CREATING A NATIONAL PARK FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS
A NEW 21ST CENTURY IDENTITY
EXEcUTIVE SUMMARY
Professor Kathryn Moore
MAY 2018
CREATING A NATIONAL PARK FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

A NEW 21ST CENTURY IDENTITY

THE PROJECT

The Project seeks to establish a new kind of National Park for the West Midlands. This immense rolling landscape, the crucible of the industrial revolution, the nexus of the UK’s major agricultural regions, with its complex infrastructure of canals, highways and byways married to some of the most beautiful, forgotten areas in Britain awaits a re-imagining for millions of people with the creation of a West Midland National Park.

The project aims to:

• Utilise major strategic initiatives throughout the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to support the resourcing of the plan: recognising the opportunities provided by the imminent arrival of HS2; Coventry’s winning the 2021 City of Culture; the hosting of the Commonwealth Games in the region; the Black Country’s application for UNESCO Geopark status; and embracing the ambition in the 2018 DEFRA 25-year plan to redefine national parks;

• Propose a new type of National Park which champions the relationship between people and place: A relationship that shapes our cultural identity, pride and self confidence, and which rightly acknowledges the landscape as being the matrix within which all development occurs;

• Create improved collaborative and citizen-engaged solutions which focus on the relationship communities have with a landscape, and which encourage cross boundary working and delivery;

• Support the positioning of UK agriculture, which is on the verge of a second agricultural revolution, and a gathering world focus on high-tech agronomy, reforesting, organic growing, water storage and cleansing; and

• Ensure that in a post Brexit UK we are a showcase for innovative, cross-community models of rural / urban localism, incorporating leading-edge land-use, inventive housing solutions, and sustainable industrial development.

The West Midlands (WMCA) offers a perfect platform for people here to create and develop the capacity to introduce new skills to the wider world and to profoundly change the identity of the region through this ambitious vision ensuring transformation not protection. This is a bold, long-term proposal that needs to be expedited now.

Annex A gives the location plan for the West Midlands Combined Authority, the proposed boundary for the West Midlands National Park.

CONCEPT

is under the direction of Professor Kathryn Moore, President, International Federation of Landscape Architects, Professor of Landscape Architecture at Birmingham City University. See Annex B for a PDF of the proposal and vision statement.

INTERESTED PARTIES

A number of political, commercial and academic bodies including UNESCO are giving support to the Project. It is our intention to partner with these and other interested organisations, institutions and communities to work collaboratively in order to achieve real change. Annex C gives a list of interested parties correct at the time of printing, but growing all the time.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Project under current planning will be implemented over a two-year period and then according to Phases enumerated in Annex D.

FUNDING

Funding exists for the initial planning phase and further funds will need to be confirmed as set out in Annex E.

FIRST FORMAL MEETING

The conference scheduled for June this year will bring together all interested parties including UNESCO and UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme. Annex F sets out the two-day conference programme (still under development).
ANNEX A
THE BOUNDARY OF THE WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CREATING A NATIONAL PARK FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS
A NEW 21ST CENTURY IDENTITY

VISION
A West Midlands National Park.
A New 21st Century Identity.

With the youngest, fastest growing, most diverse population in the UK, the imminent arrival of HS2 and the hosting of City of Culture 2021 and the Commonwealth Games, the West Midlands has a unique opportunity to re-discover a vast, hidden landscape that has been largely overlooked and undervalued for decades. The West Midlands plateau, a watershed between two of the largest river systems in the United Kingdom, is one of the most geologically diverse regions in the world. Previously an area of dense woodland, its matrix of valleys stretches from the Black Country, the crucible of the industrial revolution, to Birmingham, once the city of a thousand trades and now one of the most rapidly developing business hubs in Europe, from Medieval Coventry to the Saxon town of Tamworth. This immense rolling landscape, the nexus of the UK’s major agricultural regions, with its complex infrastructure of canals, highways and byways is married to some of the most beautiful, forgotten areas in Britain and awaits a re-imagining for millions of people with the creation of a West Midland National Park.

