

**Aylesbury Vale District Council response to the National Infrastructure Commission report:
‘Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc’**

Introduction

We welcome the publication of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) report and we have outlined our response to the recommendations contained within it in the table below.

The Commission has put forward a bold vision and we are pleased that the significant economic potential of the arc has been recognised at a national level. We would emphasise the need to support future economic growth with the necessary infrastructure and new housing in a planned and coordinated way across the arc.

Aylesbury Vale is at the heart of the arc, with approximately 70% of the Expressway ‘missing link’ positioned in the Vale, however, the definition of the arc is not clear in the report. Further clarity is recommended, which will aid the setting up of clear strong governance and effective planning.

We are supportive of the principles contained within the report but we are concerned that many of the timescales are too ambitious. Future timescales need to be realistic, especially in regard to the planning process.

A major national undertaking is needed in order to achieve the scale of growth outlined in the report, to do it successfully and to ensure its sustainability. We are committed to working with the Government, partner authorities and investors to successfully implement the NIC’s recommendations and ultimately, achieve the 2050 economic vision.

Recommendation 1a:	Response
<p>Government should progress work on East West Rail, the Expressway and new settlements through a single co-ordinated delivery programme, with cross-government ministerial commitment and oversight. The aim of this programme should be to unlock opportunities for transformational housing growth through the creation of well-connected new communities. As part of this programme Government should commit:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst we support the principles of the proposals outlined within this recommendation, we seek further clarification from Government on exactly how they are to be delivered. • The first bullet point should include a specific reference to Aylesbury Vale and include a reference to the Aylesbury Link, which is a key component of this section of the East West Rail line. • We are concerned that the commitment to £1bn to deliver the western section of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1bn to deliver the infrastructure necessary for a high quality and resilient rail commuter service between Bicester and Bedford, accelerating delivery of this section of East West Rail to a target date of 2023; • to accelerate work on the development of the new East West Rail line between Bedford and Cambridge, and commit to open the line by 2030; and • to deliver the ‘missing link’ of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, accelerating development work to deliver a clearly-defined and agreed route by 2025, enabling construction to begin as part of the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS 2) and be complete by 2030. <p>Key milestones and decision points in the development of East West Rail and the Expressway should be subject to “in principle” agreement to the development of significantly more ambitious proposals for housing growth in the arc, including major new settlements and urban extensions, and subsequently, progress in identifying, evaluating and designating sites. “In principle” agreement should be provided within 12 months. The schemes should be futureproofed to ensure the potential for expansion and improvement is not permanently and prematurely closed.</p>	<p>the EWR has been significantly reduced since the publication of the Report. We consider that the cost cutting approach has been to the detriment of the scheme, particularly in reducing the quality of Winslow Station, reduction in improvements to Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station and in no longer proposing (at this time) dual tracking of the Aylesbury Link between Aylesbury Vale Parkway and Calvert Junction. This is clearly not in line with a long term vision for this area and are cost reductions that are short sighted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support the acceleration of the work on the new East West Rail line between Bedford and Cambridge (The Central Section). • We support the “in principle” agreement to the development of achievable proposals for housing growth in the arc, including major new settlements and urban extensions, however, we feel that a timescale of 12 months to gain agreement for such a wide range of very large developments is too ambitious and will preclude the ability to deliver the ambitious expectations of the report in a properly developed and deliverable form. • If this ambition is to be achieved, planning and investment at this scale and complexity, needs to be a national undertaking. There could be more effective partnership working if the process for delivering infrastructure projects was streamlined and consistent across government. We have come to this conclusion as a direct consequence of the delays to the delivery of East West Rail. • Our new local plan references the potential for new settlements within the Vale, which is supported by a study of potential locations, and this will be explored further as part of our early local plan review, however, we seek further clarification on the quantity of new homes and the form and location of the new settlements expected. • We would also wish to explore the interest and capacity from developers to deliver these ambitious plans as our housing delivery study indicates limitations on delivery that can only be resolved through radical intervention. • To provide the futureproofed schemes ensuring the potential for expansion and improvement is not permanently and prematurely closed will require formal statutory plans to be prepared otherwise schemes risk having no status in planning decisions.
<p>Recommendation 1b:</p> <p>Government should seek to introduce fast, direct services to London</p>	<p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have already committed to major development throughout the whole of

to enable growth in the arc between Bicester and Bletchley and improve connectivity between London and Aylesbury. Any such improvements should be contingent on local authorities' commitment to major development between Bicester and Bletchley and around existing settlements.

