

**STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE
CAMBRIDGE - MILTON KEYNES -
OXFORD CORRIDOR:
A DISCUSSION PAPER**

Section 1: Introduction and background

1. This paper has been prepared to help progress debate on how local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, government departments and national delivery agencies, can work together to develop and deliver an integrated strategic plan for infrastructure, housing and jobs across the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor.
2. The paper has been developed by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC). In preparing the paper, the NIC has taken into account input from officials from local authorities and local enterprise partnerships across the corridor. It has taken into account input from officials within the Department for Transport and the Cities and Local Growth Unit.
3. The paper considers what partners within the corridor might achieve through more integrated strategic planning and both the scope and function of any new strategic plan(s). It also considers the models of governance that might enable integrated planning and collective decision-making on infrastructure priorities – whilst ensuring that local democratic accountability is preserved.

Join the discussion – a call for ideas

4. The paper represents the start of a debate – not its conclusion. The ideas outlined in the paper are not NIC recommendations, but are intended to stimulate further discussion.
5. The NIC is therefore, inviting submissions and responses to inform its thinking, and any recommendations it may subsequently make. Contributions submitted to the NIC by local stakeholders, professional groups and the development industry will be valuable in shaping the NIC's views. Contributions and insights may come from those working in the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor, or from further afield.
6. Submissions should be no longer than 10 pages and should be emailed to: GrowthCorridorEvidence@nic.gsi.gov.uk
7. Please provide submissions and any supporting evidence by 31st May 2017.
8. Those making submissions are strongly encouraged to provide details of the evidence and data which supports their views. This will enable the NIC to understand more fully the basis on which conclusions have been reached. In addition, the NIC will work with key local and national stakeholders as part of an open and transparent process of engagement to support the call for ideas.
9. The NIC would expect to publish any submissions made. If there is a reason why your submission, or any part thereof, should be considered confidential please provide details.
10. The NIC is subject to legal duties which may require the release of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other applicable legislation or codes of practice governing access to information.

Background to the National Infrastructure Commission

11. The National Infrastructure Commission was established by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in October 2015.
12. The NIC will carry out independent and unbiased assessments of the UK's long-term infrastructure needs and monitor the progress made by government and industry in meeting these needs. It will periodically publish a National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA) looking across all key sectors and geographies. This assessment will identify the UK's long-term infrastructure requirements and prioritise the most important projects for further development. It will give clear strategic direction to industry and government, and provide a firm basis for planning and investment.
13. Alongside this, the Commission will carry out specific studies on pressing national infrastructure challenges in order to support the long term competitiveness of the UK economy. Insights gathered through these specific studies, including through the response to this discussion paper, will inform the continued development of the NIA.

Background on the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford study

14. On 16 March 2016, the Chancellor asked the NIC to:

...make recommendations [to government] 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 job the area needs.
15. Detailed terms of reference are available [here](#).
16. In November 2016, the NIC published its interim report on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor. This report argued that:

“The corridor connecting Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford could be the UK's Silicon Valley – 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.”

17. Based on its analysis the NIC made seven recommendations, including the following:
 - a. 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.
 - The plan should provide a framework for cross-corridor economic and transport strategies and for strategic spatial plans which, when combined, enable a step-change in housing provision and connectivity.
 - The plan should also ensure that options for funding infrastructure are fully integrated into the strategy.
 - The Commission will support this process as part of the second phase of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford study.
 - b. 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.
 - This work should build on and strengthen existing cross-corridor collaborations and should consider the potential for formal joint governance mechanisms (e.g. joint committees, combined authorities, sub-national transport bodies, or the creation of unitary authorities). These should include consideration of future devolved powers, freedoms and financial flexibilities.
 - The work should also consider the full range of delivery mechanisms capable of accelerating housing growth, including looking at the potential for new development corporations to accelerate and drive delivery.
 - The Commission will support this process as part of the second phase of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford study.
18. The NIC’s full interim report and recommendations are available [here](#).
19. As well as making recommendations on priority infrastructure, the second phase of the NIC’s study will consider:
 - a. how local and national agencies might develop an integrated strategic plan, and
 - b. mechanisms to strengthen governance across the corridor, which will enable integrated planning and infrastructure decision-making across the wider area.

