



CREATING A NATIONAL PARK FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

A NEW 21ST CENTURY IDENTITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Professor Kathryn Moore



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

CATiD
Critical Artistic Thinking in Design

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 strategy plans to support the resourcing of the plan. Including recognise the opportunities provided by the imminent arrival of HS2 and the hosting of the Commonwealth Games in the region and embrace the ambition in the 2018 DEFRA 25-year plan to redefine national parks;
- Creating improved collaborative and citizen engaged solutions focus on the relationship communities have with a landscape that shapes their cultural identity, pride and self confidence and encouraging cross boundary working and delivery;
- Supporting the positioning of the UK agriculture which is on the verge of a second agricultural revolution and a gathering world focus on high-tech agronomy, reforestation, organic growing, water storage and cleansing; and
- Ensuring that a post Brexit UK we are a showcase of new models of rural / urban localism.

The West Midlands 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 an ambitious, 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

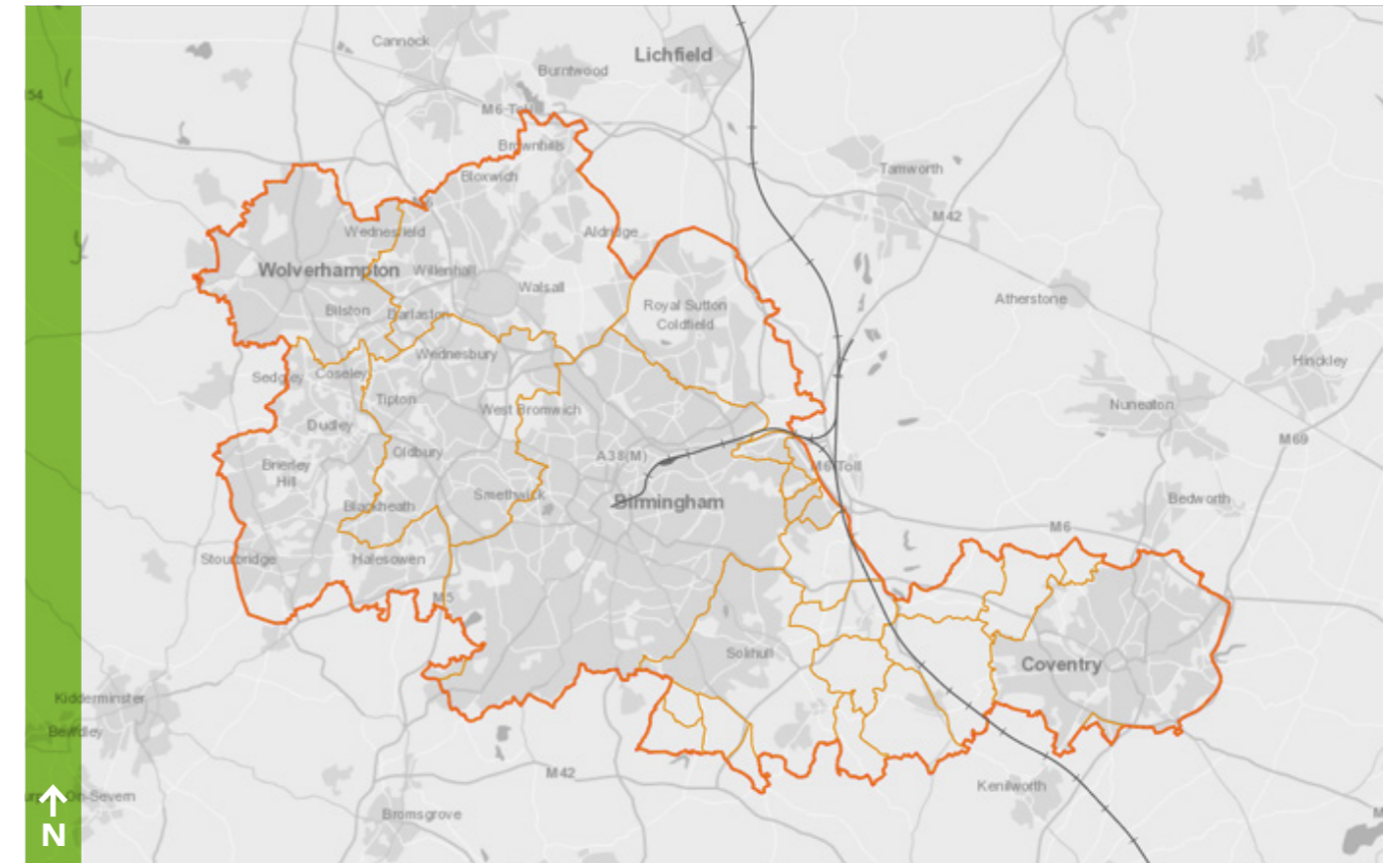
FUNDING

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



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0 1 2 4 6 8 Kilometers

- HS2_PBR_C240_RE_HighSpeedRailwaysAlignment_DE_Ln_Formal_ES
- BEN_ARP_C224_AG_StationFootprint_Ply_CT05_Formal_ES
- WMCA Parish
- WMCA

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

See attached PDF and hard copy

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 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 Coventry, City of Culture 2022, 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, focussing on the relationship communities have with a landscape that shapes their cultural identity, pride and self confidence. This is 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 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.