Aylesbury Vale, which is demonstrated in the housing figures in our submitted local plan where we accommodate 8,000 houses from the more constrained areas in the south of the County on top of our own need of 19,400 houses. Aylesbury Vale also has economic growth aspirations and is home to three Enterprise Zones; Silverstone focusing on high performance and technology and at the centre of the Silverstone Technology Cluster, Westcott Venture centred around the space propulsion section and Arla/Woodlands building on the position of Arla, the UK's largest super dairy to promote a Human Health and Agri Food cluster.

- We are also delivering significant housing year on year and we are keen to discuss with Government to understand what more can be done
- We also reference the need to carry out an early review of that plan to address the longer term requirements of EW Rail and the Expressway in association with new settlement options.
- Our land availability assessment also includes a number of suitable locations for development that are not included in the plan we have recently submitted to Government
- The delivery of what is described will depend on wider connectivity improvements in addition to the strategic elements of EW Rail and the Expressway
- EWR will put Aylesbury back on the main rail network by reintroducing regular and direct passenger services to the north via Milton Keynes for the first time since the 1960s. However, both lines south of Aylesbury to London remain rather constrained with a 40 mile journey to central London taking 60 minutes or more. As part of the works to enable HS2, the single track branch line from Aylesbury to Princes Risborough is being relocated and the new formations will enable this section of line to be dual tracked in the future. As a significant part of the branch line is being improved the opportunity to upgrade the whole line to Princes Risborough, linking to the Chiltern Mainline, should be included in the overall "Infrastructure Package" to support the growth ambitions in this corridor.
- Once complete, EWR and the Expressway will connect between most of the major radial transport routes extending west and from London – M4 to M11 via road and Great Western to East Coast mainline via rail. In addition, the Aylesbury Link and appropriate upgrades to the lines south of Aylesbury could act as a new north south radial route from London to the north via connectivity to Milton Keynes. The Aylesbury Link runs in close proximity to the HS2 Phase 1 route for

	<p>much of its length crossing north of Aylesbury. As the scheme stands, access to HS2 in the arc around London, would require journeys into the capital to come out again. There needs to be a consideration of an intermediate stop on HS2, supporting the corridor growth opportunities. Any new stop is likely to be related to the accessibility provided by EWR (including Aylesbury Link)/Expressway routes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 1c:</p> <p>Government should work with the private sector and the relevant local authorities to agree funding packages and progress schemes to support housing and employment growth now. These should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> essential works required to enable passenger services between Oxford and Cowley no later than 2019; and the acceleration of East West Rail phase 3 works around south Cambridge to enable the delivery of a Cambridge South station in 2022 as part of Control Period 6. <p>Substantial private sector and local contributions, reflecting the benefits that these parties gain, will be required to enable the delivery of these schemes.</p>	<p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EWR Western Section Improvement Extension funding package should also include the Aylesbury - Princes Risborough (The PRA Line). We agree that Government should work with the public and private sector to agree funding packages and growth deals, with the central area having its own growth deal and a funding package to support this, although developer contributions will need to link to specific developments to accord with legislation . We agree that local authorities and national government should work together to identify locations for new settlements, however, the basis of this should be any existing new settlement studies/proposals and any other such studies commissioned as part of forthcoming local plans. We would support the principle behind ensuring that benefits are derived for the community and that land value uplift needs to be harnessed effectively into building infrastructure and to enable the delivery of schemes. The strengthening and streamlining of mechanisms for compulsory purchase orders (CPO) and its reform is supported to ensure that land comes forward for development at a lower price to enable land value uplift to be captured and used for new infrastructure, affordable housing, community facilities etc. Different approaches to contributions and opportunity to set up New Town Development Corporations may provide appropriate vehicles to enable public/private partnerships to enable effective delivery. Changes to the planning systems and NPPF may also facilitate the delivery of schemes to ensure planning policy and standards are not subordinate to the competitive returns of landowners.
<p>Recommendation 2a:</p> <p>Government and local authorities should work together, through a robust and transparent process, to designate locations for new and expanded settlements by 2020. This should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> commissioning formal studies to identify and assess options for 	<p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst we agree in principle that local authorities and national government should work together to designate new settlements, we feel that the timescale suggested is very ambitious and we would stress that the process should be led by local authorities who have a greater understanding of their local area to ensure that

