

# : the conceptual background

Identify strategic and specific opportunities and proposals for changing the physical form of the Black Country, promoting:

- : The Black Country identity, its character, distinctiveness and destination.
- : An innovative landscape and environment led regeneration approach with associated lifestyle, identity and health benefits.

## ambition:

the **black country** will be **recognised** regionally, nationally and internationally as the **place to live** in the uk, as measured by a number of indicators including **quality of life, education** and **employment** prospects, its rich **cultural resources** and striking **visual identity**. a sustainable, flourishing collection of centres, it will collectively match the cultural diversity and excitement of any metropolitan area in the uk and the rest of europe, but without the assoicated urban sprawl.

## what:

the black country's **identity** will develop through a strong local, regional and global **sense of place**, a **distinct** and **highly articulated** urban topography to both the region and its component centres, and the co-ordination of social, cultural and business related processes throughout the black country.

## why:

- : hidden topography, forgotten landscape, poor identity.
- : jumbled, disconnected urban structure dictated by roads, left over space and derelict land.
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- : jumbled, disconnected urban structure dictated by roads, left over space and derelict land.
- : urban sprawl
- : no urbanity, messy low cost clutter, poor quality housing stock.
- : need to reverse population decline
- : distance will become expensive, density of development needed
- : low energy (water/power) consumption will becomes a vital component for urban life
- : increase land values through high end uses
- : bio agriculture/research and technology to reclaim and bring landscape into productive uses.

## how:

- : develop a number of flagship projects to gain national and international recognition and begin to
- : establish a new identity for the black country.
- : showcase sustainable parks.
- : make canals, waterways and greenstuff future movement corridors (foot, cycle/water).
- : establish regional and international reference points to contribute to cultural exchange.
- : encourage non-car usage

## what next:

- : water is gold: hydrological appraisal of watercourses and aquifers for long-term water conservation and use
- : create a clearly articulated and differentiated regional and local spatial landscape structure to define quality and character of the region, individual centres and provide framework for future development.
- : create a palette of new urban landscape typologies for the black country.
- : develop educational and cultural programmes to promote and create identity.
- : determine programme to emphasise built form separation between former “villages” whilst improving non-car connections.





# A : corridors

Identify those corridors within the Black Country which hold the opportunity for flagship projects. The corridor proposals act to:

- : Promote access and movement within the BC
- : Maximise interaction with BC qualities and features
- : Connect centres : Wolverhampton / Walsall / West Bromwich / Dudley / Brierley Hill / Smethwick / Birmingham

A1

**brierley hill to dudley - local**  
this strategic site located just outside brierley hill centre, beside the stourbridge canal, and route of the proposed metro. the site has been identified as a location for mixed use development which fronts onto the canal and creates a public canalside space. the proposals should seek to create pedetrian links with brierley hill centre. the site is also afforded prominent views over the rowley hills, these must be emphasised.

A2

**wolverhampton to birmingham - regional**  
this industrial site is located along a corridor of strategic routes - the west coast main line, birmingham canals, and proposed walsall to brierley hill metro. visual experiences should be created from the railway line, heightening the image of the BC. a new, 21st century residential development is proposed, together with a new public park which links up with the sheepwash park (D1). built form and vegetation together should structure and frame views up to the rowley hills. along the length of the corridor from birmingham to wolverhampton the differing river / wetland landscape typologies should be created.

