UK2070 COMMISSION

Strategic Spatial Development in the West Midlands—a Long View Perspective

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The following Think Piece has been submitted to the UK 2070 Commission in response to its Call for Evidence. The views expressed are those of the author, and not the Commission.

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Dave Thew & Sandy Taylor: Futures Network West Midlands.

Preamble

This working note has been prepared as a contribution to discussions at the first meeting of the UK 2070 Commission Steering Group. It is based on 40 years of direct experience of strategic land use planning in the West Midlands and primarily focusses on the policy-making process. It aims to draw out lessons from this experience that might be applicable in developing a National Spatial Policy Framework as a mechanism to help address current economic imbalances across the UK. Whilst the inter-face with issues relating to governance structures and resources will be touched on, these are not the focus of this note.

The West Midlands Region

The West Midlands has a population of over 5 million people and is a region of great diversity ranging from the major urban areas of Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and Stoke through to sparsely populated rural areas. A key feature in the structure of the region is a tightly drawn Green Belt surrounded by a ring of County towns. This urban-rural dichotomy is often reflected in different administrative arrangements and political perspectives. A map of the West Midlands Region is attached. (Appendix 1).

The structure of this note

The purpose of this 'think-piece' paper is to use the West Midlands as a case study to examine what underlying principles and practices might be applicable in shaping a National Spatial Policy Framework, focussing particularly on the policy-making process.

This will be achieved by:

- **Looking back** - learning lessons from the past, particularly relating to the West Midlands experience in regional planning;
- **Taking stock of current changes** – a critique of evolving new structures and policy developments including at the meta-regional level;
- **Looking to the future** – how experience from the West Midlands might influence the shaping of a National Spatial Policy Framework.

Looking back to look forward

Phase 1

- The West Midlands has a long history of successful collaborative strategic planning. (1)(2)
- Main theme of post-war planning up to the 1970s – the West Midlands regarded as the 'engine room' of the national economy - growth accommodated by the development of New and Expanded 'overspill' Towns beyond the Green Belt – supported by investment in new infrastructure (i.e. the strategy was one of **'planned decentralisation' driven by increasing 'congestion' in the Conurbation** along with

redevelopment of unfit housing areas such as the Comprehensive Development Areas in Birmingham).

- The implementation of the strategy facilitated through the establishment by Central Government of Development Corporations (Redditch and Telford) with the latter very successful in attracting overseas inward investment, particularly Japanese companies.
- The Region is an appropriate geographical scale at which to plan i.e. a functional city region + a rural western fringe – spatial policy developed by the West Midlands Planning Authority Conference in liaison/partnership with Central Government who were responsible for final approval.

Phase 2

- Mid 1970s – establishment of West Midlands County Council coincided with major economic downturn – loss of 600,000 manufacturing jobs, high unemployment, increased dereliction, erosion of traditional working-class inner-city communities.
- Crisis point – Handsworth riots - a reflection of level of discontent.
- West Midlands Futures Study undertaken by WMCC as an input to Structure Plan Review [(3)] demonstrated the scale of the challenge - the interaction of economic, social and environmental factors in a 'spiral of decline' – and the policy choices involved in trying to reverse this.
- **Fundamental change of emphasis in regional spatial policy in 1980s from 'overspilling' growth to the challenge of Re-Urbanisation/Urban Renaissance** – subsequently reflected in Regional Planning Policy (e.g. 1990s RPG11).
- Black Country Development Corporation established to help re-structure a central part of the Black Country reclaiming derelict sites around a new Black Country Route.

Phase 3

- 2000 Regional Planning Guidance Review (co-ordinated by the West Midlands Local Government Association as the Regional Planning Body) – subsequently rebadged as Regional Spatial Strategy in 2004 – co-ordination with the Regional Economic and Transport strategies.
- **Sustainable development principles** at the heart of the strategy – concern at continued 'market-driven' decentralisation of people and jobs from the Major Urban Areas (MUAs) contributing to the loss of investment, abandonment and environmental degradation in the MUAs.
- Recognition that "the dispersal of population and activities under-uses the social and physical resources of the MUAs and contributes to unsustainable development patterns that lead people to make more and longer journeys, more often than not by the private car."[(4)]
- Review process included new partnership arrangements and analytical techniques, including an assessment of the polycentric nature of the region providing a deeper understanding of functional areas and their inter-relationships.[(5)]
- Following a major study, in the case of the Black Country, a new long-term vision was developed based on enhancement of **Centres and Corridors** and the development of an Urban Park concept (lessons from the Ruhr).

- Green Belt adjustments were agreed to provide for strategic employment sites – subsequently leading in one case to a major new development at i54 to the north of Wolverhampton accommodating the new Jaguar Land Rover engine plant.