By encouraging cross boundary working and delivery, this proposal is a means to an end, a vehicle to help drive social, economic and environmental change in the region. It would be a new kind of park, embracing the ambition in the 2018 DEFRA 25-year plan to redefine national parks, focusing on the relationship communities have with a landscape that shapes their cultural identity, pride and self confidence. This is a vision of what the West Midlands could become when the significance of its landscape is properly realised and celebrated. It will profoundly change the identity of the region. Above all, this proposal’s central purpose is transformation not protection.

The delivery of HS2, City of Culture 2021 and the Commonwealth Games will bring a massive economic boost to the region and the park could play a significant role in this legacy as a fantastic natural and cultural resource with its own striking visual identity, a rich diversity of urban and rural habitats, wildlife, heritage and sport.

The West Midlands with its muscular, working landscape is inextricably linked to the extraordinary imaginations of its foremost industrialists, scientists and thinkers such as James Brindley, Thomas Telford, James Watt and Matthew Boulton, members of the Lunar Society and founders of the Midlands Enlightenment, the park would be a living and lasting testimony to their vision and ambition. It would be an embodiment of the civic pride and engagement espoused by the likes of George Cadbury and Joseph Chamberlain, ready to engage with the region’s Industrial Strategy in ways which are sustainable, productive and attractive.

This 21st century vision for a new kind of national park coincides with plans for a United Kingdom on the verge of a second agricultural revolution. There is a gathering world focus on high-tech agronomy, reforesting, organic growing, water storage and cleansing. A post Brexit UK should be in the vanguard of this revolution, creating new models of rural / urban localism and the West Midlands offers a perfect platform for people here to create and develop the capacity to introduce new skills to the wider world.

Rekindling and re-inventing the connection between communities and the space they inhabit, recognising the pride people take in that space, its cultural identity be it urban, suburban or rural is very much a modern, contemporary view of how our landscapes work. This is what the West Midlands National Park is all about. With 1,000 miles of tracks and trails, 1,000 lakes and 1,000 miles of rivers and streams and more canals than Venice. A mighty, rolling landscape with an abundance of woodland, heathland, hills and valleys with open country, working farms, small villages and larger towns. Great walking country for serious hikers or gentle strollers out looking for a place to picnic, for runners, riders, bikers and anglers, there is a huge diversity here that quite literally goes with the territory.

This is an ambitious, long-term proposal that needs to be expedited now. HS2 and the Games will give us a perfect storm of opportunity to re-imagine a long forgotten landscape, creating a living, working national park, for jobs, education, good health and well being, leisure and above all, for a high-grade, sustainable environment. Because the quality of our environment is equal to the quality of our lives, it is an equation as simple as it is compelling.
This idea is so compelling that it has already gained considerable traction, nationally and internationally. Capitalising on the keen interest expressed from all quarters – government, education, civil societies and business – it is our intention to partner with these and other interested organisations, institutions and communities to work collaboratively in order to achieve real change.

With the encouragement of the Rt Hon Dame Caroline Spelman MP and Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority in addition to the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Princes Trust, the Nobrega Foundation, The Canal and River Trust, the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership, the Black Country Consortium, Transport for West Midlands, Urban Land Institute, KPMG, Arcadis, the Heart of England Forest, the Black Country Geopark UNESCO World Heritage Project, The Landscape Institute, UK and UNESCO we are now establishing the means to take this project forward on to the next stage.

The West Midlands National Park proposal builds on the unique approach developed in the Black Country Urban Park (from 2005), HS2 Landscape Vision (2010-15) and the Tame Valley Landscape Vision (2016) which have, during the course of the last 7 years received support from Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Emma Howard Boyd (Chair of the Environment Agency), David Higgins, HS2 Ltd, David Prout and Sir Brian Briscoe (formerly of HS2 Ltd) the and a host of local institutions including the Chambers of Commerce from Birmingham and Solihull, Birmingham City Council, Smarter Cities, Birmingham, the Birmingham Metropolitan College, West Midlands Parks Forum, Directors of Public Health for local authorities and the Curzon Regeneration Board.
ANNEX D
PROGRAMME OF WORK

PHASE 1: Establishing CATiD and the June conference

PHASE 2: 2018–2020: executive development/proof of concept
• Project management: establish willing and active community to form the project team for governance and advice, able to support, influence and make the development of the project happen
• Establish key milestones, monitor programmes and progress.
• Resources: Team of 5–6 people with the capacity to employ specialist services, printing and administration and kit.

