

100 MILES Wilder

NATURE, CLIMATE AND GROWTH IN THE OXFORD–CAMBRIDGE CORRIDOR : INFORMING SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Nature should not be treated as a constraint on growth in the Oxford–Cambridge corridor; it is essential infrastructure underpinning health, climate resilience and long-term prosperity. Delivering successful growth in the region will require more than housing, transport and investment. It will depend on the health of the natural systems that regulate water, store carbon, cool urban environments, support biodiversity and sustain the wellbeing of communities.

Globally, financial flows still overwhelmingly favour environmental degradation, with around thirty times more investment going into activities that damage nature than into protecting or restoring it (UNEP State of Finance for Nature). At the same time, the benefits of nature-rich environments are becoming increasingly clear. Evidence commissioned by The Wildlife Trusts shows that scaling nature-based health programmes could improve wellbeing for more than one million people while saving the NHS approximately £635 million annually. Nature-rich landscapes therefore deliver tangible economic value by supporting public health, reducing long-term service costs and increasing resilience to climate impacts.

Importantly, the policy architecture to deliver this approach already exists. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) provide a framework for restoring habitats and reconnecting landscapes at scale while guiding development to the most appropriate locations. When combined with strategic landscape initiatives including the ambition to create a new national forest within the Oxford–Cambridge corridor these mechanisms could embed nature recovery and climate resilience directly within the region’s growth model.

Embedding whole-life environmental performance within planning and development would ensure that new infrastructure, homes and communities strengthen the natural systems that support them. By considering carbon, biodiversity, water systems, soil health, climate adaptation and human wellbeing across the lifetime of development, the corridor can deliver growth that supports both economic productivity and environmental recovery.

The Oxford–Cambridge corridor therefore has an opportunity to demonstrate a new model of growth: one where nature recovery, climate resilience and economic development are designed together, creating healthier communities, more resilient landscapes and a stronger long-term foundation for prosperity. The challenge for the Oxford–Cambridge corridor is not whether nature can fit around growth, but whether growth can be designed to restore the natural and climate systems on which our future depends.



Photograph credits with thanks to • Family tree planting: Niall Bowler 2020/VISION • Goldfinches fighting: Mark Hanks/2020/VISION • Badger: Andrew Parkinson/2020/VISION • Sooty Tern: Stefan Johnson • Marsh harrier: Chris Goodwin/2020/VISION • Working on a blue: Peta Doremont • Kingfisher: Jan Hawkins • Surrey Hills Photography • Conservation grazing: Matthew Roberts • Barn owl: Jan Hawkins • Surrey Hills Photography • White-throated: Andrew Parkinson/2020/VISION • Clear: Andy Russell • 2020/VISION • Brown trout: Jack Purvis • Common blue butterflies: Luke Preece/2020/VISION • Common blue butterfly: Vicky Hall • Father-daughter in meadow and daughter alone: Jan Hawkins • Surrey Hills Photography • Girl in bluebell: Tom Heston • Purple thistle moth: Yagho Martineau • Chaff: Steven • Linda Preece/2020/VISION •

A VISION FOR BRITAIN IN 2040

This proposal is part of the wider national vision for a Nature Recovery Network, a joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and at sea. Our vision is for a landscape where wildlife is abundant, development is green, cities are wilder, the countryside is buzzing, soils are healthy and water is plentiful and clean.

A recovering landscape:



VISION MAP KEY

- Natural Network**

 - Core Areas of Existing High Value for Nature
 - Connectivity Network
 - Recovery Zone
 - AONB
- Transport Network**

 - Existing Railway Lines
 - Existing Railway Stations
 - East West Rail Route Alignment
 - New East West Rail Station
- Places**

 - Settlements within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc
 - Settlements beyond the Oxford to Cambridge Arc
 - Significant New Developments Proposed
 - County Boundary
- Nature Friendly Land Use