Next steps

20. The NIC is inviting responses to the issues raised in this paper by 31st May 2017. These responses will be analysed and may subsequently be published. The NIC will prepare and publish a commentary on the consultation responses in summer 2017.
21. The responses received by the NIC will help inform its final recommendations on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor. These will be published in advance of Autumn Budget 2017.

Section 2: Towards an integrated strategic plan for jobs, homes and infrastructure

23. This section considers:
- a. the case for an integrated strategic plan in the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor, and what such a plan might help to achieve;
 - b. the scope of any integrated strategic plan; and
 - c. possible options on governance mechanisms to support collective decision-making and enable the development and delivery of any integrated strategic plan.

Developing an integrated strategic plan

24. The NIC's work on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor has identified an opportunity to develop a series of successful but distinct places into a major economic corridor that delivers substantial benefits to the UK as a whole. The development of any integrated strategic plan for the corridor should focus on realising this potentially transformational economic opportunity.
25. Realising this opportunity will require a step-change in collaboration across the corridor. The NIC's interim report set out the need for "a fundamental shift in the scale at which local authorities collaborate on planning and infrastructure". The development of an integrated strategic plan should, therefore, seek to enable this shift in bottom-up collaboration. Without such a shift, securing the economic benefits of a globally competitive growth corridor may require central government to adopt a more interventionist role.
26. The core function of any integrated strategic plan should be to determine the scale and distribution of commercial and residential development, and supporting infrastructure needs. In performing this function, the plan should seek to:
- a. reflect current and future drivers of growth in the economy (e.g. particular places or sectors), strengthening these drivers and serving their future needs;
 - b. reflect the character, role and aspirations of different places within the corridor;
 - c. tackle major constraints on future economic growth – i.e. the corridor's chronic undersupply of sufficient, suitable and affordable homes, and weaknesses in the transport infrastructure required to connect towns and cities to each other and to their labour supply;
 - d. maximise the potential of major new east-west infrastructure to unlock sites, improve land supply and co-ordinate patterns of development around transport hubs and interchanges. East West Rail and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway are once-in-a-generation investments that will deliver substantial national benefits but which, if designed properly, can enable the development of new communities, and bring productive towns and cities closer together; and

- e. support the wider economic strategy for the area as defined by local enterprise partnerships, recognising that decisions on infrastructure and land use must be consistent with the area's policy objectives regarding skills development, attracting inward investment and facilitating growth in key business sectors.
27. If successful, strategic planning across the corridor could help unlock significant economic dividends, not just for the corridor but for the UK as a whole. Analyses prepared for the NIC suggests that trend-based growth, reflecting established patterns of spatial development, could see the number of jobs across the corridor increase by 335,000 to 2050, increasing economic output by some £85bn. But it also suggests that more transformational growth is possible. In a scenario where the corridor's housing needs are better met and in which east-west links succeed in bringing distinct sub-regional economies closer together – the area could support a further 700,000 jobs by 2050, increasing GVA by £163bn¹.
28. To help fulfil these functions, we would expect any integrated strategic plan developed by local authorities and LEPs, should meet the following four criteria:

Criteria 1: any integrated plan should set out a clear and ambitious spatial vision for the corridor to 2050.

As a minimum, this vision would:

- a. be informed by a **single, authoritative cross-corridor evidence base** on future population growth; household formation; job growth; housing need (based on a robust methodology to be agreed by DCLG); economic trends/drivers and the performance of current infrastructure and future infrastructure needs. This evidence base would be developed for the corridor as a whole, but would need to be broken down to sub-geographies such as housing market areas, functional economic areas and administrative areas. Work to develop this evidence base should draw upon and complement existing sources wherever possible (rather than diverting time and resources to gathering wholly new data).
- b. **map the general distribution of new jobs, homes and population** across housing market areas, sub-regional economies and individual towns and cities. The final mapping set out in the integrated strategic plan should be informed by partners' analysis of multiple economic/spatial scenarios.
- c. **identify and define urban typologies** (e.g. regional economic centres; business clusters; growing towns; residential centres), distributing planned growth in jobs, homes and supporting infrastructure to reflect the character, role and aspirations of each place.
- d. **identify broad locations for different types of development.** Although any cross-corridor plan would stop short of identifying particular sites for commercial and residential development (this would remain a function for local plans to perform) the integrated strategic plan should identify and map broad areas for development.