<p>new settlements required, and potential locations for these settlements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation with communities, statutory agencies, infrastructure providers, wider stakeholders and public examination of proposed sites; and formal designation of sites and the publication of such assessments as legally required. <p>The Commission is optimistic that Government and local authorities will reach agreement on the scale and location of new settlements in the national interest. However, if agreement cannot ultimately be reached, the Secretary of State should designate these new settlements.</p>	<p>schemes are properly founded in realistic assessments of potential and needs. Formal requirements for the preparation of plans will need to be met if they are to be properly sustainable and deliverable and given the requirements for evidence gathering, sustainability appraisal, consultation and examination, this will take at least three years. If this involves an Examination or Public Inquiry timescales will be longer than envisaged even if some form of Government 'designation' is resorted to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We seek further details on exactly what the 'robust and transparent process' is and how this would work as part of the national planning process.
<p>Recommendation 2b: Government should:</p>	<p>Response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with local authorities to establish appropriate delivery vehicles for new and expanded settlements across the arc, considering the role that can be played by locally accountable Development Corporations, Mayoral Development Corporations, the Homes and Communities Agency and Urban Development Corporations. establish New Town Development Corporations to deliver larger new and expanded settlements. In so doing, it should: work with local authorities to define and agree the objectives, membership and reporting arrangements for new development corporations; provide a clear remit to support the economic success of large new settlements as centres of employment, and assist the development corporation by using wider policy levers to support local economic growth; and explore the full range of options for funding development corporations' programme of land acquisition, including providing public funding with a view to unlocking substantial private investment, and balancing considerations of short-term affordability and long-term value for money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We agree with the principle of establishing a locally influenced New Town Development Corporation (NTDC) (please also see our response to the Government consultation 'New Towns Act' as Appendix A), however, we would seek further clarification on what this looks like as current arrangements may not suit the delivery of the form of development envisaged. In order to be effective, any NTDC would need to be established as soon as possible bearing in mind the timescales set out in the report and to help drive the delivery of this scale of growth. The resources and complexity of the scale of growth should not be underestimated and there will be a consequential additional burden to local authorities, which government can help support, with the powers to set up the NTDC. We strongly agree that judgements about good placemaking are best made locally, which is why we also believe that corporations should be locally based. Our preference would be for government to provide local areas with the power and funding required to set up our own corporations, which will include other appropriate partners. The ability to acquire land at close to existing land value levels, or for local authorities as part of NTDC's to intervene in the land market, and assemble sites, is key to ensure that land value uplift can be harnessed effectively for the benefit

