



UWE Bristol bid for hosting 2019 AESOP Congress

March 2017

Contents

1.	UWE Bristol, the Faculty of Environment and Technology, and the Department of Geography and Environmental Management	3
2.	The UWE Bristol Planning School	4
3.	Research and expertise	5
4.	Organisational capacity for delivering the event	5
5.	Financial capability to support the event	6
6.	Theme: Planning for uncertainty	6
7.	Destination: Bristol, transport and accommodation	7
8.	Bristol: Relationships and opportunities	8
9.	Focus: PhD Workshop (BCU)	9



1.

UWE Bristol, the Faculty of Environment and Technology, and the Department of Geography and Environmental Management

UWE Bristol

The University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE Bristol) is a well-established university which can trace its history back to 1595. With over 27,000 students, 250,000 alumni and 3,000 staff, it is the largest university in Bristol and the South West of the United Kingdom. Students come to study with us from over 140 different countries around the world, making this a diverse and interesting place to come and study. The university offers more than 600 courses, at undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and short course level. There is a broad range of subjects across the arts, creative industries, health, science, business, law, environment and technology disciplines. We are well known for the quality of our teaching, and for our student experience as a whole. We have also developed close links with leading regional and national employers to help develop the right content for our courses and to give our students exposure to diverse professional opportunities. Alongside our teaching, our academics are working on nationally and internationally-renowned research. As well as enriching our teaching, we ensure that our research contributes to society and the economy through knowledge exchange, science communication, partnerships and supporting business innovation and growth.

The university has 4 main campuses, including the principal Frenchay Campus to the north of the city and the city centre campus, a collection of unique venues and facilities.

Faculty of Environment and Technology

The Faculty of Environment and Technology at UWE Bristol is focused on optimising both well-developed as well as new technological advancements for the benefit of the natural and human environment. This embraces teaching and research in Computer Science and Creative Technologies, Architecture and the Built Environment, Engineering Design and Mathematics, and Geography and Environmental Management. Partnerships and collaboration is at the heart of what we do. Our partners include the World Health Organisation through our WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Cities and Urban Policy, governments, industry and business, including a range of national and international academic institutions. With two-thirds of our research rated as world leading or internationally excellent in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, our strengths and success in knowledge creation is truly commendable. Our research partners span the globe and we continue to gain significant research and knowledge exchange income from research councils, industry and leading charitable trusts.

Department of Geography and Environmental Management

The Department of Geography and Environmental Management at UWE Bristol is regularly commended for its teaching expertise and research success; Bristol has considerable expertise in the environment, planning and civil engineering sectors. Bristol was European Green Capital in 2015. UWE Bristol was an academic partner and a range of events and activities were supported by staff and students from the department. We are a department with over 60 academic staff and research staff, more than 500 undergraduate students and a number of masters and PhD students who contribute to the university's vibrant postgraduate community. Several of our courses have professional accreditation through such bodies as the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES), Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), and close relationships exist with key organisations such as the Environment Agency in England. Our research activity focuses on strategically important and timely environmental, resource, transport and societal issues. Further details of our current research activities can be found [here](#).



2.

The UWE Bristol Planning School

Philosophy and provision

The UWE Bristol Planning School has operated for over forty years, with the university having an established reputation for delivering high quality research and teaching. Both of these elements are central to our offer. We are committed to providing multi, and in some cases, trans-disciplinary experiences, with the school having a strong commitment to practical application. A key goal of the school is to expose students to the type of challenges and scenarios that they are likely to encounter in the 'real world', with our offer allowing students to meet practitioners and to work with real-life project briefs. A range of study options exist at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with traditional courses in planning being supplemented with those that offer specialist study in architecture, property development, geography and transport. There are nearly 500 students on courses accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). These courses are characterised by high levels of employability and student satisfaction and are attractive to students from across the UK, Europe and beyond. UWE Bristol remains an important supporter of Erasmus and regularly facilitates student exchanges with universities in France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

The planning school is located within the Faculty of Environment and Technology and spans across two departments, namely the Department of Geography and Environmental Management and the Architecture and the Built Environment. Over 60 staff from across the two departments contribute to our planning offer.