¹ Cambridge Econometrics (forthcoming), supporting analysis prepared for the NIC

- e. **identify the strategic infrastructure needs associated with the scale and distribution of required development.** This is likely to include upgrades to transport infrastructure where planned growth will increase demand for travel on existing corridors. It may also include new transport links to enable changes in travel patterns between towns and cities in line with the spatial vision. Beyond transport infrastructure, the strategic plan would look to highlight the scale and distribution of future needs for utilities provision (energy, water, waste), strategic flood defence and telecommunications infrastructure.
- f. **emphasise the importance of place.** This means building a commitment to place-making into any integrated strategic plan, and reflecting the fact that towns and cities within this corridor will also play a role in, and seek to exploit economic opportunities associated with other economic corridors (e.g. the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Corridor).

Criteria 2: any integrated plan should be underpinned by a clear investment strategy.

This would make clear how local authorities, LEPs and other partners propose to fund (and potentially ‘forward fund’) key enabling infrastructure. As a minimum, an effective investment plan would need to consider:

- a. strategies through which local authorities and LEPs might pool resources, use S106 and CIL revenues (or those from any future replacement scheme), and or align their capital investment programmes – especially where key infrastructure crosses administrative boundaries;
- b. new funding streams that may be exploited (e.g. Business Rate Supplements, Mayoral CIL in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough);
- c. delivery models which may be employed in specific development locations, or on specific transport schemes, to manage demand (e.g. congestion charging in major centres) or to fund infrastructure (e.g. through land value capture); and
- d. strategies for leveraging investment from private institutional investors to forward fund infrastructure - including strategies for pooling risk.

Criteria 3: any integrated plan should be supported by a phased delivery plan.

Defining the progress that stakeholders expect to secure in a series of five year time horizons (covering the period to 2050) and a timeline for reviewing the integrated plan itself. A robust delivery plan would be expected to include the delivery of major residential and commercial developments and key enabling infrastructure.

This plan might also set out annual reporting arrangements, detailing how partners across the corridor would report on progress towards their 2050 spatial vision.

Criteria 4: any integrated plan should be shaped by the requirements of a robust and integrated appraisal framework.

It is important that partners understand the impacts of different development options, and of the decisions they take in defining any spatial vision and agreeing the best policies for the corridor and its key markets. It would seem essential, therefore, that any

planning process be supported and shaped by an integrated cost-benefit analysis. The breadth and depth of analysis would be need to be proportionate to the detail of decisions taken in adopting any integrated plan, but might be supported by economic analyses, strategic environmental assessments, sustainability appraisals, health impact assessments and equality impact assessments. Undertaking such analyses and appraisals will also give local authorities confidence to shape their local plans to conform with the 2050 spatial vision and delivery plan.