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, reforestation, 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.

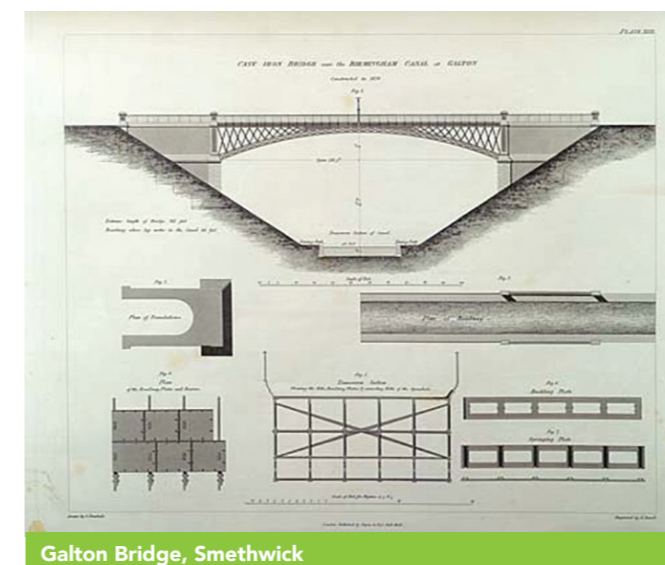
This is an ambitious, long-term proposal that needs to be expedited now. HS2 and the Games will give us a perfect storm of opportunity to re-imagine a long forgotten landscape, creating a living, working national park, for jobs, education, good health and well being, leisure and above all, for a high-grade, 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.

ANNEX C INTERESTED PARTIES

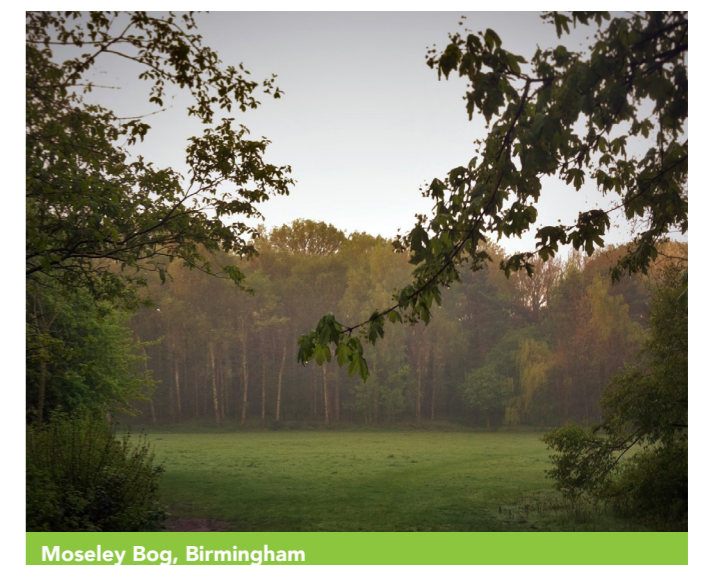
This idea is so compelling that it has already gained considerable traction, nationally and internationally. Capitalising on the keen interest expressed from all quarters – government, education, civil societies and business – it is our intention to partner with these and other interested organisations, 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.



Galton Bridge, Smethwick



Moseley Bog, Birmingham

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.



Caption TBC



Bumble Hole Local Nature Reserve © Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

ANNEX F

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR THE LANDSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE

21–22 June 2018 • Birmingham City University

DAY ONE: THURSDAY 21 JUNE

10:00 Registration opens (tea and coffee)

11:00 Julian Beer

11:10 Kate Raworth (video)

11:20 WMCA Mayor Andy Street

11:30 UNESCO Mechtild Rossier

11:40 HS2 David Higgins (TBC)

11:50 EA Emma Howard Boyd (TBC)

12:00 Prof. Kathryn Moore CATiD

12:30 Lunch

13:50 James Corner

14:00 Peter Miller

14:30 Dirk Sijmons

15:00 Break

15:30 Merrick Denton-Thompson

16:00 Sean Russell

16:30 Pietro Laureano

17:30 Michael Schwarze-Rodrian

17:30 Close

DAY TWO: FRIDAY 22 JUNE

09:30 Registration opens (tea and coffee)

10:00 Dame Caroline Spelman

10:10 Birmingham City Council

10:30 Sam Richards

10:50 Merten Nefs

11:10 Gareth Doherty

11:30 Break / Extra session

11:50 Anastasia Nikologiani

12:05 Alex Albans

12:20 Paul Cureton

12:35 Lunch

13:35 PANEL DISCUSSION:

Andy Beer

Lisa Pinney

Paul Gerreston

Col. Michael Carrington

Michele Farmer

17:30 Close