The school also has strong links with relevant professional bodies such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Institute of British Architects. It also has excellent links with practice, with Bristol having a diverse planning sector that extends across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The city has particular expertise in the major projects sector, with a master's programme having recently been developed to respond to this growing area of activity. Bristol is also home to the Planning Inspectorate, an agency that holds some key responsibilities for the operation of planning across England and Wales.



3.

Research and expertise

Research at UWE Bristol is organised within Research Centres. Staff from across the Planning School are aligned primarily to the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments (SPE), but also the Centre for Transport and Society (CTS) and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Urban Environments.

SPE aims to develop understanding on how we can achieve places that are environmentally sustainable, socially just and economically competitive. SPE places a strong emphasis on inter-disciplinary planning research. Current works focuses on the following themes: green infrastructure, healthy cities, smart cities, urban governance, urban regeneration and UK planning issues. Research is funded by the UK research councils (AHRS, ESRC, NERC), the European Commission (e.g. Horizon 2020), research charities (e.g. the Wellcome Trust), and statutory organisations (e.g. NHS England). Current projects are detailed via this [link](#).

CTS aims to improve and promote understanding of the inherent links between lifestyles and personal travel in the context of continuing social and technological change. Research is supported in a number of themes, including the promotion of inclusive low carbon travel and evaluating experiences of the travel environment. Example projects are described through this [link](#).

The WHO Collaborating Centre has been supporting the healthy cities movement since 1995. As one of only two WHO Collaborating Centres in the world situated in a built environment faculty, the centre is recognised as a leader in the field of healthy urban planning. A selection of projects is available via this [link](#).

Under the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), the UWE Bristol Planning School submitted to the sub-panel for Architecture, Built Environment and Planning. In terms of output, 66% of the submitted papers were categorised as being either 3* (internationally excellent) or 4* (world-leading) in terms of their quality. In terms of 'impact' (the reach and significance of research beyond academia) and 'environment' (the

vitality and sustainability of the research centre), even higher scores (80% or more) were achieved.

Planning research is disseminated via a multitude of channels and staff regularly attend and present at a variety of events and conferences, especially AESOP and UK and Ireland Planning Research Conference. The school has an established track record of working with a range of academic partners and is a member of AESOP. In 2013 the school successfully hosted the UK and Ireland Planning Research Conference that was attended by over 100 delegates.

4.

Organisational capacity for delivering the event

The Conference will be hosted by UWE Bristol's Faculty of Environment and Technology (FET). The University's Communications and Engagement team provide support with the facilitation of large research events and are available to support AESOP Congress delivery. They would work closely with our Marketing and Printing teams to coordinate marketing, publicity, production of Congress literature, packs, signage and other creative design. Our Events Management Team will be able to provide support with organising and facilitating the Congress. This experienced team have delivered successful conferences for businesses from the 2012 Bristol Mayoral Elections to Bristol's largest science exhibition, Venturefest (in 2013). We have a number of electronic systems which manage administrative processes for large events, including registrations (formstack), and invoicing and payments (Agresso).

The University - and the Faculty - has extensive experience in hosting large events. Recent examples include: hosting the annual Bristol Planning Law and Policy Conference and Dinner, now in its 18th year, the event attracts around 450-500 attendees; [Numisheet2016](#), the 10th annual conference and workshop on sheet metal forming processes, hosted by FET and attended by 300 people; The Centre for Appearance Research in UWE's Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences has held the Appearance

Matters conference every other year, attended by approximately 250 delegates. These events have been held at various landmark venues across Bristol including museums, art galleries, and our own UWE Exhibition and Conference Centre - one of the largest of its kind in the South West; a flexible space with capacity to welcome up to 1,500 delegates. We will seek to make optimum use of key venues, all associated with UWE Bristol, in Bristol's historic harbourside area – The [Arnolfini](#), the [Watershed](#), [Spike Island](#) and [M Shed](#) – to ensure accessibility, amenity and an enhanced delegate experience.