Lessons from the West Midlands – some initial perspectives for wider discussion

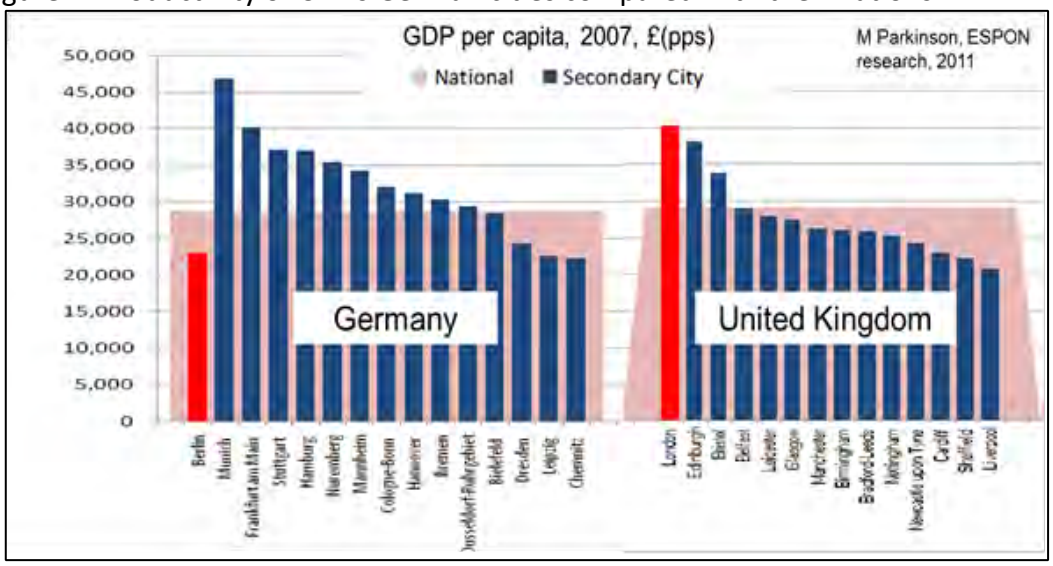
a. The need to anticipate the implications of further economic change

- The West Midlands suffered a major economic shock in the 1970s demonstrating the scale of economic change that can occur. Similar changes could still occur in the future and need to be anticipated e.g. there is still high dependence on manufacturing and the car industry, with new challenges emerging including the implications of Brexit and the impact of new technology (e.g. new emphasis on electric/hybrid models and introduction of artificial intelligence).
- In the West Midlands there is therefore a need to plan proactively for economic diversification to foster greater local economic resilience.
- One new opportunity coming forward relates to the anticipated development of HS2 creating new development confidence particularly in Birmingham/Solihull. However, there is a need to extend these benefits across the wider West Midlands (referenced in Professor Sir Peter Hall's concept of 'Irrigating the Region'). This will require not just improved connectivity but also a better integrated policy approach to 'place making' across a wider area (see d. below)**.**

b. The case for Urban Renaissance – the Productivity Challenge [(6)]

- In much of continental Europe, cities have higher productivity than their national average in the UK; however, most of our major urban areas are less productive than the nation (Figure 1).
- If English cities (mostly at least 10% below the UK national average) performed more like continental cities (mostly at least 10% above), the increase in national productivity would be worth around £100bn per year.
- There is a striking parallel to be drawn between Germany's East-West regional disparity, and England's North-South divide. But whilst the former East Germany cities (Dresden, Leipzig, Chemnitz) have substantially closed the gap since reunification in 1991, the northern English cities (Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds/Bradford, Nottingham, Newcastle, Sheffield and Liverpool) are drifting further away from the South.

Figure 1: Productivity of UK vs German cities compared with their nations



Michael Parkinson (2011*) 'Secondary cities in Europe: performance, policies and prospects'*, ESPON

c. The benefits of Place Making – the need for an integrated approach to planning for economic development, transport and housing [(6)]

- The economic prospects of the West Midlands are dependent on attracting and retaining a skilled and varied workforce. Education and training help create skills amongst people already here, but we live in a highly mobile society. Persuading them to stay (and attracting others from elsewhere) depends on the quality of life we can offer.
- When deciding where to live, the availability of jobs is fundamental, and housing comes next. Around 90% of the housing choices made each year are from the turnover of the existing stock, which is the measure of the importance of homes we already have. However 'home' means more than just a house: a place's attractions depend also on environmental quality, social fabric, services and infrastructure.
- Local transport systems are particularly important: people commute to find the best match for them between the type and quality of job, and the type and quality of home they are looking for. The amount of traffic depends on how well preferences for both jobs and homes can be met locally. **'Place-making'** is not a simple 'numbers game': it is the ability to put these factors together so that labour markets and quality of life give each other mutual support.
- Studies comparing urban policies between the UK and other countries suggest that it is the ability to integrate economic, transport, housing and spatial policies to deliver **'compact, liveable cities'** that is crucial to productivity. As well as being efficient in transport terms, such places are inherently more attractive to talent and so are more productive.

d. The case for Urban Renaissance – Climate Change

- If there was previously a strong case for supporting Urban Renaissance, this has now been further re-enforced by recent international scientific conclusions regarding the increasingly urgent need to respond to climate change.

