

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RURAL FORUM	Item 9	Page 1 of 4
Report Originator	Martin Hammond – Executive Director	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	ALL	4 th October 2018	
Title	THE OXFORD-MILTON KEYNES-CAMBRIDGE CORRIDOR		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To outline this initiative and how it affects Kettering Borough.

2. THE CORRIDOR

- 2.1 The corridor was conceived by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) as an area of the UK with significant economic potential. It was likened to a future Silicon Valley which was being held back by a lack of infrastructure and connectivity, an overheated housing market which excluded workers and future residents and a poor level of international recognition. There was also no overall vision or common set of goals which would bind public agencies and government together on a common set of objectives, unlike, say, London or Greater Manchester.
- 2.2 The commission's 2017 report can be found here:-
<https://www.nic.org.uk/publications/partnering-prosperity-new-deal-cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc/>
- 2.3 The area comprises two world class universities flanking the fastest growing city in the UK, which has the highest rate of jobs creation but, as a region, no easy means of maximising these advantages. The corridor has fuzzy boundaries, but covers Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, with some parts of Hertfordshire and Swindon potentially being included.
- 2.4 The Commission proposed several key pieces of infrastructure which were needed now – essentially east/west rail and a new expressway spanning the area, but asked the government and local authorities, along with other key agencies, such as LEPs and universities and business to sign up to creating a common vision about growth in housing and jobs.
- 2.5 The government has endorsed the NIC's report and also identified that the corridor as a whole should be capable of delivering 1 million new homes between now and 2051. The government has already revised housing targets for some authorities in the corridor, although in Kettering, the new figures are the same as our current figures and across North Northamptonshire as a whole, there is very little difference. This is largely because, compared to the rest of the

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RURAL FORUM	Item 9	Page 2 of 4
-----------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

corridor, land values and therefore house prices, are relatively low in this half of the county. Nevertheless, even the revised housing targets, once combined across the geography of the corridor, are not going to reach the 1m target.

3. WORK TO DELIVER THE CORRIDOR

- 3.1 Local authorities, LEPs and universities have come together from across the corridor to consider how to respond to the governments' challenge and to exploit the opportunities which should flow from having an identified national priority area around investment in jobs and infrastructure and new housing.
- 3.2 Work is underway on a shared economic vision for the area, and how to provide some governance which will enable broad strategic decisions to be made across a geographically large and economically diverse area. There is no appetite amongst local authorities to cede existing powers to a sub national/regional body, but there will be some pooling of effort and resources to create a meaningful governance structure, which in turn will enable the government to have the confidence to commit resources, and provide flexibilities and freedoms for the localities, in the same way as has happened in Greater Manchester. A sub-regional transport body – England's Economic Heartland – has been formed to enable transport authorities to take on some of the decision making and infrastructure design work which has traditionally sat at national level.
- 3.3 The government has decided not to try and treat the corridor as one huge area for the purposes of investment and housing delivery. It has invited areas to negotiate with it on "growth deals". Under a growth deal, a sub-regional area and the government will agree on a level of housing growth over and above current housing targets and in return government will provide a significant amount of money for infrastructure, affordable housing and other "asks", together with some freedoms and flexibilities from existing regulations or constraints.
- 3.4 A deal was made with Oxfordshire in 2017 by which Oxfordshire agreed to provide 100,000 more homes and received £250m in funding, together with a range of other benefits. A separate arrangement is being made with the elected Mayor for Cambridgeshire. Within the central part of the corridor, government has opened negotiations with:-
 - Milton Keynes and the three Bedfordshire unitaries and Aylesbury Vale on one deal
 - West Northamptonshire
 - North Northamptonshire

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RURAL FORUM	Item 9	Page 3 of 4
-----------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

4. RELEVANCE TO KETTERING BOROUGH

4.1 Kettering Borough Council, together with the other North Northamptonshire councils agreed to enter into negotiations with government for a growth deal, and to be party to the corridor wide governance arrangements. This does not mean that a growth deal is inevitable. The Council and its partners within North Northants remain committed to securing a growth deal which is beneficial to the area.

4.2 Work has been led by the North Northants Joint Planning and Delivery Unit. Consultants Lichfields have been employed to do the necessary work to identify infrastructure needs for the area, provide supporting data and engage with stakeholders as to their requirements in the future, around the following areas:-

- Utilities, water and energy
- Flood management
- Telecommunications
- Transport and highways
- Education
- Health
- Green infrastructure
- Emergency services
- Social and cultural

4.3 Government have reacted positively to the quantum of housing that it is believed can be provided over the long term -to 2051- without straining the current core strategy. This strategy only runs to 2031, so it has been extrapolated to 2051 to arrive at a figure which is above existing housing numbers but within the bounds of feasibility given what is known about historic and current building rates identified and approved development sites and urban extensions. The proposed components and local objectives of the North Northamptonshire growth deal are:-



BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RURAL FORUM	Item 9	Page 4 of 4
-----------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

- 4.4 Essentially, the aim is to accelerate existing consented development and secure infrastructure that can help do that, as well as meet some existing needs. In the longer term, it will generate new housing numbers to meet need. It aims to secure some freedoms and flexibilities – for example a less rigorous five year housing land supply, or to enable skills and transport funding to be directed locally. It aims to increase our ability to bring forward jobs and affordable housing, and set up revolving funds, which will provide a long term means of investing in the area. It is hoped that a deal may be ready to sign in the spring of 2019.

5. RECOMMENDATION

That Rural Forum note the update in relation to the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Corridor

Background Papers:

Title

Date

Contact Officer

Previous Minutes/Reports:

Ref:

Date: