



The National Forest
delivering positive
change for nature,
people and the economy





Background



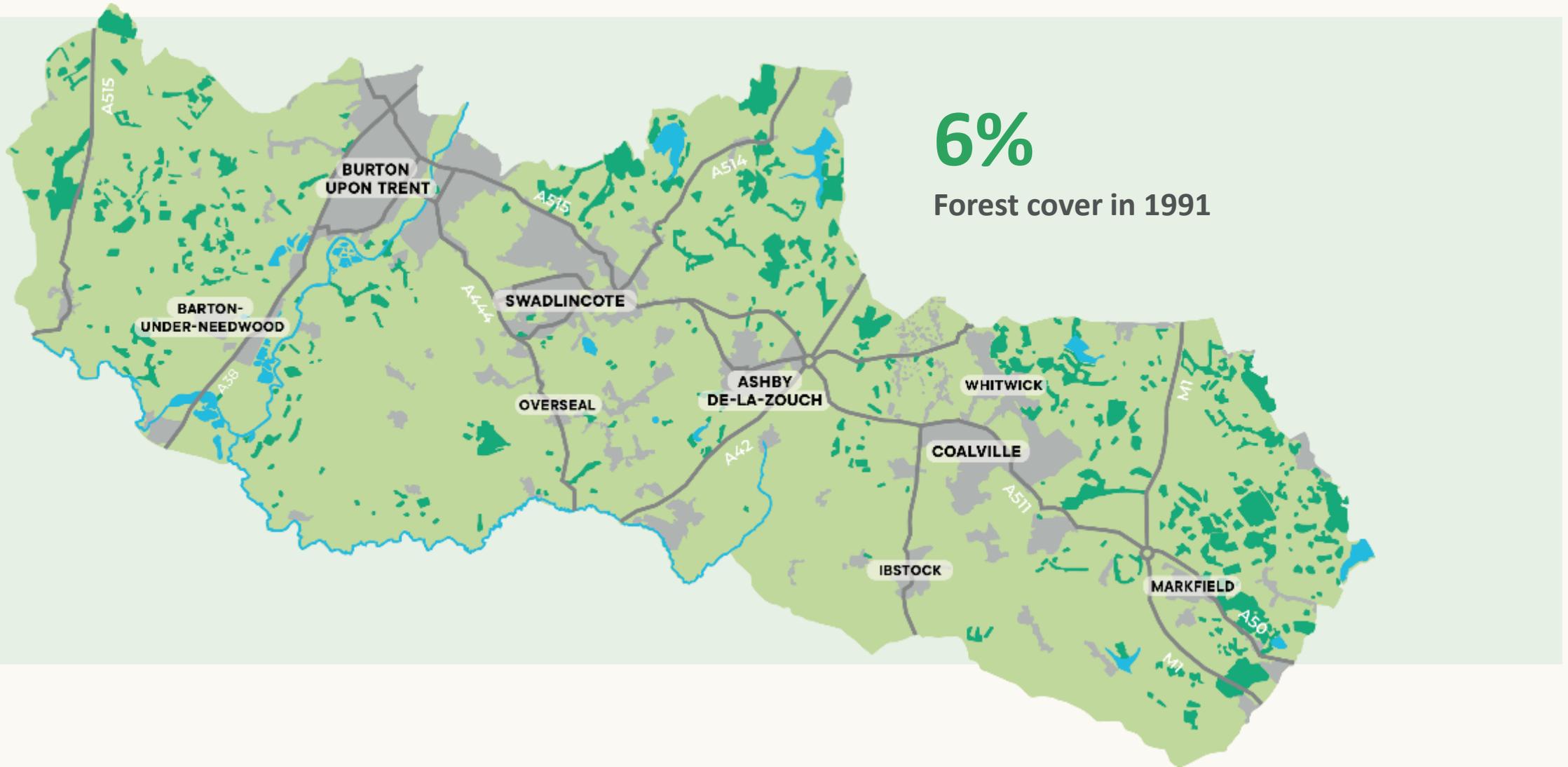
History

- Initiated by Defra in 1991.
- Regeneration of an industrial landscape.
- Connect ancient forests of Needwood and Charnwood.
- Multiple benefits – trees, biodiversity, access to nature, wellbeing, economy.
- National Forest Company established in 1995 to facilitate its creation.

