



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

Response from the Common Futures Network (CFN) : May 2017

Summary of Response

The CFN welcomes the NIC initiative to establish a long term strategic planning context for the improvement of transport links between Cambridge-Milton Keynes – Oxford (CAMKOX). This is important not only in ensuring that the major new infrastructure investment is itself plan-led but also in optimising its contribution to the national agenda set out in the CFN *Prospectus*.

To be effective an integrated land-use transportation strategy for CAMKOX should be based on the principles that underpin effective strategic planning, in particular:

- the integration externally with the *wider national and sub-national context* within which it operates;
- the creation of the *institutional capacity* internally to work across boundaries and functional responsibilities of local stakeholders.

The key challenge is that CAMKOX Initiative seeks to promote a national agenda through local mechanisms. Although this challenge can be met in various ways, international experience (e.g. OECD) is that the most effective approach to balancing these two perspectives is to base strategic planning on a devolved approach, focussed on key issues and set within the context of national and subnational spatial frameworks. A light-touch collaboration with central government with an emphasis on incentivising action (as in other devolved settlements) is more likely to ensure that CAMKOX generates its maximum potential contribution to national GDP and achieves local ownership of the strategic goals, processes and outcomes.

The NIC Consultation Document itself, however, is recognition of the need for any strategy to have a traction. This would be achieved through:

- A strategic plan with statutory status which has explicit regard to local interests
- A delivery plan building on, extending and incentivising combined and joint governmental arrangements.

The scope of the strategy for CAMKOX therefore should set out:

- The relative scale and role of combined and joint authorities of the key city regions within CAMKOX, using the new strategic plan together with existing local and neighbourhood planning methods in conformity with each other;
- Potential transformative national flagship projects which can be delivered through a CAMKOX board using existing mechanisms such as the 2008 Planning Act and new powers in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017;
- A joint action plan, for example using Combined Authority powers including planning, housing, transport, business development, digital infrastructure, energy and rural policy to deliver specific programmes using CPO and Development Corporation powers where necessary
- Key improvements in terms of internal accessibility to complement and maximise the enhanced levels of connectivity regionally and nationally that the new rail links will provide;
- The external relationships required with the surrounding Combined authorities and the Midlands Engine which could be arranged through a new Committee (e.g. House of Commons Select Committee)

Context

This response to the CAMKOX strategic planning discussion paper has been prepared by the Common Futures Network (CFN). The CFN has been established in response to a perceived need for a more explicit understanding of the spatial dimension in setting national priorities, particularly for England, which lacks any form of national development framework.

The CFN is independent of political, business or other sectional affiliations and our members include professionals with extensive experience in UK planning practice and consultancy, economic development, regeneration, transport planning utility planning and academia, across the UK and internationally.

Our recommendations arise from a symposium held in December 2016 following which the CFN has published a [Prospectus](#) which sets out eight key propositions for tackling short and longer-term national spatial priorities. A summary containing these Propositions is at Appendix 1, and a copy of our **Prospectus** is attached as supplementary evidence.

This **Prospectus** sets out a *New Agenda for England and the UK* which has direct implications for the CAMKOX initiative including:

- The need to secure the global role of the nation through flagship projects which re-engineer the nation's infrastructure and assist the rebalancing of opportunities within the Nation;
- A devolved development programme building on sub-national strengths
- The need to deliver a new urban agenda designed to support and nurture the inherent growth potential of the networked system of cities outside of London
- A new rural agenda to connect with the rural hinterland and secure the natural capital of England.

More specifically the **Prospectus** recognises the potential role of the CAMKOX Corridor in the fourth of its eight key propositions, namely,

Proposition 4: Building Networked Systems of Cities

Understanding and maximising functional linkages between cities, building upon, but not confined to, the three existing trans-regional priorities (Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, and the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor), and other nationally significant opportunities (e.g. Heathrow-Swindon-Bristol), as well as the HS2 corridors."

Proposition 5: Securing the Global Role of London also recognises the need to rebalance the focus from being solely on London to one which also supports linkages between its network of outer centres, as demonstrated in the [Polynet](#) studies of the late Professor Sir Peter Hall.