UWE Bristol is fully supportive of this bid for AESOP 2019 not only to showcase our City which was the European Green Capital for 2016, but also to celebrate the largest Planning School in the United Kingdom for more than 50 years of excellent Education and Research for better living by all. We are confident of our Bristol School of Planning delivering the best AESOP Conference ever and will provide every resource needed to deliver this.



Professor Paul Olomolaiye

Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean
Faculty of Environment and Technology

5. Financial capability to support the event

We have a robust infrastructure to support management of the event, underpinned by the University's financial strategy, setting out clear financial priorities in support of the long-term viability and sustainability of the University. The University's financial report and statement for 2015/16¹ notes that financial performance during the year was positive with operating surplus of £20.3m before actuarial losses in respect of the pension scheme. The University's overarching financial strategy is to maintain an operating surplus that generates sufficient operating cash flows, and provides assurance that it is able to support this event.

The University has the financial capability to make necessary payments required to organise and hold the congress, very early in the preparation process before the registration is open. UWE accept that AESOP is not able to provide financial support in a case that the fees cover less than 100% of the budget. Our budget has been developed to reflect this. The faculty's finance and management accounts department will support the Faculty's financial administration of the event, raising pre-requisites and authorising any payments.



6. Theme: 'Planning for hope: incertitude and innovation'

The theme of the conference will be 'Planning for hope'. Planning is currently faced by a series of epoch defining crises. These arise from the political failure to manage appropriately the public impact of austerity, public service reform, and mass immigration. They manifest themselves in the form of linked challenges:

- The demise of the meta-narrative of inescapable globalisation as progress, and the emergence of 'economic nationalism';
- The growth of a populist, parochial, anti-internationalist and anti-immigration politics;
- The rejection of expert knowledge, consensus based solutions to long agreed problems, and their substitution with 'post truth' politics and 'fake news'.

These challenges present incertitude. They require us to rethink the long-established, 'taken for granted', structuring narratives of planning; to reappraise hierarchies and scales, actions and processes, and, the very notion of 'progress'. They also permit – indeed, require – us to build a positive, normative

case for planning as a vehicle for addressing these crises; to promote innovation in both planning theory and practice. The conference will, thus, explore the potential for planning to develop progressive responses to these grand societal challenges, responses that are internationalist in orientation, emphasise social cohesion and tolerance, and value democracy and truth; 'planning for hope'!

¹<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/factsandfigures/financialinformation.aspx>

7.

Destination: Bristol, transport and accommodation

Bristol is a city of approximately 500,000 people located in South West England. Bristol has an interesting maritime, trade and industrial history, including associations with John Cabot who in 1497 became the first European since the Vikings to land on mainland North America, and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who's suspension bridge, railways, and SS Great Britain can be found in and around the city. Bristol's economy is built on education, creative industries, media, electronics and aerospace industries. It is also a major retail centre and is host to a variety of venues and organisations including the Royal West of England Academy, the Arnolfini, Spike Island, two football stadiums, a cricket ground, concert hall and theatres, and the Exhibition and Conference Centre located on the Frenchay Campus of UWE Bristol. Bristol has a regenerated docklands area and city centre full of heritage, arts, leisure, sports, and entertainment opportunities. Bristol is also a city of difference; its communities are varied and diverse creating a unique environment of difference. The city is connected to London and other major UK cities by road, rail, and air. Bristol is on a major north/south divide motorway interchange meaning it has excellent road connections enabling private travel and also coach connections. Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway mainline rail stations provide connections nationally, and Bristol Airport offers international air links. The road and rail networks also

offer excellent connections to London and other major cities, most notably Birmingham and Cardiff. Within Bristol a comprehensive bus network enables easy movement, including a very regular link between the UWE Bristol campuses and the rest of the city. For more on UWE's connectivity, please [click](#):

Bristol has a diversity of accommodation offers, ranging from luxury hotels, international and European chains, independent hotels and bed and breakfasts, and hostels. Bristol is a city experienced in hosting international, European and national events meaning the city is geared upon to provide for the accommodation needs associated with major influxes of visitors.