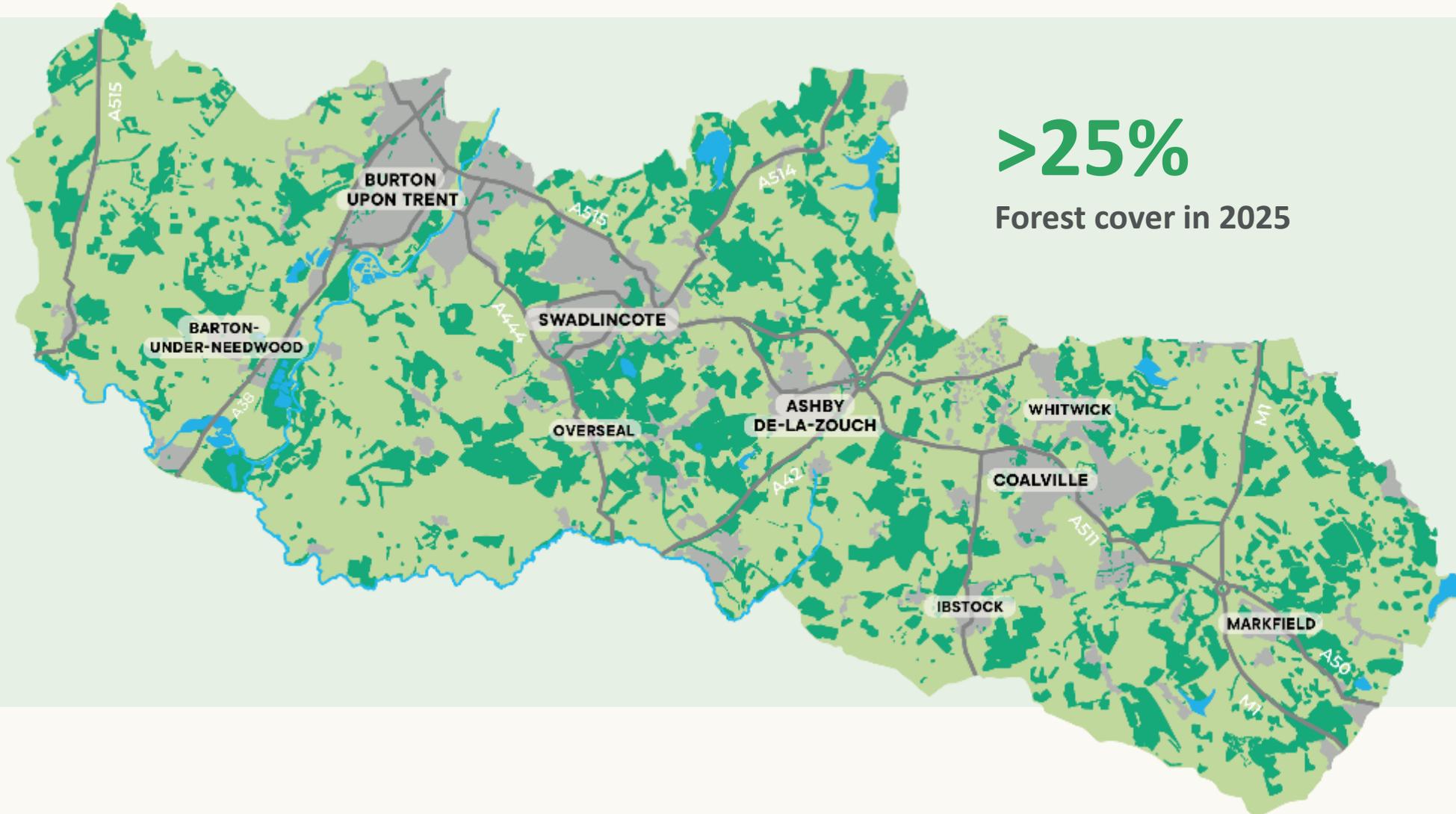
The National Forest



Where we began.....



30 years on, 9.8 million trees planted



A landscape transformed from black to green...