The benefits of an integrated plan

29. Designed and scoped in this way, the development of an integrated strategic plan, and the definition of a 2050 spatial vision, might provide a mechanism through which local authorities can reach agreement on the distribution of development across administrative boundaries. This could encourage patterns of planned development to better reflect demand in the ‘real economy’. It may also provide a mechanism to support growth discussions in towns and cities that consider themselves to be ‘underbounded’ or face major constraints on land supply.
30. Rather than require each local authority to meet its local housing and employment needs within its own area (a principle implicit in the National Planning Policy Framework), or negotiate hand-to-hand with neighbouring authorities, the development of an integrated strategic plan would provide a framework and a process for defining housing/ employment land needs and allocations across a wider geography, and in a way that is rooted in a wider vision. This is consistent with both the duty to co-operate and the proposals on new ‘statements of common ground’ proposed in the recent housing white paper. The crucial test, of course, will be whether the development needs of the corridor, and key markets within the corridor, are met.
31. There are wider benefits of this approach too. Defining a spatial vision for the long-term – up to 2050 – could provide greater certainty to a range of stakeholders on the future direction of development within the corridor. A long-term spatial vision will provide a guide to investors, infrastructure providers (public and private sector) and commercial developers. We might expect a long-term integrated plan to:
 - a. give a clear signal to private developers about the corridor’s long-term commitment to growth at scale – enabling their long-term investment in delivery capacity;
 - b. provide a clear direction of travel to providers of telecommunications and utilities infrastructure. By giving greater certainty on the long-term development of the corridor, the plan would provide a platform for better strategic engagement;
 - c. provide a basis for local partners to engage collectively with institutional investors, on how private capital can fund enabling infrastructure, with returns linked to long-term development; and

- d. provide confidence to global businesses that local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and the UK government has a long-term plan to maximise the potential of this corridor.
32. These benefits are a direct result of strategic planning at scale, but can be secured without the re-introduction of regional planning. By working collectively, and from the bottom up, planning authorities can exploit these opportunities within the existing National Planning Policy Framework, bound by the duty-to-cooperate, rather than by top-down targets.

The role of central government

33. Any integrated strategic plan will, in common with local plans, be shaped by decisions taken by government on the development, phasing and design of nationally funded infrastructure. It will also be shaped by any frameworks, put in place by regulators, to influence the development, phasing and design of infrastructure provision in energy, telecommunications, and utilities markets. Maximising the benefits of such infrastructure requires that it be designed and developed in a way that unlocks and enable new jobs, new homes and new communities. There is, therefore, a clear role for both central government and regulators in the development and delivery of any integrated strategic plan.
34. It is not, however, immediately clear that central government could, or should, play the same role as local authorities in this process. Rather than collaborate directly on the design and distribution of planned development, the most appropriate role for national government and regulatory bodies might be to:
- a. set out clear expectations for a high-quality strategic plan. This might include expectations regarding:
 - i. the quality of the supporting evidence base (e.g. on population and employment growth, on housing need);
 - ii. the content of the plan itself (e.g. the plan meets housing need in full, the plan focuses development around transport hubs and interchanges);
 - iii. the pace of development;
 - iv. the phasing of investment; and
 - v. the parameters of the supporting investment strategy.
 - b. engage throughout the plan making process, sharing information on the development of proposals for national infrastructure. This engagement would help shape local partners' views on local development patterns and reflect opportunities to unlock development in the design and phasing of infrastructure. Throughout this process, government would need to balance local opportunities and wider national imperatives.
35. Crucially, the development of an integrated strategic plan could enable a new form of conversation between corridor-level partners and central government. It could allow all

parties to develop a shared view on the corridor's long-term infrastructure needs and, subject to the development of clear governance, a long-term 'infrastructure compact' for the corridor.

36. Further thinking will be required to define what such a compact might look like, but it could set out:
 - a. an indicative long-term infrastructure pipeline for the corridor. Such commitments may be 'firmed up' at the beginning of each spending review period, road investment period or rail industry control period;
 - b. a schedule of specific schemes to which national investments may be tied, with firm commitments on when they might be delivered;
 - c. specific delivery milestones which would need to be met to unlock monies from nationally held funding pots; and
 - d. any freedoms and flexibilities that might be extended to corridor-level partners to better enable infrastructure funding.

37. Viewed in this way, the development of an integrated strategic plan– supported by a clear investment strategy, a phased delivery plan – and an 'infrastructure compact' – could:
 - a. form the basis of a quasi-contractual agreement between central and local government, linking national investment to development milestones;
 - b. provide central government with a mechanism to deliver the full benefits of national infrastructure – e.g. by ensuring that transport investments shape local decisions on land use within the corridor, as well as securing user benefits;
 - c. give corridor-level partners greater clarity and certainty on long-term infrastructure investment and its phasing; and
 - d. improve the corridor's ability to leverage investment from the private sector.