- As noted earlier, the dispersal of population and activities is likely to lead to more and longer journeys and is therefore likely to extend people's carbon footprints.
- Urban Renaissance will therefore have a crucial role to play in retaining population and reducing the need to travel.
- This will require not only a commitment to increasing new housebuilding in the major urban areas but also encouraging investment in the existing housing stock which are involved in 90% of moves.

e. Inclusive growth – creating opportunities in areas of need

- One of the characteristics of the West Midlands metropolitan area is the spatial polarisation of its social structure (Appendix 4).
- In the 2001 RPG consultation exercise, one theme strongly supported by a wide range of partners was the principle of 'creating opportunities in areas of need.'
- An underlying aim was to restore market confidence by focussing investment in key locations thereby building positive re-enforcing patterns of economic, social and environmental change.

f. The evidence base

- The West Midlands in the past has benefited from the support of a Joint Data Team (previously Local Authority co-ordinated) that not only ensured high quality data was available to support policy development but also oversaw and managed an extensive monitoring system.
- In practice, these data systems acted as an important foundation stone for effective collaboration between local authorities.
- Following the demise of the Regional Spatial Strategy, these region-wide monitoring systems are no longer supported – just at a time when it appeared that, from the housing and demographic data, Urban Renaissance polices appeared to be showing signs of success.

g. Polycentricity analysis – a role for every place

- Unique research undertaken for the 2000 RPG process was to analyse the region as a series of functional layers. Mapping these functions provided a better means of identifying spatial functional relationships and a basis for identifying the potential roles of different places.
- This form of research can in turn facilitate the identification of potential agglomerations of economic activities for further proactive promotion i.e. enhancing the roles that different areas/places/centres can potentially play.

h. The importance of adopting 'open, inclusive and transparent' policy-making processes

- A key feature of strategic planning in the West Midlands in the 2000 RPG process was that it was operated in an open, inclusive and transparent way. This meant that all key stakeholders were involved 'inside the tent' being able to contribute directly through involvement in a series of Reference and Technical Groups. This allowed 'bottom up' perspectives and knowledge to be incorporated rather than the process operating purely as a 'top down' technical/professional exercise.

i. Inter-regional relationships – MKSM growth area – stepping stone or barrier

- In practice there are potential functional inter-relationships and important transport links with each of the 5 other regions that abut the West Midlands (Appendix 1)

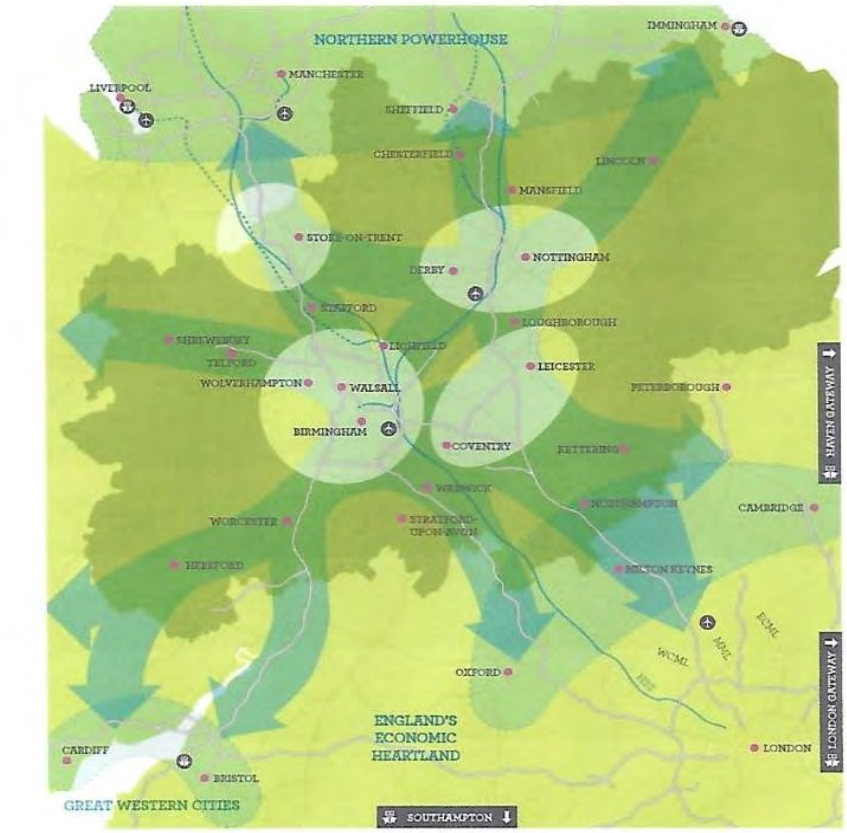
- In the case of the East Midlands, reference is made to the inter-relationship with the **Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area** – a proposal incorporated in an earlier version of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan.
- The scale of the growth proposed became a considerable concern of the West Midlands as it was considered that this would prejudice its urban regeneration aspirations by potentially:
  - diverting both public and private investment from the West Midlands;
  - attracting young talented skilled people out of the West Midlands;
  - acting as a major 'intervening opportunity' limiting the potential of development and investment choosing to move out of London/SE being attracted to the West Midlands.
- It is possible that similar concerns may arise in relation to the proposed **The Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford (CAMKOX) corridor** – if it draws investment away from London, will it act as 'a barrier or stepping stone?'