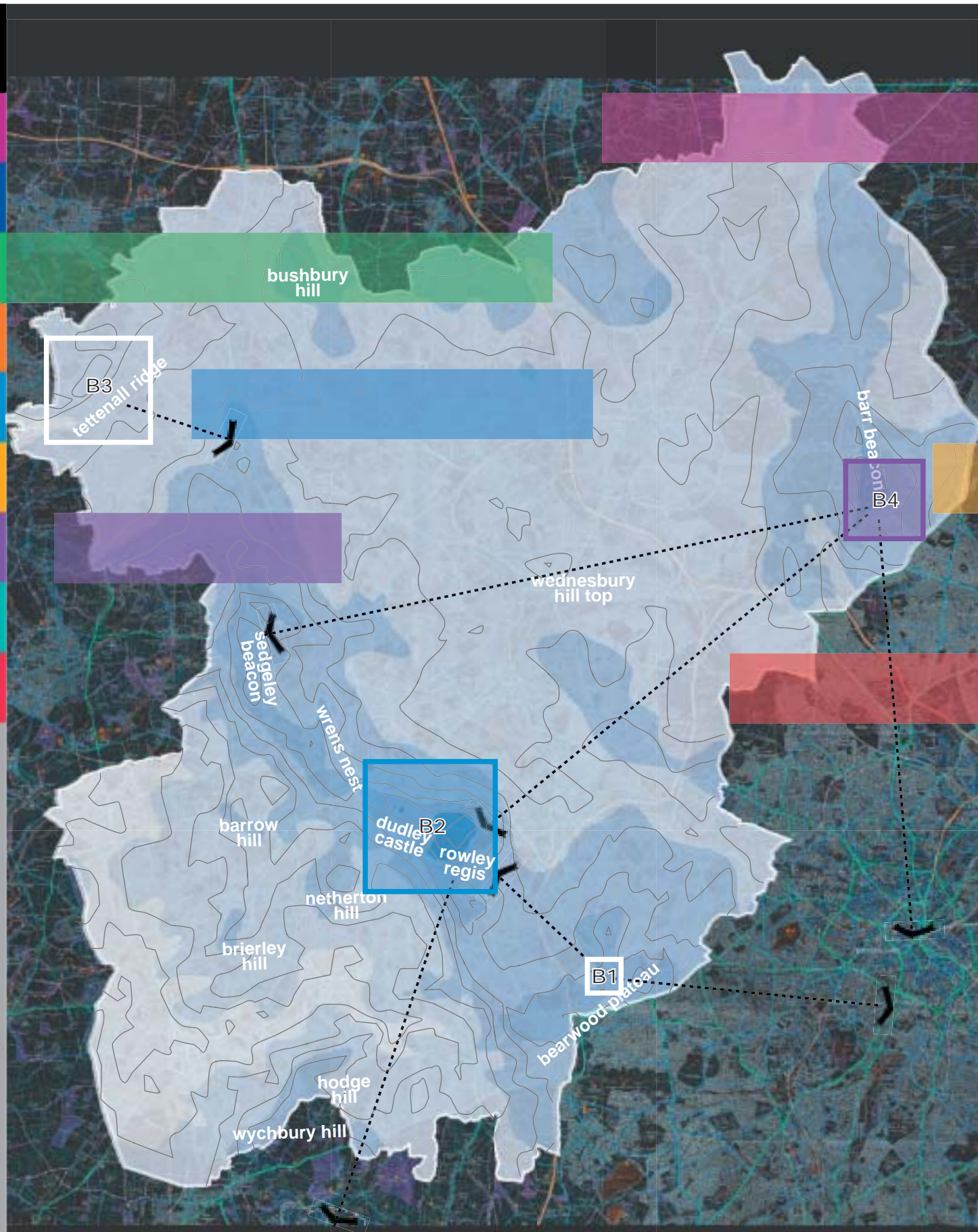
A3

**wolverhampton to high tech corridor - national**  
a new high tech park / eco-technology research centre is proposed at this location. the site lies just north of wolverhampton inbetween the canal and the west coast main line and seeks to create a connection between the city and the high techn corridor (further to the north). a new pedestrian / cycle link is being created (C2) from wolverhampton train station which will run alongside this site. it is important that the development does not back onto the canal but contributes to this new, vibrant, movement corridor.

A4

**west bromwich to walsall - international**  
it is proposed create a new physical foot / cycle - way connection between west bromwich and walsall. the route not only connect west bromwich with sandwell valley park, but will also connect walsall with barr beacon. sandwell valley park will become the location for the 2026 black country and birmingham commonwealth games becoming an 'olympic playground' of sporting and cultural celebrations (D2). visual connections should be made with the nearby barr beacon and with the adjoining M5/M6 motorway.