Response to Consultation

The CFN therefore welcomes the NIC initiative to establish a long term strategic planning context for the improvement of transport links between Cambridge-Milton Keynes – Oxford (CAMKOX). This is important not only in ensuring that the major new infrastructure investment is itself plan-led but also in optimising its contribution to the national agenda set out in the CFN **Prospectus**. The views of the CFN set out in this response are therefore made in support of this basic approach.

The key challenge is that CAMKOX Initiative seeks to promote a national agenda through local mechanisms. This challenge can be met through various administrative arrangements. Whatever one is adopted governance and accountability needs to be clear and unequivocal whilst balancing these competing perspectives. A devolved approach would be in line with that proposed by the OECD in supporting national growth through sub-state alignment between strong democratic leadership and functional economic areas (Ahrend et al 2014, OECD; <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/OECD-LEED-Local-Economic-Leadership.pdf>). This implies that, where possible, there are in place joint local

arrangements along the corridor area to make this work, to allow accountable and manageable groupings of leaders to represent what is currently a polycentric set of functional economic areas. This approach supports the New Urban Agenda agreed by the UK government at UN Habitat III in Quito in 2016 which supports “*territorial systems that integrate urban and rural functions into the national and subnational spatial frameworks and the systems of cities*”¹.

The following response by the CFN therefore focuses on identifying the principles that should be used in determining the most appropriate way for taking forward the proposals for an integrated land-use transportation strategy for CAMKOX, as set out in the Consultation paper. This response draws on the principles that underpin effective strategic planning. These apply whatever administrative arrangements are adopted, in particular:

- the need for integration externally with the **wider national and sub-national context** within which it operates;
- the need to create the **institutional capacity** internally to work across boundaries and functional responsibilities of local stakeholders.

The Wider Context

The primary case for the new rail line has been linked to promoting housing development and ‘solving’ the acute housing market conditions that exist in the Wider South East region, and will be driven by migration, especially from the London region. If this is not to be purely a commuter based demand, the proposed scale of new housing needs to be more clearly related to an enhanced economic base of the area. Higher levels of growth will therefore need to be set within wider sub-national and national frameworks. This rationale needs to be established early on since it critically affects the shape of the strategic plan and the required governance.

Key challenges in establishing the right model for preparing a strategy for the CAMKOX Corridor must therefore take account of the following key factors relating to its external/national role and its internal coherence:

- **National Role:** Without a wider agreed context, internally generated aspirations will in effect be an ad hoc ‘programme bid’. The current justification for the level of investment proposed is that it will unlock greater scales of development (especially housing). These levels of new development are not yet fully defined and are untested but they certainly will not be trend driven. If they are to be more than mere aspirational targets they cannot be determined from a bottom-up perspective alone. They need to be grounded in a national perspective of the balance and drivers of change. Supply-side opportunities can be identified and tested locally but they will need to be set within wider sub-national and national frameworks, for example, in terms of the aggregate demand arising from the core growth potential of each city-region along the corridor and the re-engineering of the nation’s infrastructure to create greater flexibility and resilience in the face of uncertainty.
- **Internal Coherence: The coherence of the plan area in socio-economic terms:** Critical to most successful strategies has been the coherence of the area in terms of it being a functionally interdependent urban region in terms of the area within which people do business (e.g. service supply chains), travel to work, search for houses and jobs and recreate. Strategies prepared for arbitrary regions rarely have buy-in politically, have limited technical analytical logic, and find making key decisions difficult.

¹ Refer paragraphs 49-52 UN HABITAT Quito :

<https://www2.habitat3.org/bitcache/97ced11dcecef85d41f74043195e5472836f6291?vid=588897&disposition=inline&op=view>) .

The CAMKOX corridor at present does not represent a functional economic area. There is limited day-to-day interlinkages along the corridor (e.g. in terms of the flows of people, goods and services) in comparison with the links to London and south Midlands. This is in part because there are no high-quality transport links between the three main towns. Therefore, it should be assumed that the corridor will derive its strength in the first instance from unlocking the distinct potential of the three core city regions and associated combined authorities, even if in the longer term, businesses and community interactions operate as a single integrated functional region. The CAMKOX strategy should therefore be based around the functional urban regions of the three cities and their links for example to the South Midlands towns and the Midlands Engine.