1. Taking stock of current changes

- In 2010, after many decades of collaborative strategic planning and like all other regions across England, the West Midlands experienced the demise of its regional policy working structures and the abolition of its Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.
- 'Localism' was the new approach with strategic land use planning matters being addressed through a new 'Duty to Co-operate' requirement and economic policy and growth driven by Local Economic Partnerships.
- Over recent times, however, two major changes have subsequently developed where strategic thinking on a wider spatial scale is again starting to emerge:
  - The setting up of the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect.
  - The establishment of a West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)**.**

a. The Midlands Engine and the Midlands Connect

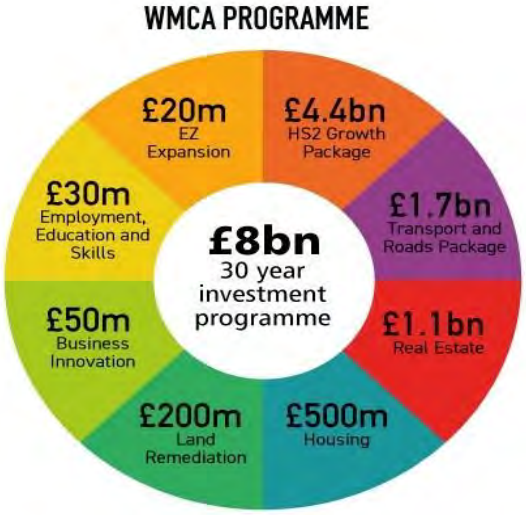
- **The Midlands Engine** was established in 2016 as a coalition of Councils, Combined Authorities, LEPs, Universities and business from across the Midlands (i.e. covering both the former West and East Midlands regions).
- The Engine is at the heart of the UK economy and is responsible for a fifth of the UK's total manufacturing industry. It acts as a gateway to the global economy through the Birmingham and East Midlands airports.
- Much of its early policy emphasis has focussed on transport connectivity in support of economic growth in different sectors and locations. In support of this emphasis, it has identified a spatial framework for investment based on **four strategic economic hubs and intensive growth corridors.**



- **The Midlands Connect initiative** was established to take forward and deliver improved transport connectivity in line with the Midlands Engine strategy. This has led onto a **Midlands Motorway Hub Study being undertaken** as an early output identifying current and future pressures on the motorway network and a range of potential options for addressing these challenges. This includes some significant options including the possibility of a new strategic route to the west of the Black Country.
- Whilst therefore the return of strategic thinking is clearly to be welcomed, in its present 'top down' form, it does start to expose significant challenges that will need to be addressed if this level of spatial policy making is to continue:
    - the lack of accountability and disconnect with local communities;
    - the lack of integration with wider social and environmental policy;
    - the disconnect with the formal spatial planning process.
    - A further concern is that by concentrating on the improvement of external transport links, this could encourage a further dispersal of development. Previous experience has shown that this could work against the interests of urban renewal and the principles of sustainability (i.e. the danger of 'left behind' communities in inner parts of Birmingham and the Black Country in a two-speed economy).
    - Promoting the right balance for future transport investment within the Engine between meeting the needs of the West Midlands Metropolitan area in support of urban renaissance and improving external links will therefore need to be a key concern particularly one that the newly formed WMCA should address.

b. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

- A diagram showing the structure of the WMCA's relationship with individual Local Authorities and Local Economic Partnerships is attached (Appendix 2).
- The WMCA's 2017 Strategic Economic Plan identified eight key spending areas:



- The Plan states, "our plan shows how we will use devolved powers and resources to deliver a stronger West Midlands with a focus on skills, innovation, transport and inward investment". However, relative to the challenges faced, other than support for the delivery of HS2, the scale of resources being allocated at this stage are limited.
- More recently, the Combined Authority has published a progress statement *Working towards a West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy* demonstrating, amongst other things its commitment to delivering a range of transport and land use related developments **within an inclusive growth strategy**. It has yet to demonstrate what this means in practice and has established a social inclusion unit to develop this further.
- Whilst proposed developments (e.g. relating to transport and housing) are consistent with the current local plans of the constituent local authorities, the Combined Authority does not have planning powers and is hesitant about preparing a spatial policy framework, at this stage preferring to focus on delivery rather than spatial policy development.
- If the role of the Combined Authority is to continue to develop through further devolution, the need for some form of Spatial Policy Framework is likely to increase. This will be particularly required to agree and justify its pattern of spending priorities between different areas. It could also have the added advantage of providing guidance to the constituent authorities in undertaking their duty to co-operate and help ensure consistency between individual development plans.

4. <u>Looking to the Future</u>

- If national competitiveness and productivity is dependent on the enhanced economic performance of all regions (and particularly the renaissance of major city regions such as the West Midlands), there is evidence from other countries (e.g.

Germany) that a more devolved style of governance can potentially have a significant role to play.

- Making out the case for such an approach will need to be a key focus for the UK2070 Commission opening up consideration of a variety of different structures, delegated powers and funding arrangements along with administrative and political capabilities and capacities.
- Whatever governance 're-engineering' options are considered, a spatial dimension will need to be addressed and the development of a National Spatial Policy Framework can provide a context for this. This raises issues as to how such a framework should be put together and what form it might take.
- The experience of the West Midlands set out in this paper provides some suggestions/recommendations as to potential starting points.

a. The process

This should be undertaken in an open and inclusive way. Whilst providing 'top down' process management, analysis and evaluation of options, the process should also incorporate opportunities for a range of 'bottom up' perspectives from different levels of governance along with engagement with wider regional stakeholders and representatives of civil society.

b. The evidence base

An openly developed and tested evidence base should form the foundation stone for the process. This could include the polycentric analysis (layers and flows) of a range of key economic, social and environmental data and provide the basis to better understand the roles of different regions and localities ('places') and the functional relationships between them.

c. The uncertainties

Given the time scale/dimension being promoted (i.e. looking forward 50 years); the level of uncertainty will increase significantly moving away from the present day. The development of alternative scenarios can provide important benefits:

- Providing an opportunity to explore ideas about the impact of some of the BIG changes that might need to be faced in the future (e.g. technology, demography, climate);
- Demonstrating how various economic, social and environmental factors might interact under different circumstances;
- Providing a neutral way to identify and test potential radical long-term visions/futures also demonstrating the integrated policy approaches required to help achieve them.

d. The principles

Drawing together the key principles that should underpin the development of a spatial framework can act as an important and constructive starting point. For example:

- Sustainability
- Equity (a more equitable distribution of resources)
- Inclusive growth
- Urban renaissance
- Economic and social resilience
- Connectivity
- Identity

In turn, these principles can act as a 'value sieve' in setting objectives and evaluating options.

e. The choices

If a scenarios exercise is undertaken, this can act as a stepping-stone towards identifying alternative strategic policy options and the key decision areas that relate to them. In relation to the West Midlands/Midlands, for example, these options might explore the difference between an emphasis on manufacturing (both through indigenous growth and the attraction of inward investment) in contrast to aiming to attract investment from London and the SE as an 'outlier' of an expanding services-based economy.

f. The output

Starting with the end in mind, it may be useful to start to identify early in the process the type of **policy concepts** that may prove useful in shaping a Spatial Policy Framework. This could include structural components such as hubs, zones, centres, corridors, networks/linkages and the like. As with any concept, in each case, the detailed policy implications would need to be unpacked and defined.

Conclusion

This working paper has provided the UK2070 Commission with an overview of regional strategic planning in the West Midlands over recent decades along with a brief outline of current changes in governance arrangements. It has demonstrated some of the interrelated factors that have shaped the strategic planning agenda and some of the administrative and professional policymaking procedures adopted in addressing the challenges identified.

In line with the original objective for the paper, it has used the West Midlands as a case study to examine some underlying principles and practices that could be applicable in shaping a National Spatial Policy Framework focussing specifically on the policy-making process. These are set out in summary form in section 4 above.

Finally, it is acknowledged that there are other important dimensions relating to the management of spatial development in the West Midlands that this paper has not addressed. These particularly relate to the operational and political interface between different layers of governance and the control of resources to deliver policy; for example, the role and effectiveness of the current Local Economic Partnerships relative to the previous Regional Development Agency. These other dimensions are matters that others may choose to explore further.

There are a range of lessons that can be drawn from the experience of spatial policy making in the West Midlands over the last 50 years which are relevant to the questions posed in the UK2070 Commission's Prospectus. A number of these have been highlighted in this Working Note mainly focussing on the principles that might be adopted in the development of a National Spatial Policy Framework.

The purpose of this addendum is to also provide from a West Midlands perspective some further thoughts on two issues that the Commission will need to consider:

1. The need to address spatial inequalities at both an inter-regional and intra-regional level.
2. The need to address how overlapping territorial relationships both within and beyond regions can best be managed.

1. The need to address spatial inequalities at both an inter-regional and intra-regional level

The economic shock in the 1970s affected the whole of the West Midlands but its impact was most strongly felt in the inner parts of the Metropolitan areas. Since this time, the regional economy has recovered but much of the growth has tended to focus in more dispersed locations.

This Working Note has highlighted that the current emphasis in the Midlands Connect initiative on improving external transport links could further encourage dispersal with the danger of 'left behind communities' in the inner parts of Birmingham and the Black Country. If National policy is to tackle spatial inequalities, it is therefore important that this is addressed at both the inter-regional and intra-regional level **and incorporates a long-term commitment to Urban Renaissance**. As set out in this Working Note, this emphasis and the case for further devolution of powers and resources to achieve it, can be further justified on the grounds of economic productivity and sustainability considerations.

The Sandwell Map of Deprivation (Appendix 4) demonstrates the scale of the challenge, where despite 50 years of inner-city policies and programmes, deep problems still exist. Nevertheless, German experience in the Ruhr (visited by the Black Country Study Team in 2004) does provide an example of what can be achieved provided there is a commitment to a long-term vision of economic, physical and environmental restructuring.

2. The challenge of managing overlapping territorial relationships both within and beyond the region

i. Within the Region – a focus on the City-Region?

Considerable attention has been given over many years to recalibrating the territorial scales of administration with implications for spatial planning and economic development policy. This has been reflected in a wide range of academic studies often evaluating the effectiveness of different devolved structures and their relationship with Government. The level of centralised control and the 'spatial blindness' of many Civil Service Departments have been particular issues that have been highlighted.[1]

In 1999, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were established to assist regions in realising their economic potential and to contribute to reducing regional economic disparities. In the case of the West Midlands, despite some limitations, a positive alignment was achieved between the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) providing a degree of consistency between spatial land use planning and economic development policy. In contrast, the current situation is that there is now no integrated policy making process able to address long-term spatial issues across the wider West Midlands. Rather, there is a complexity of overlapping responsibilities often focusing on a range of

largely uncoordinated, short term ad hoc initiatives. It is not surprising therefore that many have little confidence that inclusive growth can and will be achieved.

In these circumstances, if a strengthened approach to spatial planning is to be introduced; new coalitions of interest will therefore need to be developed. As a general principle, these can best be defined where there are common concerns and positive advantages in collaborative working across functional areas.