# B : topography

Key proposals to maximise awareness of the dramatic topography within the BC, also to gain access to the high points to appreciate views. Proposals include:: 'Beacon' developments at significant locations  
: Landscape treatment of topography to promote distinctiveness and structure views



**warley water tower - regional**  
warley woods lies on top of the bearwood plateau acting as a gateway between birmingham and the black country. properties surround the hilltop and prevent the full enjoyment of the extensive views between the two regions. it is proposed to allow public access to the water tower and adjacent reservoir space to enjoy such views through the installation of a new viewing platform. a strategic approach should be taken to allow the full extent of the panoramic experience to be enjoyed. this would mean selective property clearance, understorey tree clearance and felling on the top of the plateau.



**rowley hills - rowley regis + dudley castle - international**  
the rowley hills are the most imposing natural feature within the black country and their prominence is always apparent. to further celebrate these special features it is proposed to replace the striking communications mast at rowley regis with a modern, architectural, iconic beacon, which is both higher and even more striking. the prominence of dudley castle is to become more evident by carrying out selective topping of the adjacent woodland. these beacons act to identify the presence of the black country to residents and visitors, and to act as important reference markers to the community. these markers are also to be visible by night - projecting LEDs / illuminations.



**tettenhall ridge - local**  
this prominent ridge runs parallel to wolverhampton city centre. over time and as a result of development pressures sections of the ridge have been lost to residential properties and schools. it is proposed to reestablish a pedestrian / cycleway route along the length of the ridge. viewing points of seating and shelters will be established along the length of the path creating visual connections with the local strategic centre of wolverhampton.



**barr beacon - regional**  
panoramic views of the black country and birmingham are available from the top of barr beacon. unfortunately, this site currently suffers from neglect and has an image problem. it is proposed to create an iconic visitors centre and restaurant with the aim of attracting people to this location to celebrate these views. the visitors centre will act as the gateway to the black country, as an outdoor centre giving guidance on the local canals, footpaths, bridleways, such as the beacon way. the location is easily accessible from the m5 and m6. this site links in with the west bromwich - walsall strategic corridor (A4) and the walsall arboretum (F3).





# C : entrances

Where are the opportunities to guide and state entrances to the Black Country and its contents? This must consider:

- : Gateway schemes within existing centres for residents
- : Gateway experiences for visitors

C1

**M5 - regional**  
this site is located at strategic vantage point beside the m5 corridor, at a juncture where the motorway makes a near 90° turn. this stretch of the m5 currently passes through an unsightly industrial area of the black country. the proposal is for a 15 storey striking office building to impose itself over the users of the m5 and west coast main line. this building is well located on junction 1 of the m5, and less than 500m to smethwick galton bridge (train) and kenrick park station (metro) for connections to birmingham, wolverhampton, and beyond

C2

**wolverhampton station - regional**  
wolverhampton station is poorly connected with its city centre. the station entrance / exit is to be redesigned as a contemporary, uncluttered space. the pedestrian friendly environment is to make improved connections with wolverhampton city centre and the high tech canal corridor to the north.