A key part of the strategic thinking will need to be the identification of potential latent and future synergies between the three city regions in addition to the national economic role of the corridor. The scope for new interlinkages are seen as being based, inter alia, on the fact that a global economic growth and innovation is increasingly knowledge driven and science based. In this context the potential to harness agglomeration benefits along this corridor exist, for example, through developing globally competitive knowledge-intensive and cultural clusters, for example,

- The emerging role MK as a national regional centre for high order functions comparable to Manchester Leeds, Bristol and Birmingham
- The three Universities building on existing cooperation in key fields in which they excel globally and the emerging MOOC which the OU has led on (as a competitor to MIT)
- Cultural and tourism linkages (three spires model)

In addition, the wider context for the CAMKOX corridor proposals includes the following relationships which need to be taken into account - the Cambridge-Stansted Corridor, Milton Keynes-Northants and Oxford-Thames Valley. There are also relationships between the CAMKOX transport infrastructure and north south infrastructure, especially HS2 and the London and Birmingham airports.

Any arrangement to provide such a wider perspective needs to be established on a long-term basis. A potential approach is set out in the response to *Question 9* as a means for starting the development of such overview. Immediate action is however needed to provide the context for the wider south-east. The existing liaison arrangements for the Wider South East may offer a launching pad but it needs to be recognised that the infrastructure and development coordination arrangements need widening since they currently exclude the East Midlands part of this corridor, and discussions are focused essentially on growth corridors out of London.

Institutional Capacity

If any strategy for CAMKOX is to be sufficiently ambitious and transformative it must be focused on key issues and does not seek to be all encompassing. It needs to be related to matters which can only be resolved at this strategic level (i.e. leaving as much as possible to local determination). Its geographic focus should have a core area within which policies and proposals bite, and a wider area of context within which it sits and engage dependent on circumstance and issue (e.g. transport, economic development or green-network). It must therefore operate within a multi-layered governance structure and flexible geography.

The strategy also needs to be linked to policies and programmes of delivery agencies. For example, the benefits of improved access between the three city regions of CAMCOX will only be fully realised if it is integrated with improved connectivity and ease of movement within them. This is critical especially to Oxford and Cambridge city regions which have major internal transport challenges. To do so any strategy must have an action plan than not only identifies committed resources (which is the current norm) but enables additional resources to be harnessed such as some equivalent, if not better, form of agreements, or *Contrats* as used in France, between state and local government. This,

for example, could link governance structures with a combined development company that also allows access to private capital including sovereign wealth funds under 2011 Localism Act powers.

A key question is whether local government has the capacity to deliver major development programmes in terms of the resources, continuity of application, or skills, to take this project forward and to supply leadership, skills, resources and continuity over a 20-30-year time frame. New ways are required for capturing the land value increases and managing assets and to de-risk the environment to bring in international funds. This might be helped by some form of development corporation(s), as agents of local authorities and alongside development companies with the power to acquire land within its designated area or areas at existing use value, with safeguarding powers to safeguard the strategy (as in the case of the GLA).

The key is to create of vertical and horizontal integration through quasi contracts at all scales of government working on a common strategy and contributing investment, projects and leadership to the whole. In practical terms, therefore this would deliver horizontal integration of the CAMKOX core axis to its peripheral and neighbouring relationships periphery to the core. Similarly, vertical integration would see the NIC proposals within the context of 'Corridors' rather than routes/lines e.g. the Cambridge busway as part of the A14 corridor.

