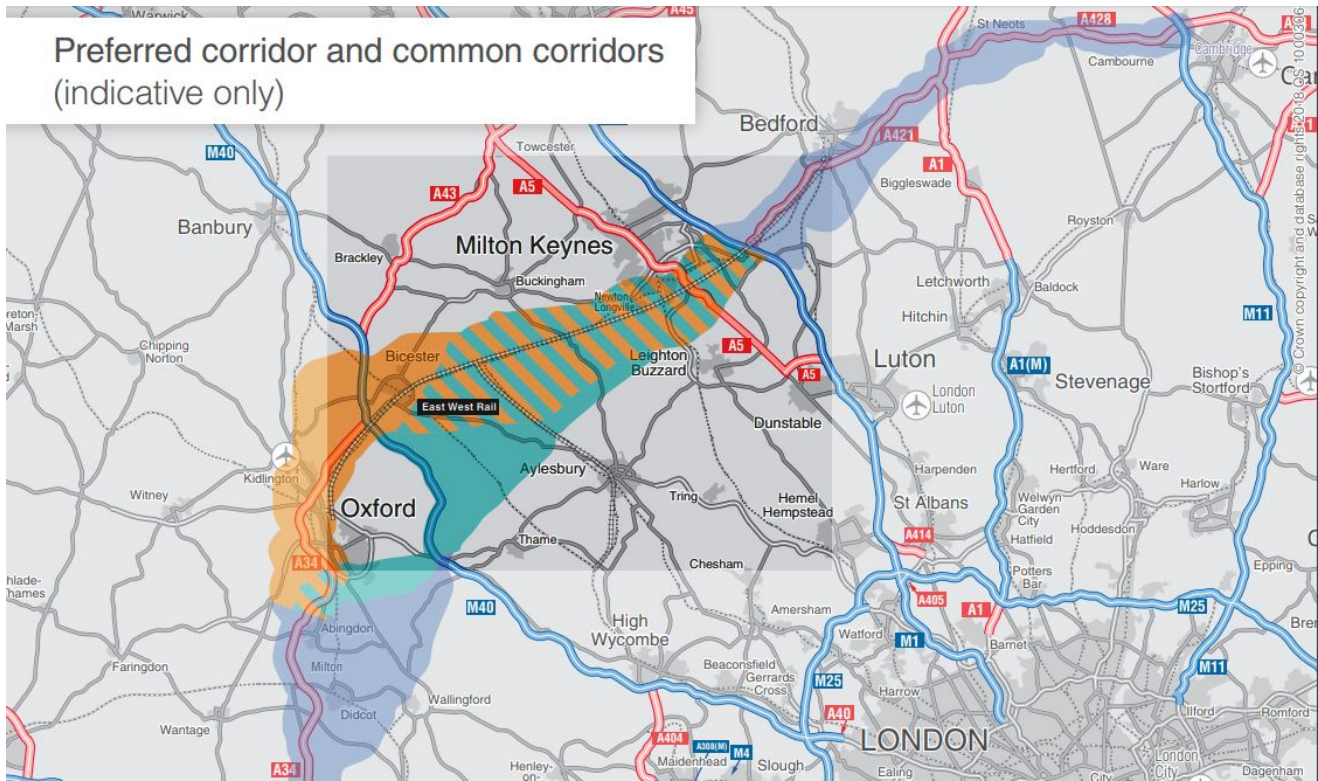


Fig. 7

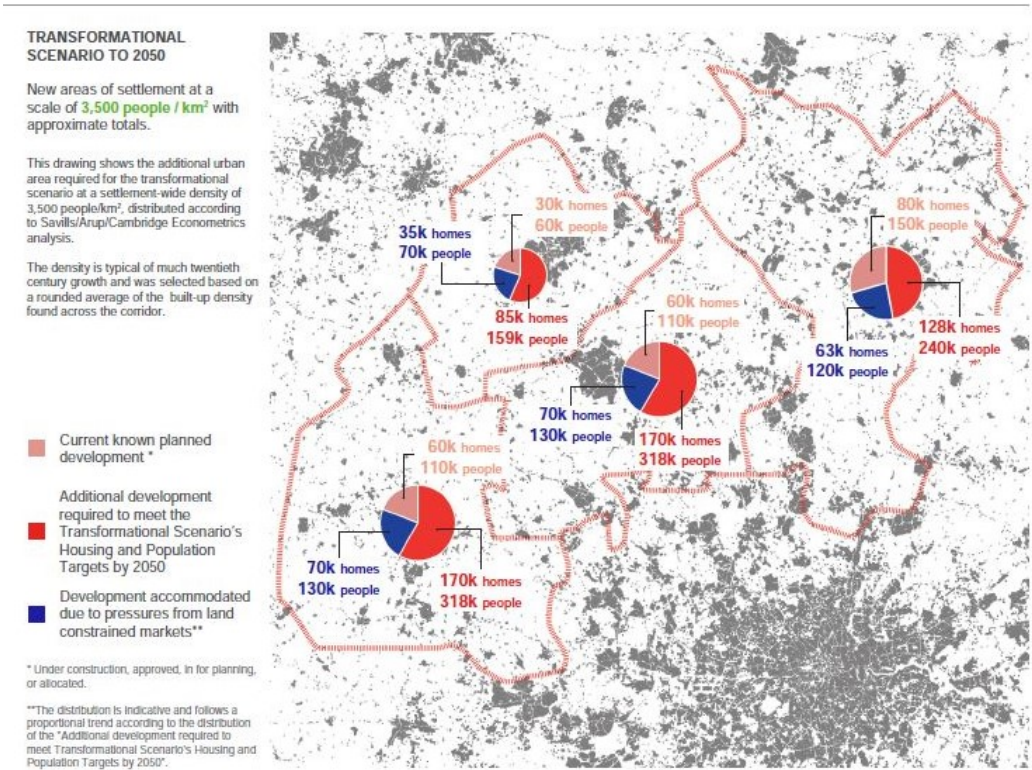


Fig. 8

## Oxford-Cambridge Arc Leaders Group