38. Developing any infrastructure compact will require multiple central government departments and agencies to engage with the corridor in a joined up fashion, speaking with a single voice and advancing a single set of priorities. Achieving this single point of engagement with the corridor could be achieved by identifying a Ministerial lead for the corridor, by creating a new inter-departmental delivery unit, or by building on the existing work of the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

Supporting governance

39. The development and delivery of any integrated strategic plan for this corridor will require local authorities to take decisions collectively and at a greater spatial scale. New governance arrangements will be required to support and enable this collective decision-making. New governance arrangements will also be necessary to help exploit the opportunities identified above.

40. To ensure that new governance arrangements are fit for purpose, it is important that their development be shaped by a clear set of design principles. Although not exhaustive, we might consider the following principles as a reasonable starting point for discussion.
41. Any new collective governance arrangements should:
- a. **have a clear geographic scope.** While the concept of a ‘corridor’ is inherently vague, when designing new structures to support collective decision-making, it will be essential to establish a clear boundary. A pragmatic approach would be to base this on existing administrative geographies.
 - b. **be empowered to take collective decisions.** To maximise the potential of the corridor as a whole, and capitalise on national investment in infrastructure, key boards/forums must be empowered to take decisions:
 - i. based on the needs of the corridor as a whole; and
 - ii. without the need for decisions to be ratified through individual local authorities’ decision-making processes.
 - c. **ensure clear and meaningful lines of accountability.** Decisions on strategic planning could have a profound effect on the corridor, its cities, towns, and villages. They are also likely to have an impact on the allocation and distribution of public funding. It is important that governance arrangements make clear who is accountable - individually and collectively - for strategic planning decisions.
 - d. **be appropriately representative and collaborative.** It is important that any integrated strategic plan is collectively ‘owned’ by partners across the corridor. New governance arrangements must, therefore, create space for all local authorities to influence and shape cross-corridor decisions.
 - e. **include safeguards to protect the interests of individual areas.** The need for collective decision-making must be balanced against the need to protect the interests of communities – including those that wish to grow.
 - f. **give confidence to long-term partners.** If an integrated strategic plan is to provide a platform for engaging investors and national government over the long-term, then governance arrangements will need to ‘lock in’ local collaboration. The sustainability of collective governance arrangements cannot be contingent on current relationships between local authority partners.
 - g. **work with the grain.** New governance arrangements to support collective decision-making should reflect, as far as possible, existing local collaborations, patterns of identity, functional economic geographies and the geography of Housing Market Areas.
 - h. **support all stages of strategic planning.** It is important that collective governance arrangements support the delivery of any strategic plan, as well as its development.
 - i. **minimise bureaucracy.** Governance arrangements should be as simple and streamlined as is possible whilst enabling collective decision-making and reflecting the principles above.

Governance architecture

42. Among the factors that will shape the architecture of any collective decision-making and governance arrangements are:
- i. **the role of collective governance structures.** Should the scope of governance structures be limited to collective decision-making on spatial planning issues? Should they developed as a platform for collective investment in growth-enabling infrastructure (or wider economic initiatives)? Any investment strategy that requires participating authorities to pool risk/resources, borrow as a collective, levy new taxes (e.g. Business Rate Supplements), will require supporting governance structures that are sufficiently robust to provide assurance on the use of public funds.
 - b. **the level/scale at which different decisions are taken.** Should decisions on strategic planning be taken at the ‘whole-corridor’ level, or at a ‘sub-regional’ level? Should decision-making responsibilities be shared/split across these levels depending on the issues in question?
 - c. **the formality of collaborative governance arrangements.** Would a model based on informal collaborations between local authorities be sufficient to support the development and delivery of an integrated strategic plan? Would non-statutory joint committee arrangements suffice? Would new statutory bodies be required to ‘lock-in’ collaboration amongst partners over the long-term² (models may include sub-national transport bodies, combined authorities, or new unitary authorities).
43. While there are a multitude of possible models – each shaped by different answers to the questions above – the applications of the design principles outlined at paragraph 41 help narrow the field substantially.
44. In designing any new governance models, it will be important to consider and reflect pre-existing arrangements for collective decision-making within the corridor – particularly those which have been established in statute. The most obvious example is the mayoral combined authority established in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (currently operating in shadow form). The fact that all local authorities in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area are members of this combined authority precludes them from participating fully in any other combined authority structures.
45. It is also important to consider the legal scope, structure, functions and limitations on membership associated with different statutory governance vehicles. For example, a combined authority may comprise a minimum of two district or unitary councils, but a sub-national transport body (STB) must comprise two or more combined authorities, unitary councils or county councils. Crucially, when any part of a county or unitary