The strategy for CAMKOX therefore should focus on identifying:

- Establishing an institutional format similar in nature to but wider than Transport for the North with greater focus on devolution and less control by central government as in other devolved settlements in order to ensure that CAMKOX generates its maximum potential contribution to national GDP (see OECD discussion below) within a sustainable context;
- The relative scale and role of each of the combined authorities within CAMKOX using a new strategic plan together with existing local and neighbourhood planning methods in conformity with each other;
- The transformative potential national flagship projects which can be delivered through by the CAMKOX board using existing mechanisms such as the 2008 Planning Act and new powers in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 for declaration of new towns and garden suburbs;
- The CAMKIX Board will have Combined Authority powers including planning, housing, transport, business development, digital infrastructure, energy and rural policy that it will deliver through the use of specific programmes using CPO and Development Corporation powers where necessary
- A key focus will be on improvements in terms of internal accessibility to maximise the enhanced levels of connectivity regionally and nationally that the new rail links will provide;
- The external relationships to the surrounding Combined authorities and the Midlands Engine will be arranged through a new Committee possibly reflected in the House of Commons as a Select Committee

The institutional capacity to undertake, sustain and implement such a strategic planning agenda depends on a range of key factors. Leadership is key. Collaboration based on liaison is often driven by the pace of the slowest and the minimum common agenda. It is rarely transformative. There needs to be clear champions (political and professional), accepted by the wider community, with continuity of leadership of programmes over a long-term period. As implicit in the NIC Consultation Document itself this is requires that an informal partnership.

In addition, there are specific organisational factors which will determine success, relating to:

- The status of the Strategy: A strategic plan can be prepared by any one of the following governance models – top-down national body, dedicated statutory body, non-statutory committee, bottom-up joint body, an ad hoc public private consortium or an advisory

variation on any of these. They are all capable of 'working' if their individual limitations are offset in some way. In the context of CAMKOX and the current planning system the most effective planning process is for the strategy to be a high-order formal document. This, for example, could be achieved by being recognised through secondary legislation but more effectively as a joint spatial strategy for the three city-regions / combined authorities, and supported through a light-touch formal national/local agreement (e.g. MOU) for its implementation over the longer term.

- **The technical capacity of the organisation:** The very nature of the proposed strategy for Cambridge-MK-Oxford (CAMKOX) must be transformative. It is critical that the technical basis of the strategy should not be trend-based. This means it should have an independent technical capacity to develop fresh thinking, challenge the established norms and planning evidence basis (e.g. ONS projections and CBA analysis). To do this it must have a dedicated resource to prepare and maintain / monitor / review the strategy. It is worth noting that the relative effectiveness of the GLA and the Greater Manchester are related to the relatively substantial technical resource they have to hand, whilst the slower progress and impact other areas of strategic initiatives is related to the very limited technical capacity. In the words of the old paradigm "*If you wish the ends you must wish the means!*". During the set-up period, it would be helpful for this to be supported by tapered matched government funding

Implications

In order to build institutional capacity to make and deliver strategic decisions it is essential that there is Horizontal and Vertical Integration between different levels and across sectors. The governance implications for the planning of the CAMKOX Corridor are threefold:

- (i) **An agreed national context** in terms of
 - the scale and nature of the contribution that CAMKOX Corridor should make to building the national economic, social and environmental capital.; and
 - the relationship to the parallel strategic relationships (e.g. the London Plan, the Stansted Corridor or the links to the South Midlands and the wider Midlands Engine). At the national level this requires the articulation of a national framework.

This cannot be generated bottom-up, but requires a national spatial framework. This is reflected in the Quito 2016 New Urban Agenda to which the UK Government is a signatory. The CFN *Prospectus* sets out the basis for preparing such a framework.
- (ii) **Maximising local ownership of the strategy:** In addition to local input to all stages, strategic planning needs (for both the processes and outcomes) to be seen to take account local interests. This need to ensure democratic accountability has been addressed in the formulation of arrangements for the new combined Authorities. The majority model is that the directly elected mayor operate their powers and in this case, there is no need for individual local authority approval unless specially stated in the order like Manchester, where there is a directly elected mayor who are democratically elected to make executive decisions for their whole area.
- (iii) **Build strategic thinking and mechanisms from the three core functional city regions outwards:** Cambridge, MK and Oxford have distinctive national and sub-national roles, relationships and needs. They each need their own coherent strategic framework, and much is in hand to do this. These local initiatives at joint working should be boosted and incentivised. This does not however require a single detailed comprehensive strategy. What is needed is that they have a common frame of reference in terms of not only the national agenda but timescales and scenarios, and the identification of those issues where specific collaborative working has the potential to generate genuine additionality in economic performance, a value-added strategy.