Tasks: scoping and mapping:
• Of physical, environmental, economic, digital, social and cultural infrastructure, analysis and examples of best comparable international practice, models of governance, finance, and innovative public engagement, existing and potential assets.
• Identify the future resources needed for the project and the return on investment expected.
• Identify existing projects and groups/communities to capture immediate and tangible impact.
• Identify key big moves, competitions and bids for implementation (for 2022).
• Establish bids for funding for research and implementation including MIPIM presentation.
• Building on existing networks, establish new key players, partners and supporters whose aims and ambitions align with the projects including 3rd sector networks, HEI’s, businesses, NGO’s, charities and local authorities,
• Undertake preliminary case studies for 2022 Commonwealth Games and arrival of HS2.

PHASE 3: Funding and implementation (dependent on funding cycles)
• Knowledge and expertise from Phase 1 will inform and shape the development of strategy, policy, public engagement and the communication of approaches to the delivery of the West Midlands National Park proposal.
• It will inform the development of significant funding applications to implement a range of specific physical, social and cultural projects, engage communities to raise the profile of the WMCA ensuring that it can compete effectively in the global race for talent.
• As support for the WMNP gathers momentum, we will provide a flow of strategic advice and expertise between the community, key stakeholders, partners and international networks to the Combined Authority for the continued planning and implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan over a 10–15 year period, responses to the New Land Management Policy and potential structure for the national park.
• Provide a community and stakeholder perspective on how geographic identity, culture and environmental sustainability can be used to positively impact on WMCA plans, recognising that many of the issues are within a regional, national or global context.
• Facilitate a landscape master planning approach to help guide economic development, regeneration and housing decisions to derive increased health and quality of life outcomes over the long term through a number of case studies including Tame Valley (three sections), the Contour Canal and the Geo Park, The Commonwealth Games, B7 and the international Wetland Park
• Advise on, represent and pursue the aims relevant policies including the UN SDG’s, to ensure the WMCA contributes to resolving international challenges and becomes renowned for excellence
• Act as a link between government, the Mayor and the WMCA for good practice relating to landscape and the environment linked to infrastructure.

PHASE 4: Implementation (in partnership)
• Create self-sustaining and resilient organisation to continue for 15–20 years to engage with DEFRA, Natural England, local politicians and government.
• Establish international network of partners to examine national and international impact of a new landscape-led approach to considering development and change.
• Publish policy documents and research papers.
• Establish programme of exhibitions and dissemination of ideas.
• Attract research funding and impact evaluation
• Continue to build supportive constituencies.
• Advise on the strategy for the physical implementation of projects, exhibitions and collaborations.
ANNEX E
POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

Institutional funding has been provided by Birmingham City University establish CATiD, led by Professor Kathryn Moore, to kick-start the project.

We anticipate working collaboratively with a number of partners to gain further support to undertake its executive development and implementation. Currently this includes the Department for Transport, DEFRA (via the Environment Agency and Natural England), Natural Improvement Area Funds, the RSPB, National Trust, the Canal and River Trust, Severn Trent, The Nobrega Foundation, Local Authorities, other HEI and FE institutions, local businesses and civil societies. Possible opportunities exist via the GBSLEP ERDF Sustainable Urban Development Fund.

Other international and local sources are being investigated.
Julian Beer
BCU Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Julian leads on the University’s Research, Enterprise and Business Engagement strategy, forging links between business and higher education. Julian has extensive experience of the private sector, as well as transferring higher education knowledge into commercial or public policy outcomes. As leader of its strategy on business and employer engagement, Julian strengthens Birmingham City University’s connection with the City and region. He leads on research, innovation and knowledge exchange development, together with expanding commercial activities. Julian has significant experience of both higher education and the private sector, as well as successfully transferring research and learning from one to the other.