Flood Zone 2

Key Waterways + Rivers

Future Waterway Links

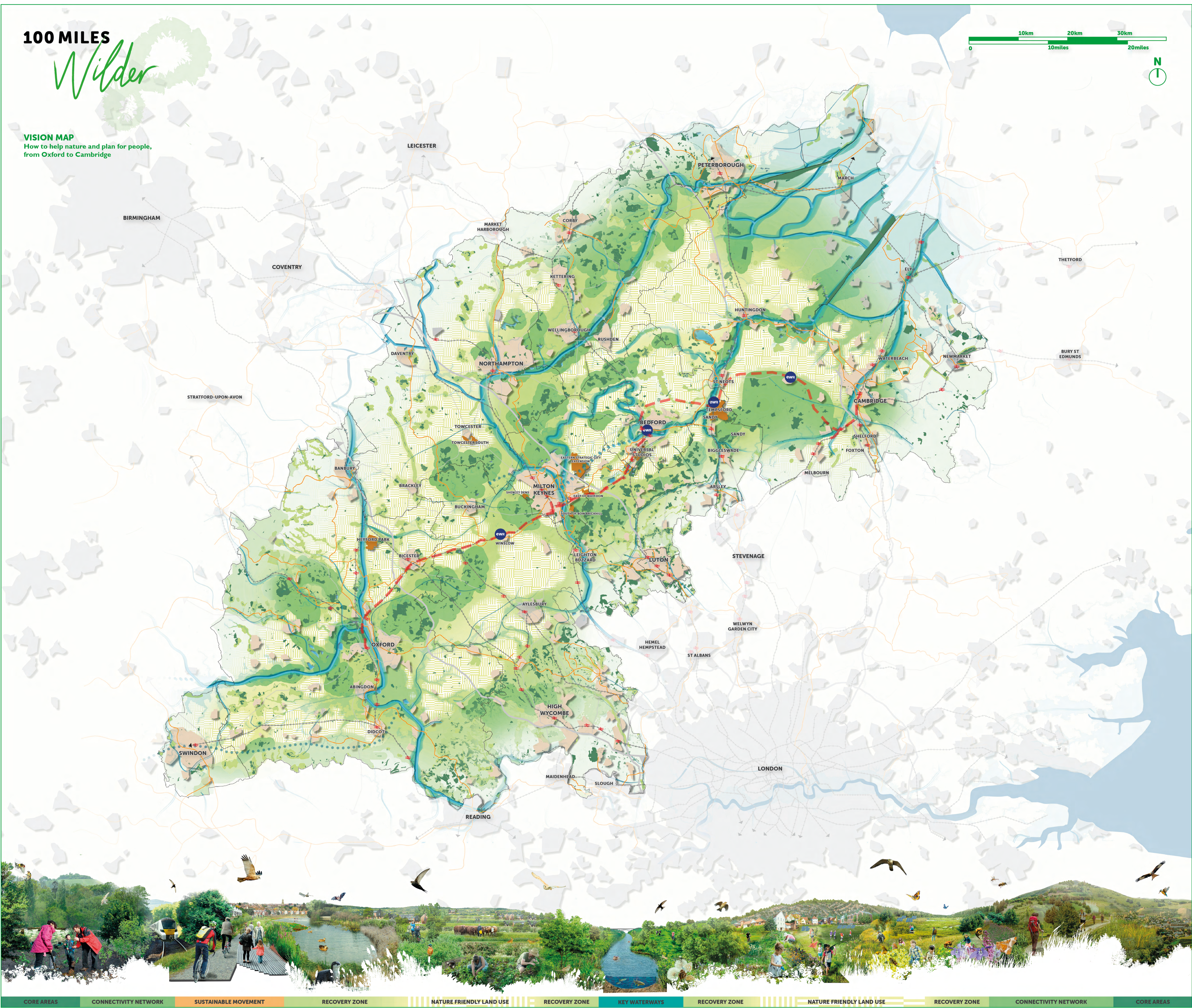
Sustrans Cycle Routes

Existing Motorways

A Roads

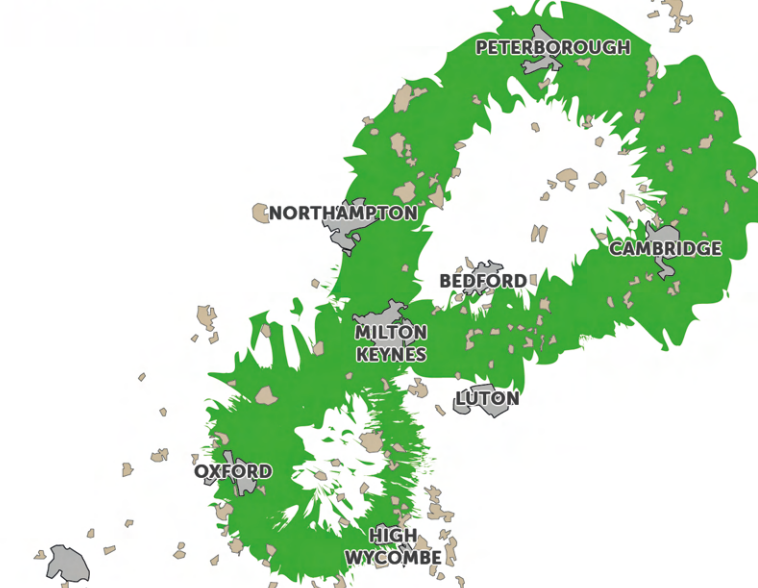
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VISION MAP How to help nature and plan for people, from Oxford to Cambridge



LIVING NETWORKS FOR WILDLIFE