	<p>of the community, and mechanisms need to be in place prior to the announcement of the corridor for the Expressway to enable it to have maximum effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of Enterprise Zones and the rates relief offered are useful policy levers which can be used to encourage sustainable new developments with employment and housing. Strategically placed sites could also maximise the linkages between existing Enterprise Zones in the knowledge belts. • We would favour an approach that focuses on designing communities that sustain themselves by virtue of how they operate. A good example of this is Brighton whereby local residents manage waste and recycle effectively, ensuring less intervention by the local authority. We are considering initiatives like these through the development of our Garden Town status for Aylesbury.
<p>Recommendation 3: Government should work with local authorities to:</p>	<p>Response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • put in place an independent design panel for East West Rail, the Expressway and new and expanded settlements across the arc by April 2018. This panel should work in concert with existing infrastructure design panels and new development corporations to specify, scrutinise and challenge settlement designs, plans and delivery, with a view to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making most efficient use of new and existing infrastructure (including transport and utilities); • supporting positive social outcomes (including better mental and physical health); • achieving net gains in biodiversity and natural capital across the arc; and • improving quality of life for existing and future residents. • establish arrangements for the long-term stewardship of valued community assets in each new or expanded settlement, placing responsibility and resources in the hands of the community – learning from both the Parks Trust in Milton Keynes and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation; and • ensure that strategic infrastructure, including new elements of East West Rail and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We agree with this recommendation in principle but the timescale of April 2018 is unrealistic. After all many of the matters it will need to liaise on have no form yet e.g. new development corporations. • We particularly support the principle of long term stewardship of community assets through the creation of suitable bodies and funding via land value capture.

<p>planned and developed to achieve net gains in biodiversity and natural capital across the arc.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 4: Government and local authorities should implement measures to increase certainty on the delivery of growth enabling infrastructure.</p>	<p>Response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should work with local authorities to establish an indicative, long-term pipeline of strategic national and local infrastructure investments, conditional upon specific housing delivery milestones, and with firm financial commitments made at the beginning of the relevant spending review, road investment or rail industry control period. This pipeline should be established and agreed by 2020. • Local authorities should work with LEPs, local business groups, educational institutions and other key partners to formally agree robust and credible transport plans to enable the development of the arc's key towns and cities. These should be agreed locally by April 2019. These plans should provide a firm basis for long-term growth and investment, and include plans for significantly upgrading public transport, integrating transport hubs and providing safe cycling infrastructure. • Following agreement of these long-term transport plans, Government should develop deals, bespoke to this region, with local authorities in Oxfordshire and the central section of the arc. These deals should extend powers over bus franchising, the introduction of smart ticketing, and give greater long-term certainty over future funding which authorities can use to fund, and unlock finance for, city-regional infrastructure improvements. Powers and resources should be devolved no later than April 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst we agree that the Government should work with local authorities to establish an indicative, long-term pipeline of infrastructure investments, the deadline could be brought forward to align with the development of housing and economic proposals. • We agree that local authorities should work with LEPs, etc. to agree transport plans but we need to know where the growth is going to go first or at the same time. April 2019 is unachievable.
<p>Recommendation 5: Government should, through bespoke deals with local areas, make changes to the operation and application of CIL and s106 agreements</p>	<p>Response</p>

<p>across the arc that will:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give groups of local authorities, working together through appropriate governance structures, the power to levy a city-regional CIL; and • remove restrictions on the pooling of section 106 revenues and on the forward funding of infrastructure against future receipts. These changes should be agreed by 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst we note some of the benefits in implementing an arc-wide CIL arrangement, we seek further details on how this would work and we would need to ensure that we receive the appropriate level of funds required to meet the needs of our area. Whilst CIL can be deployed at varying rates for differing areas, we would like more detail on how CIL would operate over such a wide area and across many housing market areas. • We welcome the removing of the pooling restrictions on S106 revenues and forward funding of infrastructure, but consider that the legislation would need to go further than that to deal with land value capture. • We are concerned that this recommendation promotes a mayoral type CIL, like the Milton Keynes Tariff, which may not match the make up of the local authority groupings that may deliver the growth. • There does not appear to be any good practice examples that could apply to an arc-wide CIL and therefore, a more bespoke solution needs to be sought. • We are also concerned that an arc-wide CIL may prioritise certain requirements, such as infrastructure, at the expense of other pressing needs, such as affordable housing, which already in many cases, comes towards the bottom of the hierarchy of section 106 contributions. This is why a traditional developer led approach using existing viability assessment will not deliver what the NIC report envisages. Some form of land value capture is therefore essential. • We would like to emphasise that the delivery of genuinely affordable housing, that includes social housing, should be a key consideration for the success of the arc and in the creation of mixed and balanced communities. • We believe that land value uplift has to be harnessed more effectively into building infrastructure, and recommend that legislation should be in place which gives greater powers to the local planning authority to intervene in land market and assembly, and acquire land at close to the existing land value. Furthermore, reform the complex and lengthy CPO process to make it a quicker simpler process, act as a deterrent to developers in holding on to land and provide a more effective mechanism to control land values. • Funds being accessible from government would also help cash flow and delivery of upfront timely infrastructure as part of a comprehensive package in association with the above measures.