Andy Street
WMCA Mayor

Andy Street was elected as the first Mayor of the West Midlands on May 4, 2017. The primary function of the role is to chair the West Midlands Combined Authority and brings with it significant powers over transport, housing, skills and jobs. Before becoming Mayor, Andy combined a career with John Lewis, Britain’s most successful workers’ co-operative, with a host of high-profile economic development roles, working with local and national government. He was the Chair of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership between 2011 and 2016, helping to build the relationships that have underpinned the economic growth of the region.

Roland Lin
UNESCO

Dr Roland LIN Chih-Hung is currently Programme Specialist of the Asia-Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO Headquarters in France. He coordinates UNESCO cultural heritage safeguarding projects in Central and South Asia, notably the Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nominations; Bamiyan Valley preservation project in Afghanistan and Lumbini, birthplace of the Lord Buddha preservation project in Nepal. He also manages World Heritage issues in India, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives, and five Central Asian countries. Born in Taiwan, but living in Paris since 1991, Lin received his PhD in Art History and Archaeology from Paris-Sorbonne University in 1998.

Kathryn Moore
CATiD

Kathryn Moore, President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and Professor of Landscape Architecture at Birmingham City University has published extensively on design quality, theory, education and practice. Chair of the pilot High Speed 2 (HS2) landscape guidelines, she has taken a lead role in redefining the relationship between landscape, culture and governance, finance, health and community engagement within the context of the Birmingham region and is a member of the independent National HS2 Ltd Design Panel. As president of IFLA she led the transformation of the organisation and is a founding partner of the World Design Summit, leading to the World Design Declaration signed this year in Montreal 2017.

Dirk Sijmons
NETHERLANDS’ 1ST STATE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT


James Corner
FIELD OPERATIONS

James Corner is the Founding Partner and CEO of James Corner Field Operations. His work is renowned for innovative and bold contemporary design across a variety of project types and scales, with a special commitment to the design of a vibrant and dynamic public realm in cities, informed and inspired by the ecologies of place, people and nature. He was responsible for designing New York’s...
highly-acclaimed High Line and London’s South Park Plaza at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. He was named by TIME as one of ‘Ten Most Influential Designers’ by Fast Company as one of the ‘Top 50 Innovators’.

**PETER MILLER**  
*HS2*

Environmental Programme Leader in planning, directing and building major infrastructure projects. Peter provides environmental and sustainability advice for business, planning and Secretary of State decision makers to make major projects happen. Expert witness and specialist in environmental planning of Transport & Works Orders, hybrid Bill preparation and evidence. Witness before Judicial Review, Parliamentary Examiners, Commons and Lords Standing Order Select Committees, Environmental Audit Committee. Principal environmental witness HS2 Select Committee.

**METTE SKJOLD**  
*SLA*

CEO and Partner at SLA A/S, Mette is leading the committee on architecture and construction policy at Danske Arks, the trade organisation of Danish Architects. Mette is a member of the Business Council of the Copenhagen Municipality, led by mayor Frank Jensen. She holds experience from several national and international strategic rural and urban development projects. Mette holds a masters from the School of Architecture in Aarhus, and an international master in leadership and innovation from Copenhagen Business School.

**MERRICK DENTON-THOMPSON**  
*LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE*

Merrick Denton-Thompson is President, Trustee and Fellow of the Landscape Institute. He has worked in local government and the voluntary sector for all of his career. He left local government as the Assistant Director of the Environment at Hampshire County Council where he was responsible for environmental policies in strategic planning, rural affairs and the countryside service. He was appointed to the Board of Natural England by the Secretary of State to assist in the development of the new government agency in 2006 – 2009. He was awarded an Order of the British Empire by the Queen for his contribution to education.

