Review of the Year 2017
Welcome to PBA’s 2017 Review of the Year
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2017 has been a great year for PBA. We have been working hard to improve our clients’ experience through client relationships, people development and innovation-related programmes.

Despite being in economically uncertain times, we have benefitted from a steady flow of project wins across our target sectors, and our focus on continuous improvement has helped us to deliver this work to the high standards our clients rightly expect from us.

One of the fascinating things about working in the world of development and infrastructure is how it’s constantly changing in response to economic, technological, policy and political pressures. The pace of change has never been faster and this year, we have made a particular point of maintaining our commitment to thought leadership. We have been thinking about the challenges now being faced by our clients, and how we need to respond to these over the next few years. This has led to blogs, reports and seminars on subjects such as Creating Garden Communities, Travel Trends and the increasingly-critical housing shortage.

To celebrate, this Review of the Year brings together some of our most prominent thought leadership pieces, alongside relevant projects and news.

We’d like to thank everyone we have worked with this year, and wish you all the best for the year to come.
Creating Garden Communities

In early 2017, the Government announced an initiative to use garden communities to support much-needed housing delivery across 14 key regions in the UK. In response to this, PBA launched a blog series to review the original principles of the garden city movement and discuss how these need to be updated to be relevant to the challenges of tomorrow.

In the first of these blogs, PBA Partner Tim Allen drew on Ebbsfleet, where we have been engaged for over 25 years, as well as our experience on many of the Government named garden community schemes around the country.

In subsequent posts, we have explored some of the emerging principles in more detail. We hope that this series will contribute to a better understanding of how garden communities can be developed to meet housing need and provide sustainable places where people will want to live, work and play.
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Connecting Cambridge to Oxford

Visualising the corridor

The Cambridge to Oxford corridor includes four of the UK’s fastest-growing economies and most productive centres: Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Oxford. Over the last 20 years, development in the East of England has been happening at a healthy pace, yet poor transport connectivity between the East and West remains. The region desperately needs new infrastructure to overcome constraints to growth and promote regeneration, creating a knowledge intensive cluster that competes on the global stage.

The key to this lies in integrating placemaking with infrastructure to get the right blend of housing, employment and facilities with connectivity and ease of movement for users. This need prompted the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) ideas competition to find inspirational visions for the development of the corridor. PBA contributed to several entries, one of which was highly commended and one shortlisted.

In recent years, PBA teams in Oxford, Northampton and Cambridge have been involved in major transport infrastructure and development schemes along the corridor including Oxford’s Barton Park residential scheme, the Northern Gateway, Bicester ecotown, Brooklands and Newton Leys in Milton Keynes, Waterbeach in Cambridge and the North West Cambridge development. Each one transforming its local area, fuelling the corridor’s growth.

PBA is dedicated to creating better communities. Our experience of strategic infrastructure and large-scale development management means we will not only be able to help unlock and deliver schemes quickly and efficiently, we’ll also be able to design a corridor that can adapt for future communities.
Our thoughts

Visualising the corridor

Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield, Cambridgeshire

In the news

Cambridge breakfast seminars launched

Ideas to shape the future of the Cambridge to Oxford corridor
Travel Trends

Men aged between 17 and 34 are travelling 47% less than they were 20 years ago, yet an increasing population means traffic levels remain high. In these unpredictable times, PBA produced its own analysis *Planning Transport & Development: All Change?* to help clients anticipate how their projects may be affected.

What will happen if the Millennial generation continue to travel less, and what if Generation Z is even more disposed to agile working arrangements, travel alternatives, and the sharing economy? How do we produce the infrastructure needed to support future communities when the future bears so little relationship to the past?

Most forecasting techniques rely on empirical evidence of past. However, by adopting a ‘Vision and Validate’ approach, we can establish a shared vision of the places we are trying to deliver, and use our technical skills to plan how we get there, using transport models in back-casting mode rather than forecasting. Putting places first – infrastructure projects second.

This thinking has wider applications beyond transport. At its heart is a question about how future technological and behavioural changes will allow us to make more efficient use of land and infrastructure. This has the potential to transform unviable sites into viable sites, enabling clients to deliver better projects for themselves, and for future communities.
Meeting housing needs

The UK is often quoted as being in the grips of a ‘housing crisis’. Waiting lists for social housing continue to grow with more than 1.8 million households waiting for a social home – an increase of 81% since 1997.

Not enough social homes have been built over recent decades. The Government has therefore pledged to deliver 400,000 social homes over the next five years, 90,000 of which are to be built in London. The Mayor of London has committed to building new homes on land owned by City Hall, including Transport for London land, and intends to fast-track scores of sites.

In 2017 we achieved development planning consent for high-profile schemes in Westminster and Wandsworth and continue to deliver large estate renewal programmes in Camden, Hackney and Southwark; helping unlock the delivery of much needed housing for the London boroughs.

In Oxford, PBA is involved with a range of strategic development in and around the city responding to the demand for housing and infrastructure improvements. One such project, Barton Park, is the largest residential development in Oxford for a generation.

Areas of opportunity exist outside our major cities too and our planning teams work tirelessly to seek these out for our clients.
Our thoughts

- The housing white paper: a review
- What does the housing white paper mean for Local Planning Authorities?
- How might the new five-year land supply calculation work?
- Housing need: what can we learn from the new CLG proposals?

Our projects

- Bridport House / Colville Estate, London
- HB Villages Developments

In the news

- Housing plans approved in Horsham
Growth in the north

Well-regarded as one of the most important growth areas in the UK, Leeds has become a dynamic centre for property investment, which makes it the perfect location for us to build on our existing presence in the North. We already work across the lifecycle of major schemes in the area, for instance Sheffield’s Meadowhall, Leeds’ Thorpe Park, the redevelopment of Buslingthorpe Mills, and the iconic Tetley Brewery.

PBA Director Henk Gelens, pictured here in front of the old brewery headquarters – now an event space and art gallery – is thrilled to be involved with the launch of the Leeds office:

‘PBA is delighted to be open for business in Leeds. We are already involved in several projects in this part of the country, and hope to expand our offering to other clients. We are excited about the opportunities that Leeds and the wider area can bring – there is a buzz about the place, and we have been made to feel very welcome.’
Tetley Brewery, Leeds

Buslingthorpe Mills, Leeds

Thorpe Park and Green Park, Leeds

Prescot Masterplan

PBA builds northern presence in Leeds

Planning consent secured to redevelop Tetley Brewery

Unveiling PBA's offering in Leeds

Buslingthorpe Mills site to rise from the ashes

Success at the 2017 Planning Awards

City region benefits from Nationally Significant Renewable Infrastructure

Our projects

In the news

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Our services

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- Civil Engineering
- Environment
- Planning
- Transport

Get in touch

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