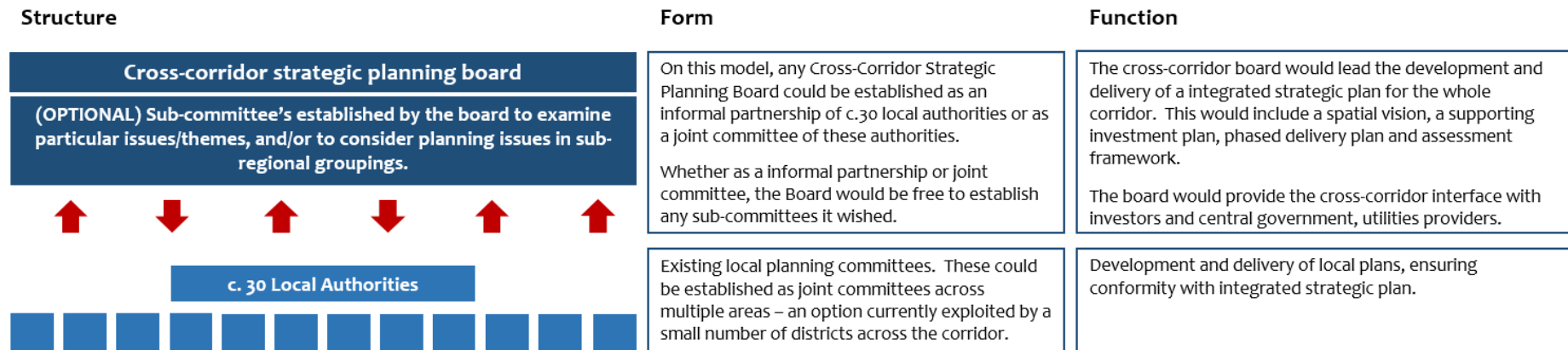
² In preparing this paper we have assumed that statutory governance options would be limited to those which are enabled by current legislation. We have not, therefore, considered the development of wholly new statutory governance structures.

council's area, falls within a combined authority area, only the combined authority can participate fully in the STB.

46. It may also be helpful to consider the potential to strengthen governance arrangements through the inclusion of an independent Chair for any cross-corridor body. Such an appointment could be made jointly by corridor partners, or in concert with government. Depending on any independent Chair's background, he/she may bring experience, boost the profile for the area and demonstrate credibility with potential investors.
47. With these considerations in mind, the following pages set out two contrasting models of cross-corridor governance that could support strategic planning. These are presented as a prompt to further discussion and debate, rather than as a definitive shortlist of options. The NIC would welcome views on alternative models and working arrangements that are consistent with the design principles set out above.

Illustrative model 1: Integrated strategic planning at the corridor level

The model illustrated below would see an integrated strategic plan developed for the corridor as a whole. It would be incumbent on individual local authorities to co-operate on the development and delivery of this plan, and then to ensure that their local plans are aligned to this.