Bristol is an attractive tourist destination and in 2014 The Sunday Times named it as the best city in Britain in which to live, and Bristol also won the EU's European Green Capital Award in 2015. Bristol has a long association with the 'green' movement and is proud of its status as a Green Capital. Not only is it the UK's first Cycling City, Bristol is also a Fairtrade City which sees it trading fairly with nearly five million workers in 58 developing countries. To further boost its green credentials, Bristol is home to the Soil Association and Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity behind the development of the National Cycle Network.

For more about the City of Bristol, please [click](#):

Bristol and the South West of England (plus adjacent South Wales) provide ample opportunity for post conference 'mobile workshops' focusing on a variety of planning themes – urban development and regeneration (in Bristol and Cardiff), European Green capital, creative industries and the knowledge economy, rural planning, coastal planning, heritage conservation (e.g. City of Bath), etc.



8.

Bristol: Relationships and opportunities

Bristol is the largest city in the South West of England. It is also one of Great Britain's ten self-styled Core Cities, the most economically influential parts of the country outside London. The Bristol city region has the highest productivity of any region outside London². Its particular economic strengths are in aerospace and defence, high-tech industries, professional and legal services, media and creative industries, and – importantly – higher education.

One of UWE's particular assets is its excellent connections to its host city and businesses, which are a significant benefit to students and staff. Our Vice Chancellor, Professor Steven West, is President of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Chair of the West of England Initiative.

Reflecting the city's economic strengths, are the number of both public and private sector organisations in Bristol whose core interest is in planning. Bristol is home to England's Planning Inspectorate, with a staff of over 700. It is an executive agency of national government responsible for planning appeals, national infrastructure planning applications, and the examination of local plans. The Homes and Communities Agency, another arm of national government, also has a large presence in Bristol. There are a wide range of private sector firms – consultancies in planning and transport, real estate businesses, and lawyers – with planning advice a central function. In fact, many national firms have their largest offices outside of London here in Bristol.

Illustrative of the strong partnerships we have with many organisations in the city is the immediate support we have received from partners in making this initial submission (see the boxes below and appendix). Our intent, in hosting AESOP here in Bristol, would be to celebrate and build on these relationships by actively engaging the wider planning community in Bristol in the congress, and seek to advocate the importance of close working relationships between academia and practice.

"As a major law firm in Bristol, with a strong track record working on prominent planning projects, Bond Dickinson fully supports UWE's bid to host the AESOP Annual Congress in 2019."

Bond Dickinson employs more than 1,200 staff across its seven UK offices, including 250 in Bristol, its second largest office. The firm advises clients across a range of sectors including real estate, financial institutions, insurance, retail, energy, transport, manufacturing and private wealth".

Bond Dickinson

Bristol Chamber of Commerce & Initiative - Business West plays a central role in supporting Bristol businesses capture and nurture the benefits of being located in the most economically successful city outside London and one of the leading city regions in Europe and far beyond. The city is recognised as the most liveable city in the UK and with its fast growing communities is increasingly seen as a hot spring of innovation and enterprise, attracting investment and talent from across the world. The city hosts a hugely successful Festival of Ideas was the first British city to be a European Green Capital back in 2015 and due to its scale and make up is seen as a place to operate as a city scale test bed and laboratory for change. As such, Bristol Chamber of Commerce & Initiative - Business West is delighted to support UWE Bristol's bid to host the AESOP Annual Congress in 2019 and the many opportunities this would bring the city and wider area.



"As one of the UK's largest employers of town planners with a large base in Bristol, Barton Willmore LLP enthusiastically endorses UWE's bid to host AESOP conference in 2019"

**BARTON
WILLMORE**

² Economist 2017; <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21695067-south-western-powerhouse-needs-better-government-if-it-prosper-london-upon-avon>

9.

Focus: PhD Workshop

Birmingham City University

The PhD workshops will be hosted at BCU's fast-developing £260m city-centre campus, by the Centre for Resilient Environments – part of the School of Engineering and the Built Environment.

BCU has been providing accredited planning programmes since 1957 and now offers a BSc/ MPlan Property Development and Planning (jointly accredited by RTPI and RICS), and a MA Planning Built Environments (RICS accredited). The programmes seek to develop 'reflective practitioners' able to cope in a fast-changing and multi-disciplinary professional environment, and its programmes involve considerable sharing of teaching and learning experiences with other built environment professions. BCU has a group of PhD students active in diverse fields including urban food and health policy; urban form and development; project management and risk; and building information modelling, and Centre staff are active in managing research student processes for the Faculty and University, and in working on PhD issues with the UK Council for Graduate Education.