<p>Recommendation 6: government should consider the <u>need</u> for agreements extending flexibilities in the application of five-year land supply requirements. These agreements should only be considered in cases where local authorities agree deals to accommodate significantly higher levels of housing growth. Flexibilities should:</p>	<p>Response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help ensure that local areas are not exposed to increased risk of speculative development as a result of their commitment to additional growth; and • be kept under review and made subject to local areas demonstrating progress in the delivery of major housing growth. <p>In all cases, agreement must preserve the requirement for local authorities to maintain a supply of land sufficient to enable house building at the rate that would have been required in the absence of any deal to support additional housing growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We welcome this recommendation as it is essential that scarce council resources are not at risk defending speculative development proposals outside the plan preparation process. Aylesbury Vale in particular has faced massive and continuing pressure despite an exemplary delivery record and a strong commitment to the delivery of a local plan alongside neighbourhood plans. In particular, the proposed housing delivery test and the new OAN calculation method must be applied appropriately to allow the arc councils to deliver on their growth expectations. The additional housing ‘requirement’ should not form part of the calculation of five-year housing land supply until the ‘supply’ via new allocations is formalised through the planning process,
<p>Recommendation 7: Government should work with local authorities across the arc to secure agreement that:</p>	<p>Response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representatives of each of the arc’s defined sub-regions will work together at the arc-wide level, and with Government, to develop an ambitious spatial vision covering the whole arc area up to 2050, identifying locations for growth and investment and enabling infrastructure requirements. This work should be completed no later than summer 2019. This vision should be supported by a set of arc-wide economic plans and an arc-wide plan for strategic infrastructure; and • local planning and transport authorities will work together, in defined sub-regions, to prepare statutory strategic spatial plans and submit these for inspection by April 2020. These should be underpinned by a clear investment strategy and a phased delivery plan, and shaped by the requirements of a robust integrated appraisal framework. Local Enterprise Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the “ambitious spatial vision covering the whole arc area up to 2050” is to have any statutory force, it must be properly developed through the formal planning process so that it is supported by relevant evidence and a sustainability appraisal. Developing such an approach will not be feasible in the timescale proposed. Sticking to the suggested timescale would be possible if a very broad vision was to be set out, but further work would then be required to turn that broad vision into deliverable proposals which would similarly not follow the suggested timescale. • 7 of the Authorities also represented the Central Corridor at MIPIM London 2017 and representation is planned for MIPIM London 2018. • England’s Economic Heartland are working on producing a Transport Strategy for the arc area.