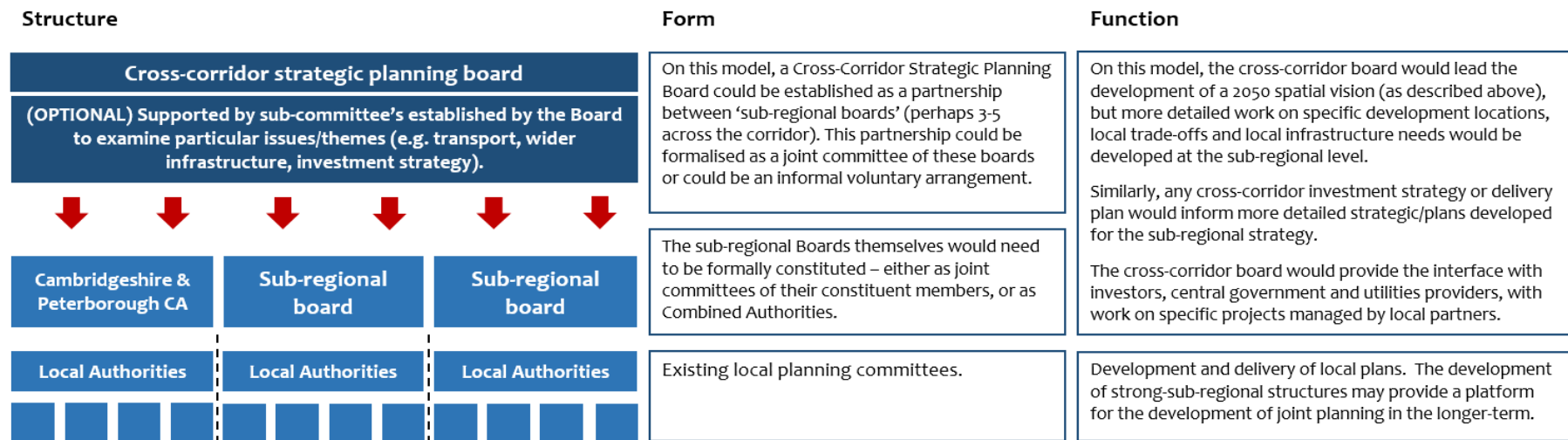


Commentary

- Constituting any cross-corridor board as a joint committee would empower it to take decisions without these needing to be ratified by constituent authorities. Constituting the board as an informal partnership would not allow for this.
- The structure provides a direct and unmediated route through which all local authorities can influence cross-corridor strategic planning.
- With c.30 members on a single, cross-corridor planning board – this board would likely be large, cumbersome and difficult to manage effectively.
- The cross-corridor structures may have limited buy-in from members, as each authority's stake in the business of the board will be limited. For example, discussions on strategic issues affecting districts in Oxfordshire may be of limited relevance to those in eastern Cambridgeshire.
- It may be a challenge for a joint committee of c.30 LAs to a) demonstrate clear lines of accountability for cross-corridor decisions, and b) give confidence to wider stakeholders (e.g. investors, government) that cross-corridor plans – and the governance mechanisms that support them – enjoy partners' long-term support. Individual local authorities could withdraw from the committee at any time.
- It is not clear how any cross-corridor planning board would operate alongside a sub-national transport body (STB). While a cross-corridor joint committee would require the membership of all local authorities, full membership of any STB would be restricted to the Combined Authorities, county councils and unitary councils. Aligning transport strategy and spatial planning at corridor level may, therefore, rely on informal collaboration/engagement between transport authorities and planning authorities.

Illustrative model 2: Corridor wide spatial vision, supported by robust sub-regional planning

The model illustrated below would see a ‘thin’ strategic plan developed for the corridor as a whole, but supported by more detailed spatial planning at the sub-regional level. This model builds on existing institutions in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and emerging practice in Oxfordshire.



Commentary

- Robust sub-regional governance is vital to this model. To provide clear and robust lines of accountability, and to give wider stakeholders confidence in partners’ long-term commitment to collective strategic planning, these sub-regional boards may need to be constituted as Combined Authorities (CAs), with responsibility for (at least) strategic spatial planning.
- If CAs were to be established at the sub-regional level, then the cross-corridor strategic board could be constituted as a joint committee of these authorities (perhaps 3 – 5 in total, depending on the geographical definitions of the CAs). This could enable collective decision-making at the cross-corridor level, and at the sub-regional level, without these decisions being ratified by all constituent authorities.
- Although the structure provides a route for all LAs to influence cross-corridor planning, this influence is mediated through sub-regional structures.
- The model allows decisions on cross-corridor, sub-regional and local planning/development issues to be undertaken at the appropriate level.
- Any sub-national transport body (STB) developed in this area could be comprised of CAs from across the corridor. Such a grouping could fulfil DfT criteria for the establishment of an STB. Such a grouping might also be well placed to collaborate on strategic planning issues. This model could, therefore, formally link corridor-wide decisions on transport strategy and strategic land use.