The Centre for Resilient Environments delivers teaching, research and enterprise across the fields of planning, real estate and environment. BCU's alumni have reached senior managerial positions in the planning profession, and our Visiting Professors include Waheed Nazir (Director of Planning & Regeneration, Birmingham City Council) and Richard Wakeford (formerly the Scottish Government's Director General, Environment). We regularly host visiting researchers, recently from Europe, Turkey and China. BCU's environment research focuses on low carbon technology including biofuels and waste remediation, ranging from EU INTERREG projects and work for Doosan. Our planning research has been nominated for RTPI Awards in 2014 and 2016, has produced "RUFopoly", an innovative game for public consultation and professional training; entries in major reference works including the Routledge Handbook of Planning History (2017) building on a long-term reappraisal of post-catastrophe (post-Second World war) urbanism;

mitigating flood risk; and on building energy and energy consumer behaviour.

The facilities available on this campus include a wide range of formal teaching and flexible seminar/ workshop spaces ranging from small rooms for a handful of participants to a 700-seat lecture theatre/ widescreen projection facility. It incorporates 'Thinktank', the city's museum of science and industry; and the Eastside Park, the country's largest inner-city new park for over a century. We have organised events ranging from small workshops and CPD for professional groups in the Midlands region to jointly organising the UK annual Planning Research Conference (in 2011, with the University of Birmingham).

Birmingham is the UK's 'second city' of a million people, at the heart of an industrial region and is a good centre for planning research as it copes with de- and re-industrialisation, population growth and migration, variable environmental quality, and its already excellent and central connections by road, rail and air will shortly improve with construction of the HS2 high-speed rail route from London to the north of England. A spur station is being developed immediately outside the BCU campus, providing an excellent laboratory for planning, property development and management. Cultural facilities such as Symphony Hall, the Convention Centre, museums and the National Exhibition Centre mean that the city is well-provided with a range of hotel accommodation. Five universities and university colleges contribute to a very student-friendly culture.

For further information, please contact:

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Letters of Support

27th February 2017



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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Dear Nick,

2019 AESOP Congress

I write in support of the bid by the University of the West of England to host the AESOP Congress in 2019.

The RTPI is proud of the links we have with UWE, an RTPI-accredited Planning School of many years' standing. Its research outputs are timely and have significant impact beyond the planning sector, focusing as they do on issues of sustainability and the risks posed by climate change. Excellent research links have been built with external agencies.

The University played a key role in supporting Bristol's Green Capital status through its innovative 6-week online course, 'Our Green City'. With its history in environmental research and the fact that it plays host to a number of environmental- and planning-focused agencies and organisations, the City of Bristol provides a rich backdrop for planning at UWE, and the department makes good use of its strong industrial links.

Yours sincerely,

Trudi Elliott, CBE, MRTPI
Chief Executive



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Date 9th March 2017

Dear Nick Smith,

Bid to host the annual conference of the 'Association of European Schools of Planning' in 2019

As Service Director Planning for Bristol City Council, I am very pleased to add my support to the bid from the University of the West of England to host the 2019 Aesop conference.

UWE has a very well established and respected Town Planning School within the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, with which Bristol City Council has had a close association for a number of years. Many of our planning officers have completed their academic qualifications at UWE and the school provides a range of opportunities for shared learning and continuing professional development with which the Council enthusiastically engages.

Bristol offers a great location for such an academic conference. As one of the 'Core Cities' in England, the hub for economic, cultural and technical growth in the West of England, one of the 100 Resilient Cities, and with the legacy of the year as European Green Capital in 2015, the city provides a wide range of opportunities to explore themes of place shaping and the built environment through a historic setting and both traditional and forward thinking new development. With award winning museums and waterfront conference facilities, the city provides the potential for UWE to host an exciting and challenging conference.

With best wishes,

Zoe Willcox
Service Director Planning