**SEAN RUSSELL**  
*WEST MIDLANDS MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION*

Sean Russell is Implementation Director of the West Midlands Mental Health Commission. As Director of Implementation, Sean oversees the delivery of an ambitious action plan which could make a significant difference to people’s lives in the West Midlands. It will help people with mental ill health stay in employment, support others get into work, focus on the importance of good-quality housing, stem the flow of people with mental ill health into the criminal justice system and improve timely access to good quality, compassionate care that gives more control to people.

**PIETRO LAUREANO**  
*IPOGEA*

Pietro is the founder and coordinator of IPOGEA Center for Traditional Knowledge Studies, a non-profit organization based in Matera and Florence, which carries out projects to safeguard the landscape with ancient practices such as the use of dry stone terraces, water collection tanks and draining tunnels. Pietro is part of the UNESCO expert group that is working on the drafting of the new Landscape Convention. As an Italian representative in the Technical-Scientific Committee of the United Nations Convention on the Fight against Desertification (UNCCD), and as President of the Panel for Traditional Knowledge, he promoted the creation of a World Bank on Traditional Knowledge and their use innovative.

**MICHAEL SCHWARZE-RODRIAN**  
*ERMSCHER LANDSCAPE PARK*

Michael is the head of the Department European and Regional Networks and the EU Representative of the Regional Association Ruhr (RVR). He is a landscape planner who planned and implemented the Emscher Landscape Park. He moderates local and regional networks for a sustainable Metropolitan Ruhr. His great experiences with urban landscapes, integrated strategies and project management is the background of his European and international networking. His current interests are focused on the integration and bundling of several spatial, environmental and economic strategies under the label ‘Green Infrastructure Ruhr’.
Executive Summary

**TIM HASELDEN**
**TAME VALLEY WETLANDS TRUST**

Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager. Tim manages the Tame Valley Wetlands scheme and team, working closely with the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Partnership Board. Tim studied geography and ecology at the University of Plymouth and worked as a Ranger looking after parks and local nature reserves in the borough of Solihull before joining the Trust.

**MICHÈLE FARMER**
**PRINCE’S TRUST**

Michele Farmer is the Prince’s Trust Director for Central England, a region that stretches from the Welsh border to the Norfolk coast, from Bedfordshire in the South to North Lincolnshire. Across this region full of contrasts, the Trust works with c15000 young people every year, helping them towards work or self-employment. Michele has a degree in Art History from Leicester University and a Post Graduate diploma from the University of Manchester. Originally trained as a curator, Michele is passionate about the arts and creativity and alongside that, has spent many years championing young people, especially those who may not have had the best start in life.

**DAME CAROLINE SPELMAN**
**MP MERIDEN**

Caroline was first elected as the MP for the Meriden Constituency in 1997. In opposition she held a number of posts including shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, International Development and Spokesperson for Health. She was also Chairman of the Conservative Party. From 2010 to 2012 she was Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Caroline now serves as the Second Church Estates Commissioner. As an Member of Parliament Caroline has consistently campaigned to protect the greenbelt, introducing a private members’ bill to prevent garden grabbing in 2008.

**SIMON DELAHUNTY-FORREST**
**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

Simon manages the City Design and Conservation Team within the Planning and Regeneration service. As Birmingham City Council’s lead design advisor championing design quality Simon is known for his ability to successfully combine Architecture and Urban Design to create holistic environments. This includes acting as the focal point on design issues and stimulating design quality through multi-agency project team working and close interaction with external developers, key stakeholders and partners in relation to the design of new development being promoted and managed through the Planning.

**GARETH DOHERTY**
**HARVARD GRADUATE DESIGN SCHOOL**

Gareth Doherty is an assistant professor of landscape architecture and senior research associate at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where he is also director of the Master in Landscape Architecture program. Doherty is author of, Paradoxes of Green: Landscapes of a City-State, published by the University of California Press. Previous publications include, Is Landscape…? Essays on the Identity of Landscape, edited with Charles Waldheim; and Ecological Urbanism, edited with Mohsen Mostafavi. Doherty is a founding editor of the New Geographies journal and editor-in-chief of New Geographies 3: Urbanisms of Color. Doherty’s latest book is Roberto Burle Marx Lectures: Landscape as Art and Urbanism.