Developing an integrated strategic plan

48. The development of such a plan will be a challenge. The development process will:
- a. be iterative, involving local authorities, LEPs, central government departments and national delivery agencies;
 - b. require bottom-up collaboration amongst local authorities. Collaboration on the development and agree of an integrated strategic plan will prove a powerful expression of authorities' 'duty-to-co-operate'. But if local authorities are not central to the development of any strategic plan, then there are few mechanisms to ensure that local plans are consistent with the wider strategic vision; and
 - c. need to progress independently of current work to finalise and submit local plans. Many local authorities across the corridor are finalising and submitting their local plans for examination in line with government's 2017 deadline. Any work to develop an integrated strategic plan – and to consider wider housing/employment land needs and how best to meet these – should be progressed separately, informing subsequent reviews of local plans.
49. There is a risk that, by recognising the need for new governance arrangements to support collective decision-making, progress on the development of an integrated strategic plan could be delayed until after these arrangements are established. But there should be no need for long delay. It is within the power of local authorities across the corridor to collaborate on work to:
- a. commission research, analysis and studies to develop the cross-corridor evidence base that would support an integrated plan;
 - b. negotiate on the distribution of new jobs, homes and infrastructure;
 - c. examine and agree the infrastructure priorities to enable, support and unlock development and growth.
50. Early progress – in the absence of formal governance – will require political will, leadership, collaboration and compromise between local authorities. But it will also require a commitment of capacity from those stakeholders who need to be actively engaged in the plan development process.

Section 3: Key questions

51. This discussion paper has presented some high-level thoughts about the scope of work to develop an integrated strategic plan, the benefits that the development of such a plan might unlock, and the impact that such a plan could have on relationships between partners, and between the corridor, national government, infrastructure providers and private investors.
52. We would be interested to hear views on any points raised by this paper. We would welcome views, in particular, on the following issues:

An integrated strategic plan

- Q1. Can the approach to strategic planning explored in this paper help to:
 - a. tackle major constraints on future economic growth – i.e. the undersupply of homes and weaknesses in east-west transport infrastructure;
 - b. maximise the potential of major new east-west infrastructure links; and
 - c. develop distinct towns and cities into a major economic corridor?
- Q2. How could the approach to strategic planning be amended or strengthened to better achieve these aims?

New opportunities

- Q3. Can the approach to strategic planning explored in this paper provide a basis for improved long-term collaboration and engagement between the corridor and:
 - a. housing developers;
 - b. infrastructure providers (e.g. in the telecommunications and utilities sectors) and investors; and
 - c. central government - through, for example, a new, long-term ‘infrastructure compact’?
- Q4. How could the approach to strategic planning be amended or strengthened to better achieve these aims? What else will be required for partners across the corridor to develop these relationships and exploit these opportunities?

Governance

- Q5. Do you agree with the design principles set out at paragraph 41? How might these be developed or amended to better enable collective decision-making?
- Q6. Should any new cross-corridor governance structures preserve a role for sub-regional collaboration?

- Q7. Can the opportunities afforded by strategic planning, be exploited without statutory governance structures to 'lock-in' collaboration over the long-term?
- Q8. If informal models of collaboration are to be sufficient, how can local authorities give confidence to wider stakeholders that their commitment to a) their strategic plans, and b) joint-working will sustain over the long-term?

Developing and delivering an integrated strategic plan

- Q9. How could local authorities make early progress in the development of an integrated strategic plan, prior to the development of any new collective governance arrangements?
- Q10. How can progress against the plan be assessed and the effectiveness of the plan monitored and evaluated? Are there examples of good practice from which lessons can be learned?