<p>and utilities providers should be included in the development of these strategic spatial plans.</p> <p>Local authorities and LEPs should work collectively and seek to agree a definition for sub-regional planning areas by April 2018. If agreement cannot be reached by this date, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government should define the sub-regions based on consideration of the best areas for joined-up economic, transport and land-use planning.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 8: Government should work with local authorities to put in place robust sub-regional and arc-wide governance arrangements. This will include:</p>	<p>Response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reconstituting the Oxfordshire Growth Board as a planning joint committee by April 2018, ensuring it is empowered to take decisions on the development, adoption and delivery of a strategic statutory spatial plan; • establishing growth board arrangements for defined planning areas in the central section of the arc by April 2018, ensuring these are constituted as planning joint committees and empowered to take decisions on the development, adoption and delivery of a strategic statutory spatial plan(s); • supporting the continued development of new and existing growth boards, with a view to their being constituted as statutory combined authorities, or mayoral combined authorities, as soon as possible and no later than 2022; and • working with representatives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Oxfordshire Growth Board and other growth board(s) across the arc to establish an arc-wide 'Strategic Partnership Board' by Summer 2018. This should include recruiting an independent chair to convene the board and provide a clear link to Government, and agreeing this appointment with local partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities across the central section of the arc have been working together to form a Central Area Growth Board to act as a Joint Committee. Terms of Reference have been compiled and agreed and the Authorities are in the process of taking them through their individual approval processes by June 2018. The Growth Board has been formed to provide one coordinated voice speaking to Government and its Agencies. The Board also has the purpose to seek to establish Common Planning Areas to produce an integrated and holistic approach to strategic planning for employment, housing and infrastructure that builds on local plans and transport plans.
<p>Recommendation 9:</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>Government should work with local authorities and any new delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst we support the intentions of this recommendation, we have the following

<p>bodies from across the arc to prepare and publish a six-monthly update, with the first being published in April 2018, enabling the Commission to assess the progress achieved in delivering the recommendations set out in this report.</p>	<p>queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is the geography and boundary of the Arc?○ What is the expectation about accelerating growth?○ What are the timescales?○ How does the Government propose to work with local authorities across the arc and publish six-monthly updates?
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Conclusion

The recommendations in the report would be truly transformational, particularly for certain areas like Aylesbury Vale. We would seek reassurance that this once in a generation proposal is completely joined up from the very highest level in Government and that there is control at a central level to ensure that a true partnership can be created to ensure the proposals can be realised. We want to do everything we can to help ensure that this is not simply a new road link and some housing – we recognise the scale and ambition of these proposals and fully welcome the proposals to maximise the potential and benefits for this area.

The New Towns Act 1981 (Local Authority Oversight) Regulations

Consultation paper: December 2017 Response from Aylesbury Vale District Council

Question 1: Do you support the principle of enabling oversight of the development of an area as a new town to be transferred from the Secretary of State to the local authority or authorities covering the area?

AVDC supports the transfer of oversight powers and authority from the Secretary of State to the local level in order to ensure a strong element of local ownership and accountability. We consider that local councils, working in partnership, are best placed to understand the needs of their place and population and how to effectively respond and manage these.

We would welcome clarity on who might qualify to be an oversight authority, particularly where there are two tier authorities and we believe that this should be the local planning authority.

We consider that the powers should have sufficient flexibility so that, where local conditions dictate, a single locally led new town development corporation is able to cover more than one project within an area and that these projects are able to be at different scales (reference to scales of garden villages, towns and cities within the DCLG prospectus on garden communities). These also need to be sufficiently flexible at a local level to amend the scale (increase / reduce) of relevant development projects.

We also ask that the Government considers how local authorities can be supported in setting up and delivering these powers, given the skills, knowledge and resources required so they are truly effective.

We support the requirement for a strong evidence base demonstrating that the site or sites are suitable for development at the scale proposed and that the appropriate consultation has been undertaken locally.

Question 2: Do you agree that the proposed list of functions to be transferred and functions that may only be exercised with the consent of the oversight authority is the correct one? If not, please specify which other functions you think should or should not be transferred and why.

It may be helpful that, if requested and if agreed by each of the authorities comprising the oversight authority, an order could provide for the transfer to the development corporation of CIL powers, development management powers (including enforcement powers) and plan-making powers, to create flexibility and local appropriateness in the delivery of required functions.

Question 3: Where the draft Regulations provide for the transfer of functions has this been done correctly? If not please specify the changes you think are required and why.