Rawdon colliery before



Rawdon colliery after
(site of Conkers)

Transforming lives and livelihoods...



Local communities dominated by coalmining



Local communities caring for and connecting with the Forest

Five pillars



- Growing a forest
- Caring for a forest
- Inspiring future generations
- A forest for everyone
- A resilient and greener economy

Growing a forest



More than  **8,000 hectares** of habitat transformed



25%
Forest cover
reached in 2024

Up from 6% in
the early 1990s

9.8 million
trees planted 

Ambition:

33% Forest
cover

Growing a forest



Third party landowners

- Getting to know landowners
- Understanding their aspirations
- Sharing knowledge and experience
- A whole business approach
- Flexible and streamlined



The Planning System

- National Planning Policy
- All six Local Plans with National Forest policy
- 20-30% of new developments with woodland planting or landscaping
- Works alongside Biodiversity Net Gain



Our Estate

- Restoration sites (landowner of last resort)
- Site identified through priority mapping
- Demonstration of different land-uses
- Supporting like-minded partners to acquire



Caring for a forest

Dormouse
reintroduction



70%

woodlands in
active management

Up from 20% in the 2000s

29%



habitat cover
supporting
biodiversity



Purple Emperor
butterfly sighted
for the first time in
nearly 200 years

Ambition:

90% woodlands
in active
management

Caring for a forest



Woodland owners

Facilitating a Woodland Owner Network

Specialist advice, grants, training

A whole business approach

Volunteers

Facilitating a network Community Woodland Network

Specialist advice, grants, training

Woodlands, walks, wildlife recording

Partners

Woodland Trust, Forestry England, National Trust, Local authorities, NFU and CLA

Shared knowledge, networks and aligning resources



Inspiring future generations

90%

of primary schools
undertaking regular
outdoor learning

Up from 9% in the early 2010s

Introduction
of Level 1 Forestry in
the Community Award
in secondary schools



**OVER
50K** people reached each
year through arts and
creativity programmes

Ambition:

100% of primary schools
undertaking regular
outdoor learning

Inspiring the future generation



Primary Schools

Improving outdoor spaces
Forest School Training
School Development Plans
Champion Schools

Extending Provision

SEND pupils in secondary schools
Early Years
Duke of Edinburgh
Local colleges / apprentice schemes

Arts Programme

Co-designed Arts & Creativity Strategy
Targeting urban areas and under-represented groups working with local artists
Supporting young people to connect to nature through music, digital, dance



A forest for everyone

71%



of households are within 500m of a publicly accessible Forest site

Up from <10% in the early 1990s



70 volunteer groups managing woodlands

320km

promoted walks



including the 75-mile-long distance walking trail, the National Forest Way

Ambition:

90%

of households within 500m of a publicly accessible Forest site

A forest for everyone



More accessible green space

Incentivising through our creation and management grants

Improving access through planning

Promoting access

National Forest promoted walks

A new 75-mile National Forest Way

The National Forest walking festival

Local communities

Co-creating Community Woodlands

Working directly with under-represented groups

Events and wellbeing activities

A greener more resilient economy



Approximately
9 million
visitors each year



Visitor economy
Increased by
nearly 30%
over the last 20 years

Arts and recreation activity
has increased by 14%
over the last 8 years



Ambition:
Net Zero Carbon
by 2050 or sooner

A greener more resilient economy



Growing sustainable tourism

Visitor accommodation Design Guide

Expert advice and Early Market Engagement with accommodation operators / developers