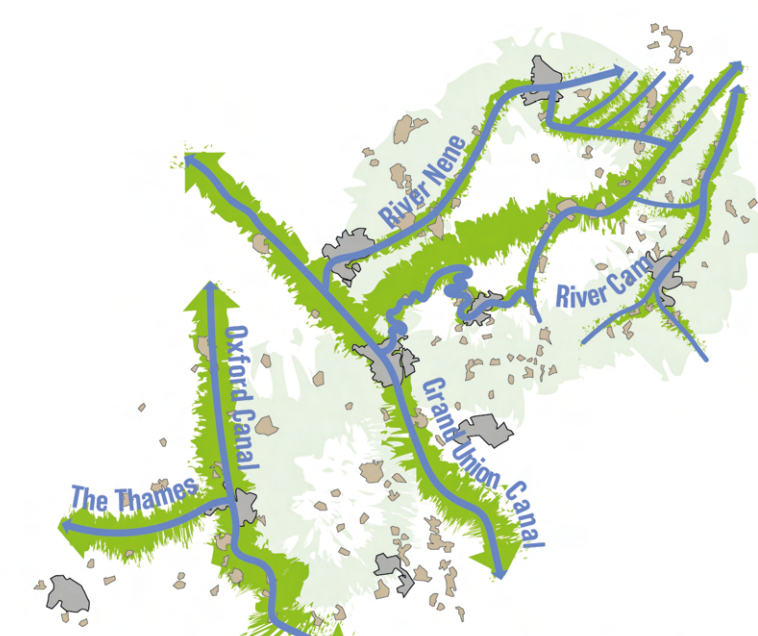
Wilder network



The wilder network is a big, bold plan to protect the wildest places, connect them together and increase the overall area available to wildlife, creating a living legacy for generations to come.

It is a pioneering vision to establish a network where nature can recover and wildlife can thrive.