In the West Midlands, there are strong housing market and labour market functional relationships at the City-Region level. It is certainly at this level where strategic planning issues such as the accommodation of 'overspill' housing and the inter-relationship with public transport improvements continue to be addressed. However, without any overarching long-term strategy, decisions are being made in a disjointed manner. Indeed, there are signs that transport policy could end up driving long-term spatial policy without a proper assessment of wider social and environmental considerations.

Given that many of the key strategic policy challenges facing the City-Region are closely related to the future of the Metropolitan area, there is a strong case to be made for the WMCA to take a lead role in promoting the development of a spatial policy framework for this wider area. This would not only have the benefit of ensuring that Urban Renaissance interests are fully incorporated but could also assist authorities within the City-Region in the fulfilment of the Duty to Co-operate requirement.

Clearly, a critical first step in such a scenario will be the need for the Combined Authority itself to accept that a spatial policy framework should be developed for its own area. If this is the case, this could then act as a driving cog to establish appropriate spatial policy relationships with surrounding authorities within the wider City-Region. In turn, this policy framework would provide a more assured context for further devolution and the allocation of resources both to the Combined Authority and to the wider area.

ii. Beyond the Region – how to manage a range of inter-regional relationships?

This Working Paper has described how the West Midlands is currently tied in to a governance arrangement with the East Midlands through the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect initiatives. In the latter case, there is a primary focus on transport connectivity in support of economic growth with a very broad spatial policy framework of strategic economic hubs and intensive growth corridors identified.

The Paper also shows that there are potential economic and transport functional relationships with the other regions which abut the West Midlands and suggests that there can be concerns about scale and type of growth proposals in these other regions (e.g. the impact of the CAMKOX corridor).

Against this background, questions inevitably arise:

- Is there an adequate evidence base about the nature of functional relationships to justify the current governance arrangement with the East Midlands?
- Is there a danger that just focussing on one region could distort spatial policymaking and miss other potentially important linkages with opportunities in other regions?

In asking these questions, it is not the intention to undermine the current initiatives that clearly have the support of Government. Nevertheless, they are matters that could be examined in the development of a National Spatial Policy Framework. Moreover, as noted in the Working Paper, operating at this 'meta-regional' level also raises further issues such as:

- The lack of accountability and disconnect with local communities;
- The lack of integration with wider social and environmental policy;
- The disconnect with the formal spatial planning process.

Whether these concerns can be addressed may well depend on how the emerging spatial policy framework of the Midlands Engine subsequently interfaces with and influences the policy of the Combined Authority (and vice versa). This is a story still to unfold.

This paper has only been able to touch on some of the 'governance issues' that the UK2070 Commission will undoubtedly wish to address. What is clear from this appraisal is that there is currently limited coherent and integrated spatial policy thinking in the West Midlands at either the level of the Metropolitan area or the City-Region. There are certainly various spatial policy components in the form of transport strategy, the operation of the Duty to Co-operate and the spatial implications of a wide range of separate economic, social and environmental policies but there is no overarching collaborative process by which these are drawn together. If a case is to be made out for further devolution of powers, responsibilities and resources, this is a major weakness.

Furthermore, whilst the Midlands Engine demonstrates that there are functional relationships that extend beyond the West Midlands boundary, there remains a range of uncertainties as to how this policy interface will work out in practice. Taking forward the output from the Midlands Motorway Hub Study (referred to in this Working Note) could well be the first test of this arrangement.

More fundamentally, the West Midlands story suggests that, though spatial planning has a role to play especially in attempting to bring together the various policy threads, in the absence of redistributive policies at the national level, the English regions will continue to underperform and act as a break on national economic performance.

References

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2. RTPI – Region and Renaissance
3. Baker, M., Roberts, P. & Shaw, R. (2003) Stakeholder Involvement in Regional Planning Town and Country Planning Association).

4. WMCC Structure Plan Review – Futures Study
5. West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy
6. ECOTEC Polycentricity Study for RPG process
7. Extract from FNWM Letter to the WMCA Mayor
8. Extract from West Midlands Economic Forum's briefing note

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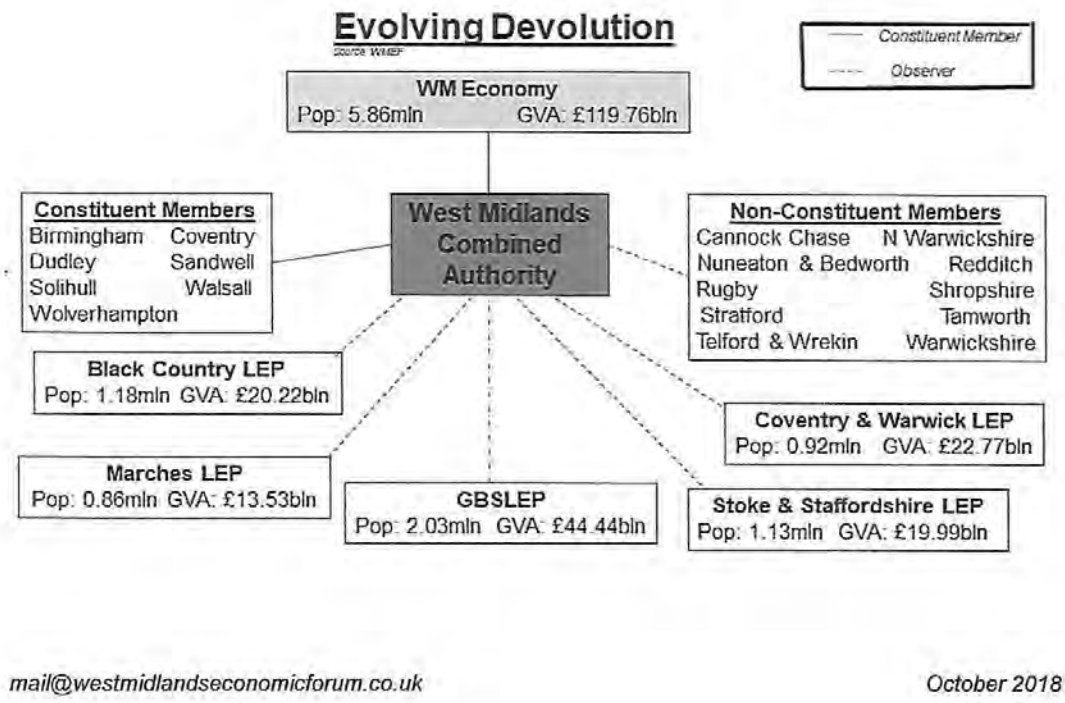
April 2019

