



Planning for Real **NEED** not Speculator **GREED** in Oxfordshire

To the National Infrastructure Commission,

8 November 2017

Copied to:

Lord Adonis, Chairman of National Infrastructure Commission  
Rt Hon Theresa May, Prime Minister  
Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP  
Members of Parliament for Oxfordshire  
Oxfordshire Local Authority Leaders  
CPRE National Office  
CPRE Cross Corridor group  
Highways England  
Department for Transport  
England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

**Re: NIC final report on maximising the potential of the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor**

Need not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a Coalition of over 30 local community organisations which campaigns for sustainable, democratically-accountable planning across Oxfordshire.

I am writing on behalf of the Coalition, to raise our fundamental concerns about the lack of adequate public information, consultation and engagement on the concept of the Oxford-Cambridge corridor and in particular the Expressway. We oppose in principle the creation of the Expressway which we believe will facilitate a nightmare scenario of a ribbon development of so called “garden towns” reliant on unsustainable, long-distance commuting.

If the National Infrastructure Commission and Highways England presses ahead the economic, environmental and social implications of the corridor in general, and the routes in detail, demand public discussion and engagement. **We therefore demand a Public Enquiry on the need for and effects of the Expressway, the choice of corridor and the detailed route arrangements.** We believe that the objectivity and transparency provided by an independent public inquiry would be the only appropriate mechanism to achieve any public confidence in the outcome.

NNGO is deeply concerned about the constant promotion of the so-called “Growth Corridor” which we contend does not in reality exist, merely being the intervening, highly valued, rural space between three high growth cities. Equally, we contend that the “Expressway” is in reality a long-distance freight route, not the so-called “Knowledge Corridor” which is intended to leverage additional, unwelcome, growth. Recent CPRE research has shown that new roads have consistently failed to deliver the promised economic benefits or to reduce congestion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘End of the road? Challenging the road-building consensus’ CPRE, March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2zHOMuc>

## Need not Greed Oxfordshire:

- Seeks explicit commitment for the early completion of East – West Rail as part of a “rail before road” approach promoting a sustainable transport mode. In addition, we seek upgrading of the Didcot to Oxford rail line to minimise additional car-based commuter pressure on the A34 south of Oxford;
- Strongly objects to the lack of accountability / transparency around the whole corridor development process, particularly the intention to choose a route corridor without reference to any form of public consultation;
- Challenges the ‘forced economic growth agenda’ being imposed on the residents of Oxfordshire, as outlined in the Local Enterprise Partnership’s revised Strategic Economic Plan, particularly the disconnect between the provision of housing and employment and the essential infrastructure to support them;
- Demands a comprehensive reassessment of regional growth patterns seeking a National Industrial Strategy that promotes a balanced approach, encouraging greater growth in areas seeking economic benefits via growth and removing the current over-development of the South East;
- Calls for a comprehensive study of the cumulative environmental and landscape impacts of the Expressway/Growth corridor; and
- Notes that the very same Oxfordshire local councils that are promoting the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway have committed (in the ‘Oxfordshire 2030’ report) to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by the year 2030 (compared to 2008). We also note that the ‘Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis’ Report (2016) reminds us that: “Meeting the Oxfordshire 2030 target will be further challenged by the county’s plans and aspirations to grow its economy and population.” Prioritising the Expressway over the completion of East – West Rail will be a disastrous move in the wrong direction and will exacerbate not only greenhouse gas emissions but also particulates, causing widespread public health issues.

Yours sincerely

Helena Whall

**on behalf of the Coalition**



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