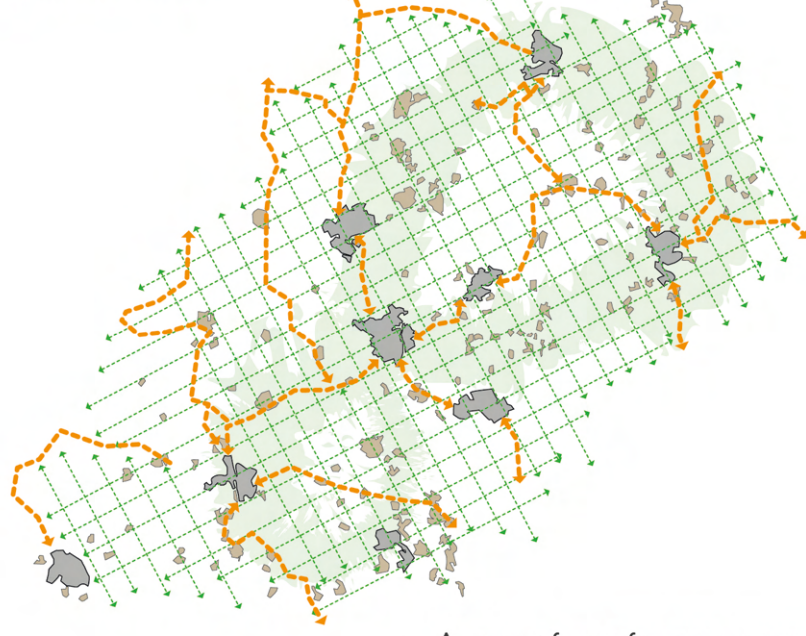
Blue and Green network



The natural blue and green network connects people to nature; encouraging people to move sustainably by providing access to settlements and wild areas along new and enhanced pedestrian, cycle and boating connections.

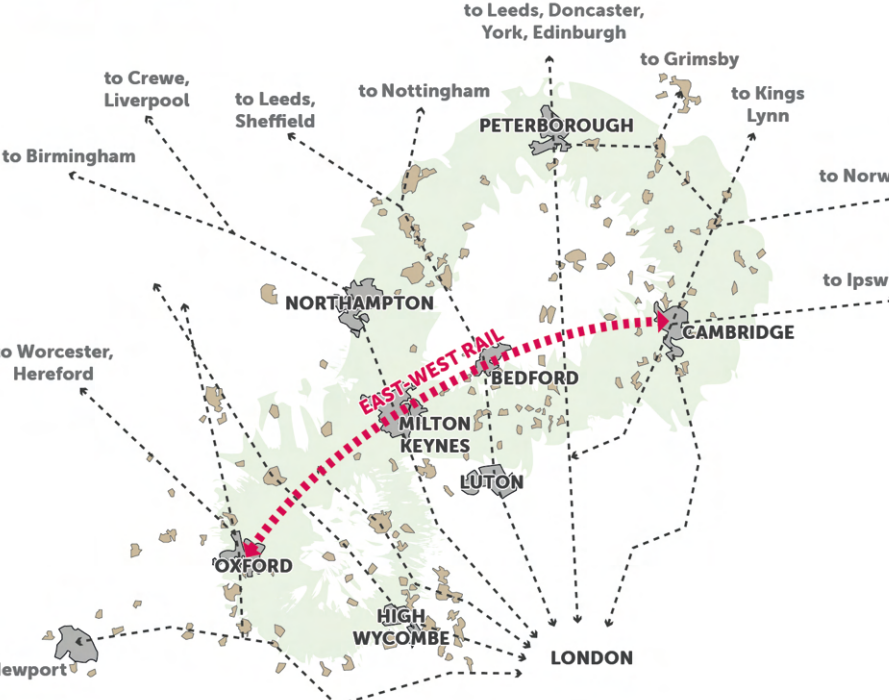
Natural corridors allow wildlife to move and migrate freely across the region, linking natural habitats along vibrant green corridors and restored blue waterways.

Cycle network



A concept for a safer, more permeable cycle network, strengthening the existing national routes with a 'green grid' of new walking + cycling paths, allowing people to navigate the landscape and encouraging sustainable, slow movement.

Railway network



The east-west rail is a major opportunity to change the way people move across the region, as the railway network expands away from the London-centric model. Consideration of sustainable transport options will be important in informing the most sustainable locations for development.