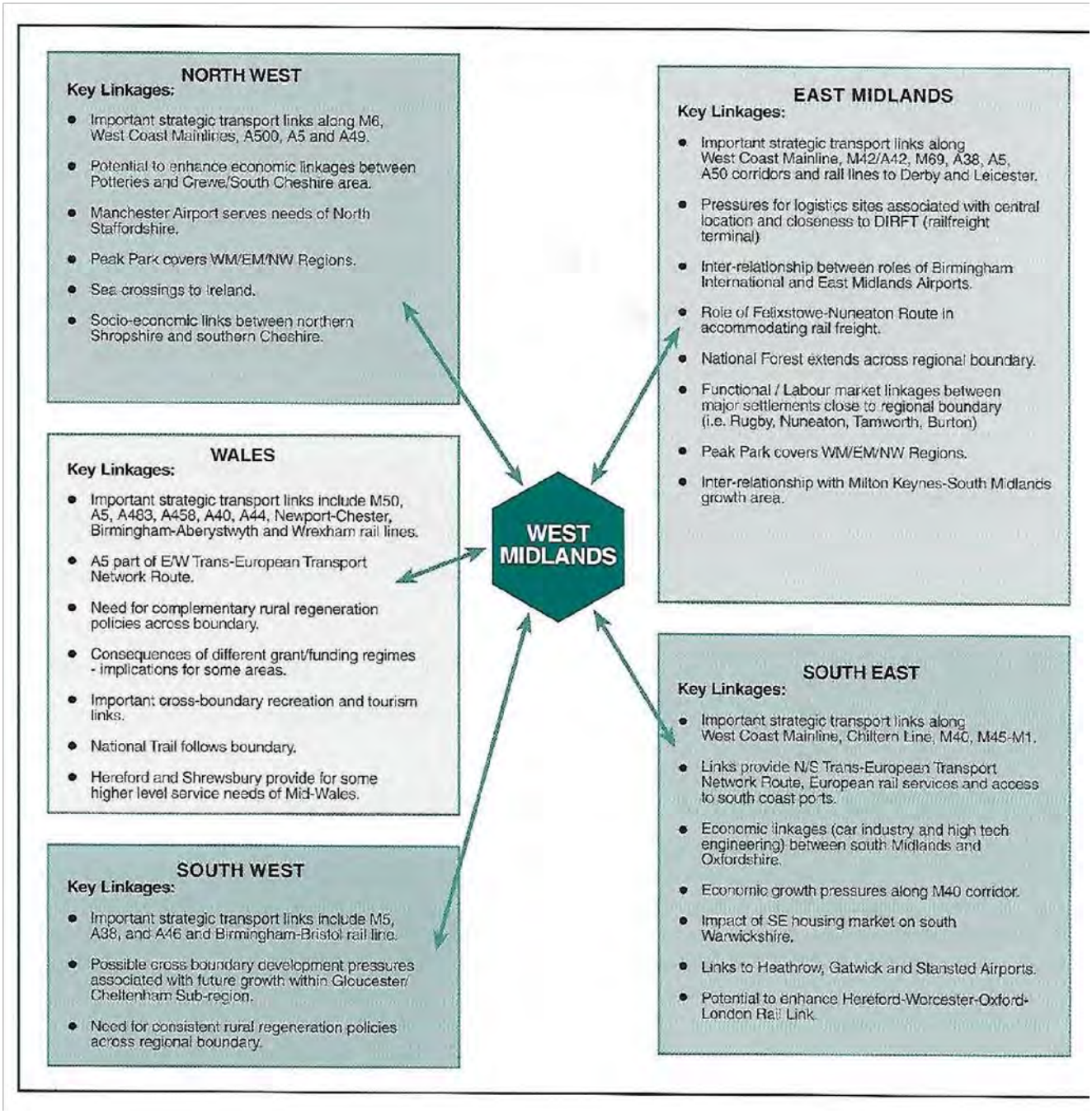
Appendix 1: The West Midlands Region

Appendix 2: The West Midlands Combined Authority[7]