**MERTEN NEFS**

Merten Nefs received his master degree in architecture at Delft University of Technology (2003) and studied regional planning at the University of São Paulo. In 2010, Merten joined the Deltametropolis Association, a Rotterdam-based network and laboratory for metropolitan development. He coordinated the SprintCity program for Transit-Oriented Development that has resulted in an interactive planning support tool implemented on several transport corridors, international presentations and workshops, as well as various publications. He has organized a research-by-design program on metropolitan landscape in collaboration with renowned landscape architects and knowledge institutes. In parallel, Merten coaches master students from several universities and teaches at the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture.
SAM RICHARDS
INDEPENDENT DESIGN REVIEW
PANEL HS2

Sam Richards is a town planner with 35 years of experience in major transport projects, urban design and policy development. He is a member of the HS2 Independent Design Review Panel and is a co-chair of Urban Design London’s panel. As Head of Urban Integration at Crossrail Sam led and managed the largest programme of urban realm improvements associated with an infrastructure project in this country, including designs for 31 stations. As Head of Land Use Planning at TfL Sam advised the Mayor on some of the most significant development in London, including the Shard, Kings Cross, Stratford and Greenwich Peninsular.

ANASTASIA NIKOLOGIANI
CATiD

Anastasia Nikologianni is qualified as a Landscape Architect MA and Agriculturist/Horticulturist MSc. Her Climate-KIC labeled PhD in Landscape Architecture explored the role of low carbon and spatial quality and the contribution of design in the development of regional landscape based spatial strategies. She is the Chair of the Emerging Professionals Advocate of IFLA World, holding committee positions at professional organisations such as the Climate-KIC Alumni Association and the Landscape Institute Midlands.

ALEX ALBANS
CATiD

Alex Albans is a qualified landscape architect PGDip with a background in geography, surveying and cartography. His PhD in Landscape Architecture explored how landscape architects interpret sites and examined the factors which shape their resultant design decisions. The research was informed by experience gained teaching postgraduates with Prof. Kathryn Moore over a number of years. In addition to the work at CATiD, Alex is an independent conflict mediator and facilitator and runs a network of peace and reconciliation partners for Coventry Cathedral’s non-faith and other-faith programme.

PAUL CURETON
CATiD

Paul Cureton is a Senior Lecturer in Design (People, Products, Places) Imagination Lancaster, Lancaster University. Paul and Senior Research Fellow at CATiD. He holds a PhD in Landscape Representation from Manchester School of Architecture. Primary research interests include Future Cities, GIS, UAVs, mapping, modelling and digital fabrication. Recent publications include Explorations of the Work of Lawrence Halprin ‘Rhythm, Agency, Scoring & the City’ in ‘Landscape & Agency: Critical Essays, a monograph; ‘Strategies for Landscape Representation: Digital and Analogue Techniques’ (Routledge 2016) and the co-authored governmental working paper ‘A Visual History of the Future’ (Foresight, BIS 2014).

GRAHAM WORTON
DUDLEY COUNCIL

Project lead for the Black Country Global UNESCO Geopark and keeper of geology at Dudley Council. Graham has worked for Dudley Council for 17 years and has been closely involved with Dudley Museum for more than 35 years. In 2017 Graham was awarded the Brighton Medal, which is awarded every three years to a geological curator, by the outgoing chair of the Geological Curators’ Group which is affiliated to the Geological Society of London.

PAUL GERRETSSEN
DELTAMETROPOLIS

Paul Gerrels is chief designer in the fields of regional planning, urban planning and architecture. He has studied at the renowned Universities TU Delft and ETH Zurich. He graduated with honourable mention in 1999 at the TU Delft as Master of Architecture. From 2008 onwards he was appointed director of the Deltametropolis Association. The Deltametropolis Association is a members association that focuses on the development of the Randstad area, consists of the metropolitan area around the four major cities of the Netherlands.
## ANNEX F
### PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE LANDSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE

**21–22 June 2018 • Birmingham City University**

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