Responding to the Questions

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?

Answer Question 1

- a. Not necessarily for two reasons. Firstly, An explicit strategic plan cannot of itself deliver investment and development. If transport investment funding is secured to improve both intra and inter urban connectivity, it can be targeted to unlock the housing potential of particular areas. But for high-quality mixed tenure development to take place at scale and at speed, a wider range of delivery models are needed. To guarantee housing output there will need to be some direct enhanced delivery by local authorities and potentially other public bodies. Local authorities are starting to deliver housing again and a current research project being undertaken by UCL funded by the National Planning Forum and RTPI is investigating the scale across the whole of England by each local authority of this activity and over 50% of local authority leaders are committed to establishing a housing company and over 125 local authorities have already done this. (Data for the 30+ local authorities in the corridor area will be available to the NIC from this project by the end of 2017). Current numbers are small but are likely to grow quickly in some locations. These housing companies are building for all tenures and will be the only way to guarantee at least some of the proposed housing is delivered. This approach to direct delivery appears to have been adopted for directly elected mayors for combined authorities so this approach could also be used here, although it would need to be aligned with the adopted governance model (see below).

Secondly, any strategy for the CAMKOX corridor needs an agreed sub-national and national context. At present, there is no body responsible for setting this wider context. To fill this gap in the short term, it would be desirable for the NIC to convene an ad hoc consultative forum to act as an advisory group to set out wider trans-regional and national scenarios within which the strategy is drawn up and tested.

- b. The maximising of the potential of east west links will depend on the models used for public transport and particularly integrated ticketing. An approach such as that used for Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (<http://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans>) would provide an initial step. This would also need careful travel planning support and investment for existing and new settlements/housing. Projects such as that undertaken in Darlington and LB Sutton would be useful softer measures to align with a more strategic delivery approach.
- c. Strategic plans could support the development of distinct towns and cities but this would need public investment.

Q2. How could the approach to strategic planning be amended or strengthened to better achieve these aims?

Answer Question 2 : **The NIC's own report on best practice on Strategic Infrastructure Planning prepared by the OECD suggests that a top down approach is the most successful. However, it says less about local democracy and devolved decision-making that would be proposed as a strong approach from other parts of the OECD to support economic growth (Ahrend, R., et al. (2014), "What Makes Cities More Productive? Evidence on the Role of Urban Governance from Five OECD Countries", *OECD Regional Development Working Papers*, No. 2014/05, OECD Publishing, Paris; *Urban policy and metropolitan reviews* <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/urbanmetroreviews.htm>).**

The integration of investment programmes and funding streams in multi-layered areas of governance (such as CAMKOX) is essential. Such an approach has been most recently adopted in the England and Scotland for example in relation to strategic planning in Cornwall (<https://www.cioslep.com/assets/file/Cornwall%20and%20IOS%20ITI%20Strategy.pdf>). This structure has the benefit of being a vertical institutional and contractual framework across tiers of governance from central to local and comprises a strategic plan and associated action plan to deliver it. This combined approach offers some of the strengths being sought in this NIC approach and a model that is being used elsewhere, so has some familiarity and opportunity to compare experience as its use develops. ITI also have many purposes in their institutional construction that have a strong sympathy with the NIC's objectives for CAMKOX viz: preparing integrated strategies where they do not exist; • promoting territorial dialogue; • developing coordination with other local, regional and national strategies; • introducing a multilevel governance system; • promoting partnership with territorial development stakeholders such as local governments, other public bodies, business, NGOs and representatives of local community groups; • bringing about experimentalism and flexibility; • encouraging more effective management and implementation of public policies; • building monitoring and evaluation capacity, etc.

In the scenario approach to using ITI, one of the four models might be applicable to CAMKOX – that for a sub-region (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/pdf/iti_en.pdf).

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;
- a. infrastructure providers (e.g. in the telecommunications and utilities sectors) and investors; and
- b. central government - through, for example, a new, long-term 'infrastructure compact'?