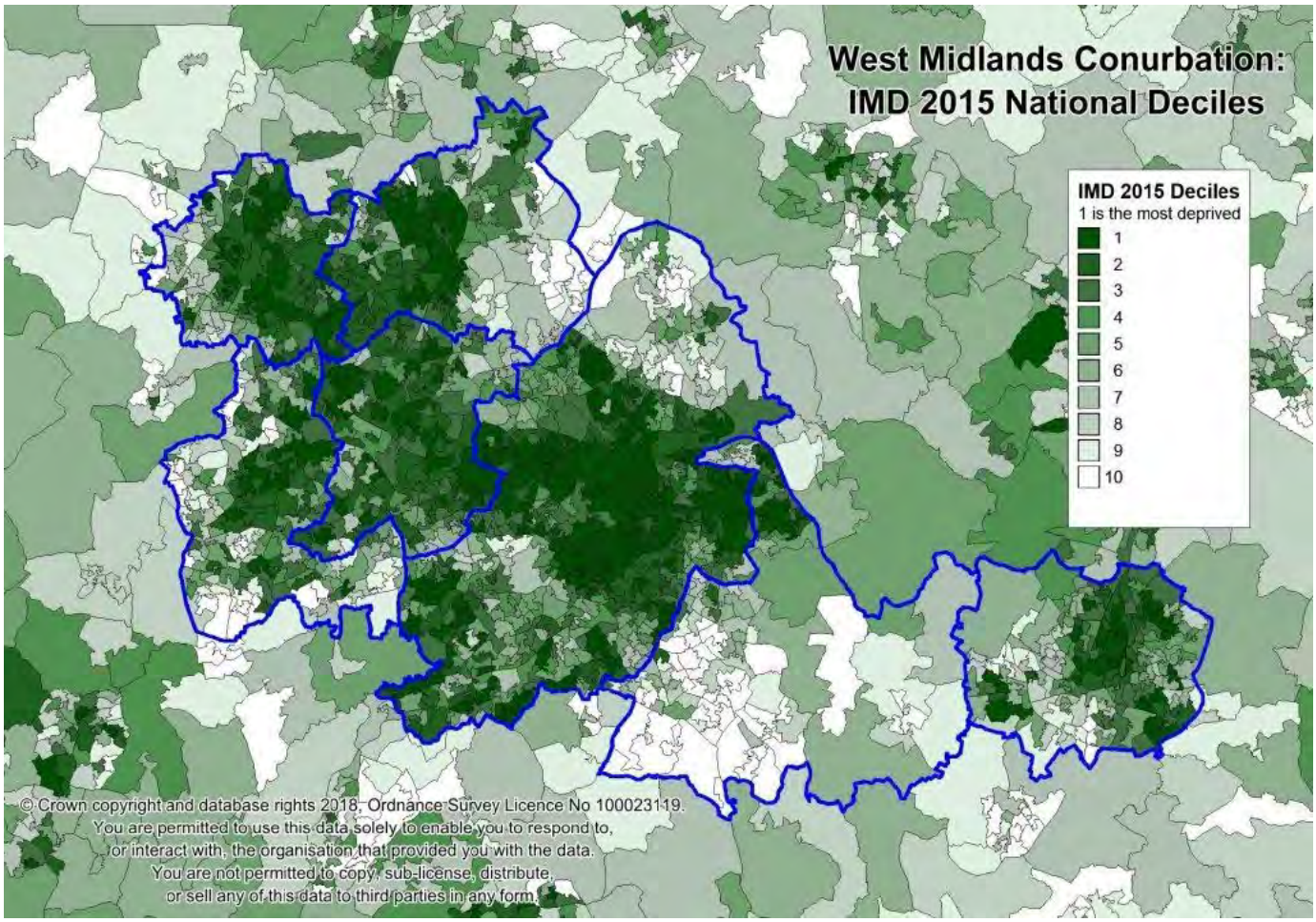


mail@westmidlandseconomicforum.co.uk *October 2018*

Appendix 3: The West Midlands – Inter-regional Relationships



Appendix 4: Deprivation - Sandwell in a West Midlands Context



- The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 shows Sandwell's average deprivation score as the 13th most deprived local authority in England, out of a total of 326. Previous IMD results for this measure show that Sandwell's position has improved slightly relative to other districts in England. Sandwell was the 12th most deprived local authority in 2010.
- Within the West Midlands conurbation, there is a central corridor of severe deprivation that runs from Birmingham, through Sandwell, into Wolverhampton, parts of Walsall, and Dudley. The less deprived areas are around the extremities of the conurbation and within the adjoining district of Solihull.
- Sandwell's location at the centre of this deprived urban area means that the borough does not benefit from having a semi-rural fringe - indeed, Sandwell is the only metropolitan borough outside London that does not adjoin a Shire district. The likely impact of a largely deprived hinterland should not be underestimated as a significant limiting factor on the potential to address some of Sandwell's deprivation characteristics.
- England is made up of 32,844 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 186 of which are in Sandwell. One in five of Sandwell's LSOAs fall into the most deprived 10% nationally in 2015. This shows a relative improvement, as around 30% of LSOAs were among the 10% most deprived in both 2007 and 2010. A further third fall into the most deprived 10-20%, so overall 55% of Sandwell's LSOAs fall within the worst 20% nationally, and 86% within the worst 50% nationally, clearly displaying the high levels of deprivation prevalent in large parts of Sandwell.