Sufficient flexibility should be retained in order to allow functions to be transferred, suspended or terminated or, as in the case of development management powers, to relate to only certain specified categories of development for the delivery of major growth

Question 4: Do you agree that the draft Regulations appropriately support the delivery of high quality, sustainable communities and their long-term stewardship? If not, how should they go further or include less prescription?

We endorse the aims of the oversight authority including a need to consider and plan from the outset for the long term stewardship of the new town assets, say through a legacy plan. The responsibilities of the oversight authorities will then include ensuring that the development corporation manages the development programme and asset disposal/transfer in a way that delivers long term stewardship in accordance with its legacy plan.

We believe that the aim in relation to stewardship applied to oversight authorities should be expanded to arise at the outset as proposed and also be expressed to apply up to and on dissolution, so that any Regulation 41 request for the apportionment of assets is made having regard to that aim.

Question 5: Do you agree with the proposals for Board membership set out in Paragraph 22 of Schedule 1 of the draft Regulations? If not, how should these be changed?

We again re-iterate that we welcome the stated aim of the oversight authority having overall 'control' and responsibility for the new community and this clearly ensures a significant role for locally elected and accountable Members. We also fully appreciate and support the involvement of local, independent stakeholders and individuals to form an integral part of the structure as this will enrich skills, knowledge and local ownership of the development. However, whilst we recognise the benefits of the Development Corporation Board being a partnership between public and private sectors, and in particular we support local business representation, we would not wish the Regulations to specify that the Chair and Vice Chair should be independent. This appears at odds with the aims of being locally led and locally accountable. We believe that local authorities have a significant role to play in the leadership of garden communities and driving their delivery. We therefore propose that the Chair and Vice Chair should be elected Members who are accountable to the local electorate and this applies equally to the majority of the board members.

Question 6: Are there any issues with the draft Regulations not picked up in the questions above you would like to raise? If so, please set these out.

It would be helpful to have guidance from the Secretary of State on the conditions that will need to be met in order for a new town to be designated and a development corporation incorporated.

We welcome the fact that the Development Corporation would have borrowing powers and consider this essential for it to be able to deliver its function. Whilst we support a cap, up to which Treasury consent is not required, we do not consider £100m to be an appropriate sum, particularly in relation to those new town corporations that may be set up in higher land value areas. New communities, by their nature, will require significant infrastructure provision, together with land acquisition, and we consider the stated limit to be too restrictive. We would suggest that there is no fixed limit in order to give greater flexibility, particularly where projects require significant infrastructure provision/land acquisition and in recognition

of our desire to ensure that a single New Town Development Corporation has the ability to cover more than one project within an area.

We question whether all Development Corporation funding should come via local borrowing. The original New Towns had the benefit of Treasury funding. We suggest that, in part at least, there needs to be a commitment to government investment in set up costs, revenue costs and strategic infrastructure, otherwise many authorities are likely to be prohibited from pursuing the option of a New Town purely on the basis on initial expense and disproportionate financial risk for local councils. Also, as the creation of a New Town is a national contribution to the housing need, the financial burden of this shouldn't be met exclusively by local taxpayers.

It is also not clear how the value of compulsory acquired land is calculated to ensure there is value capture for the benefit of the new community. Creating a new/revised, simplified and bespoke CPO process that allows land to be acquired at a rate that takes account of the overall costs, quality and sustainability of the New Town would be helpful. We also consider a need to update CPO guidance to take account of new garden communities. In particular it would be of assistance to make it clear that, if requested by the development corporation,

the Secretary of State will be willing to confirm an order permitting the acquisition of the whole (or a large part) of the new town area at the outset. The development corporation (and the underlying local authorities) will want to be clear that the land asset is available before committing to the infrastructure investment necessary to deliver a high quality garden community.

We consider that the Regulations need to be drafted to take account of, and allow for, different delivery models, including those that vary from the traditional model. We refer in particular to land value capture for the benefit of the new community. We wish to ensure that specification of functions and flexibility in how they are operated is inherent to allow for different methods of delivery to be tailored to local circumstances.