

Press Release

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PATRON
Sir Samuel Whitbread KCVO

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Trust Welcomes National Infrastructure Interim Report

The Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust enthusiastically welcome the publication of the National Infrastructure Commission's report into the infrastructure and approach needed to underpin the successful economic growth of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor.

The report, published on 16th November, points to the need to promote new east - west road and rail links as a context for housing and economic growth but in doing so it gives very strong emphasis to the need to create inclusive liveable places, connecting people and communities with opportunities for work and leisure – something which the Trust believes the Waterway Park can play a key role in.

Jane Hamilton, Chair of the Trust said

“The NIC report provides a tremendous opportunity for us to work with our partners to demonstrate the key role the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park can play in creating a very liveable and joined up environment for people to live and work in at the centre of the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Corridor.

Running through the heart of the already established Forest of Marston Vale the creation of the first new Waterway in a 100 year is a fantastic opportunity to create a sense of place which people will want to identify with. There are many examples of the difference which a waterside environment and well planned parkland can make to the success and health of new communities.

The NIC points to the need for new infrastructure to be properly aligned with a strategy for new homes and communities, not developed in isolation. The Trust believes that the Waterway Park can provide that vital link across boundaries and be very much part of a new strategic framework for promoting successful and sustainable growth in the corridor. In a strong and healthy community, it is the spaces between the buildings which are as important as the buildings themselves and the Waterway Park set in the Forest of Marston Vale can provide that critical element. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to get it right.”

The NIC report recommends that 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.



As part of the next stage of its work, the Commission will continue to work with urban planners and the design community to understand how infrastructure can enable new and expanded settlements which incorporate the highest standards of design and place making. The Trust believes that the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park can and should be the catalyst for bringing forward the aims and objectives of the NIC Report in and around the Marston Vale.'

- ENDS -

Notes to editor

The B&MK Waterway Trust was established in 1995 to promote the development of a broad waterway park which will link the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes to the river Great Ouse in Bedford through a series of waterway parks. More detail can be found at:

<http://www.b-mkwaterway.org.uk/>

The National Infrastructure Commission was set up on an interim basis on 5 October 2015 and will look at the UK's future needs for nationally significant infrastructure, help to maintain UK's competitiveness amongst the G20 nations and provide greater certainty for investors by taking a long term approach to the major investment decisions facing the country.

In March 2016, the National Infrastructure Commission was asked to consider how to maximise the potential of the Cambridge- Milton Keynes- Oxford corridor as a single, knowledge-intensive cluster that competes on a global stage, protecting the area's high quality environment, and securing the homes and jobs that the area needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-infrastructure-commission/about>

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