Answer Question 3 a,b & c : Only if there is a legal entity established for the area. An approach such as that adopted for the creation of Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) has shown that a combined approach based on a joint committee using s101 of 1972 Local Government Act can go a long way to support working together but this has the potential weakness that any member can drop out following a resolution of their council.

Taking the current Greater Manchester approach would suggest a series of layered institutional relationships (for example, with the LEP as one of the 'subsidiary' bodies. might be a better proposition that would include a joint committee. with development company powers under the provisions of 2011 Localism Act, as suggested in the NIC's note this could also be added the STB. This approach could also reinforce the role of LEPs as one of the "subsidiary" bodies in this layered

relationship/hierarchy. For example, the South Midlands LEP deserves credit for having kept alive the concept of East-West Rail following the abolition of regional planning

The idea of agreeing an indicative long-term infrastructure pipeline with government (for social as well as physical infrastructure) is innovative and highly welcome. For transport spending it is much easier to see how this could work where both the STB and the cross corridor strategic planning board were made up of all combined authorities, or a mix of combined authorities, unitaries and county groupings with new strategic planning powers.

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?

Answer Question 4: As above

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?

Answer Question 5 : Yes these all seem sensible

Q6. Should any new cross-corridor governance structures preserve a role for sub regional collaboration?

Answer Question 6 : We are not sure what this question means? If combined authorities could be established for Oxford and its wider area, and MK and its related south Midlands area, then all three mayors could work together more efficiently. What is important though, is that these arrangements represent the three major cities involved in the corridor if the approach is not to become distanced and a lack political engagement at the level required.

Q7. Can the opportunities afforded by strategic planning, be exploited without statutory governance structures to 'lock-in' collaboration over the long-term?

Answer Question 7 : No. The current duty to cooperate arrangements are woefully inadequate. Merely setting up an informal partnership or joint committee at cross corridor level will not be sufficient to give stability and confidence for investment for the longer term. But it depends what you mean by 'statutory' – this can either be using existing powers to create institutional frameworks i.e. company or a joint committee or creating a new recognisable area under a statutory instrument or through wider legislation. The key rests on the status of the strategy – as the NIC consultation itself states this requires more than an informal partnership This will be most effective if it has statutory status through the devolved powers to local strategic authorities. Other less effective or efficient top-down mechanisms are possible to give it weight as a material consideration (e.g. by ministerial guidance or through the NPPF) but central government endorsement and commitment is important in linking the strategy to delivery programmes and incentivised local action.

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?

Answer Question 8 :Informal models of collaboration have no proven track record for the delivery of specific targets, programmes and projects of the type being promoted by the NIC.

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?

Answer Question 9: The key would be to build strategy thinking and mechanisms from the 3 core functional city regions outward. A first step could be to move towards establishing a joint planning conference for the whole area and then appointing a technical team to lead the work. However, the level of commitment by local authorities will depend on the safeguards and additionality. What is the scope of the Conference and its competences? What will be reserved for local decision-making? What is the added value? It will need some significant effort and would be helped by the offer of government match funding for capacity building (as was previously provided to Regional Planning Bodies in their early stages).

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?

Answer Question 10: There are a range of examples. Current ones include the annual reports for such places as Greater Manchester and Sheffield. See also the former Regional Assembly annual monitoring plans as examples, based on aggregated data from individual local authorities and other bodies including the former RDAs and the EA, and their own analysis e.g. of labour market

CONTACT

This submission was prepared on behalf of CFN by Vincent Goodstadt, Corinne Swain and Ian Wray, taking into account the proceedings of the symposium held on 6th and 7th December 2016, the Interim Prospectus "*A New Agenda for England and the UK*" and comments received subsequently in the consultation undertaken with members and has the broad support of Common Futures Network

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APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY PROPOSITIONS OF COMMON FUTURES NETWORK

Towards a Common Future

The nation needs vision, determination and a plan to drive growth and jobs up and down the country - from rural areas to our great cities to create an economy that works for all.

These ambitions require an integrated framework of action, which gives confidence to those who want to invest in the future of the country. The empowerment of local communities through the devolution and localism agenda needs to be strengthened, by providing a clearer context for local decision-making. Business development needs confidence in the longer-term future for investment.