Creating networking opportunities

Promoting the place and its businesses

Supporting forest enterprises

The forest has inspired new business opportunities

Supported through advice and small grants

Creating networking opportunities

Celebrating success

Attracting investment

National Memorial Arboretum

St George's Park

The Deer Barn

Burton Washlands



Let's grow together

A simple and shared vision

Determination and commitment

Bringing people together

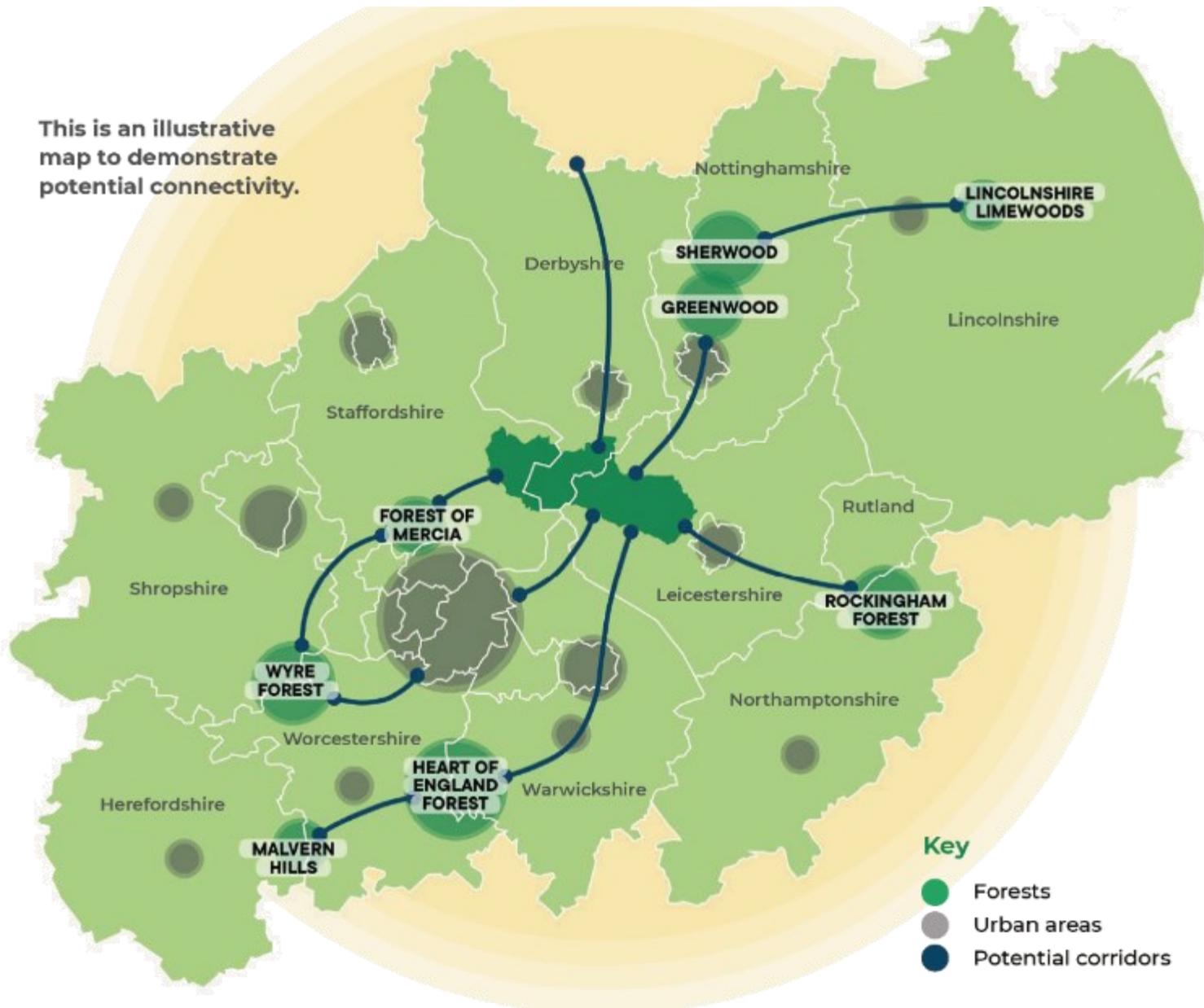
Time and pooled resources

Measuring impact and celebrating success



What next?

This is an illustrative map to demonstrate potential connectivity.



New national forests



Transformation



- Landscape change at scale
- Nature recovery
- Climate adaptation

Growth



- Planning and green infrastructure
- New funding and partnerships
- Business development

Wellbeing



- Job creation and skills
- Education and volunteering
- Access to nature



Looking forward

The next chapter for the National Forest

1 From creation to sustainability

A resilient Forest

2 A world class visitor centre

The transformation of Conkers

3 A sustainable destination

The Heart of the National Forest vision

4 Connecting the Midlands

The Midlands Forest Network

5 Replicating the approach

New national forests



Thank you for listening!