There exist the foundations of such an integrated approach for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as set out in their respective national development frameworks - but there is no equivalent for England. The recent consultations on a National Industrial Strategy and a National Infrastructure Assessment were therefore welcome but not sufficient to be successful in delivering this agenda in full.

The Common Futures Network (CFN) has therefore come together to respond to the interlinked challenges of inequality, low productivity, economic imbalance, and social and political cohesion. It seeks to transform rhetoric into action through a consensual, forward-looking and independent Agenda for shaping the future of England over the next 50 years.

Opportunities for Change

The following opportunities to rebuild the nation need a national framework of action:

- A better national balance of investment, research, culture, people and jobs, both urban and rural
- An economic strategy that harnesses the UK's full potential as a global mega-region
- An urban policy which sets out the roles of the major cities and their regions
- Securing the global role and functioning of the Capital Region of London
- Enhanced relationships between devolved administrations
- An infrastructure framework that underpins these, including movement and energy.

These challenges are overlain by the impacts of climate change and the potential implications of BREXIT. They are also hampered by fragmented administrative areas, and short-term outlooks. We need to change the way we do things!

A New Agenda for England and the UK

We need to build on the existing initiatives by harnessing fully the potential opportunities created by England's position as a *global economic region*. A fresh national agenda will help unite the nations of the UK by expressing their separate but interlinked identities, needs and ambitions. A new agenda is needed to translate government objectives into their spatial implications throughout England. Conversely, we need to consider geographical implications much more explicitly than at present when national policy decisions are taken, including those related to mainstream funding.

The immediate actions to tackle the short-term and longer-term national development priorities are therefore set out in the following eight Propositions. These could be informed by an independent body (comparable to the Office of Budget Responsibility).

The Propositions

Proposition 1: Creating a New Agenda for England to promote a portfolio of actions recognising geography based on:

- The global role of the London mega-region within the UK
- A new devolved development programme building on sub-national strengths
- An urban agenda to support the networked systems of cities
- A new rural agenda as a basis for connecting the rural hinterland of England
- Securing the natural capital of England
- An integrated infrastructure strategy rebalancing opportunities within England as part of the UK.

Proposition 2: Introducing a Place-based Industrial Strategy to harness the agglomerative capacity of the UK, and England in particular, as a global mega-region, and a refreshed regional development programme reducing peripherality, identifying areas of industrial specialisation, linking research and development, and setting priorities and goals for underperforming parts of the country.

Proposition 3: Integrating Infrastructure to move the agenda beyond re-engineering the nation to rebalancing opportunities within England; also, opening up new development areas required to meet the additional 9m population by 2040.

Proposition 4: Building Networked Systems of Cities: Understanding and maximising functional linkages between cities, building upon, but not confined to, the three existing trans-regional priorities (Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, and the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor), and other nationally significant opportunities (e.g. Heathrow-Swindon-Bristol), as well as the HS corridors.

Proposition 5: Securing the Global Role of London: Ensuring action throughout the London Capital Region supports the commercial, labour and housing markets upon which the future of London as a global city depends, through a high level non-statutory public – private forum, and also strengthening London’s relationships with other major UK cities.

Proposition 6: Facilitating Devolution: Reinforcing the potential created by the emerging framework of Combined Authorities through a more structured and incentivised basis for collaborative action, whilst retaining a safety net for vulnerable towns.

Proposition 7: Identifying the Components of a Framework: Based on these propositions identifying the key issues that must be decided at a national level for England in terms of the *National Economic Hubs, Corridors and Networks* in support of the *National Flagship Projects* and the *National Priorities for Collaborative Action*.

Proposition 8 : Linking Devolved National Frameworks through the British Irish Council’s Working Group to provide a common context for cross-border cooperation, creating synergies and identifying cross-boundary and external relationships and nation-wide approaches to increasing self-sufficiency in food, raw materials and energy

The Next Steps

These Propositions have been taken forward (and amplified) in a Prospectus for ‘*A New Agenda for England and the UK*’. The form of follow-up will be responsive to and in liaison with partners, and be seeking cross-party support.