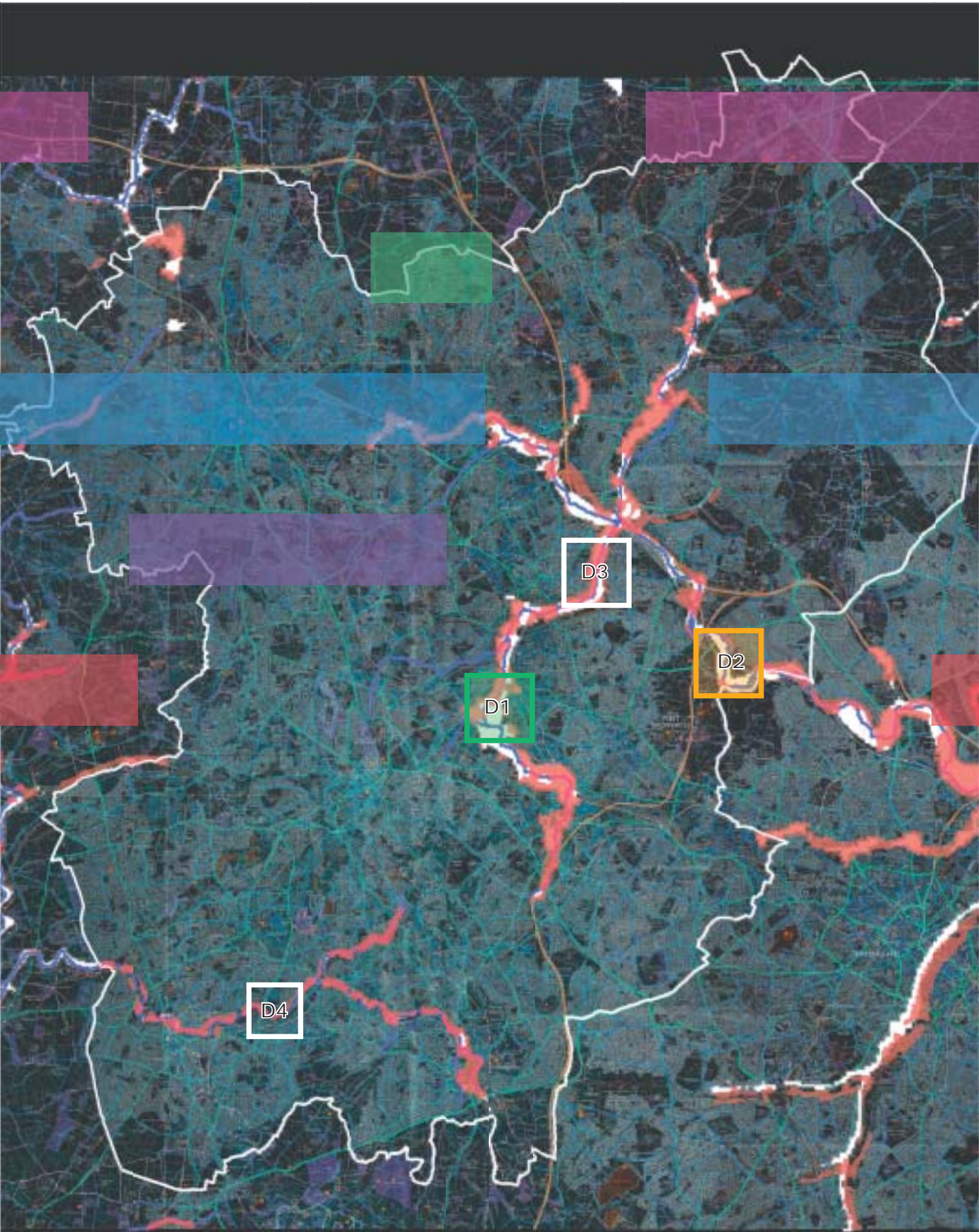
C3

**M5 - national**  
views from the main infrastructural routes (primarily the m5) are to be opened up / emphasised to focus on the new communications tower (B2). there is a potential for the views to be framed with lines of trees / structures. developments within these 'zones' are to have height restrictions. the quarry at the foot of the hills is to be developed as a technology / communications park associated with the new communications tower. a national climbing centre is also to be established within the quarry utilising the face of the quarry.

C4

**west coast mainline - regional**  
this site continues the strategic west coast main line corridor linking in with a number of the other strategic maps. the industrial units and derelict sites along the length of the railway do not give the black country a good image. it is proposed to create new areas of redevelopment to the perception. this site would be suitable for a heritage sensitive, canalside development for a mixed use technology park. views from the railway will be focused on the rowley hills.





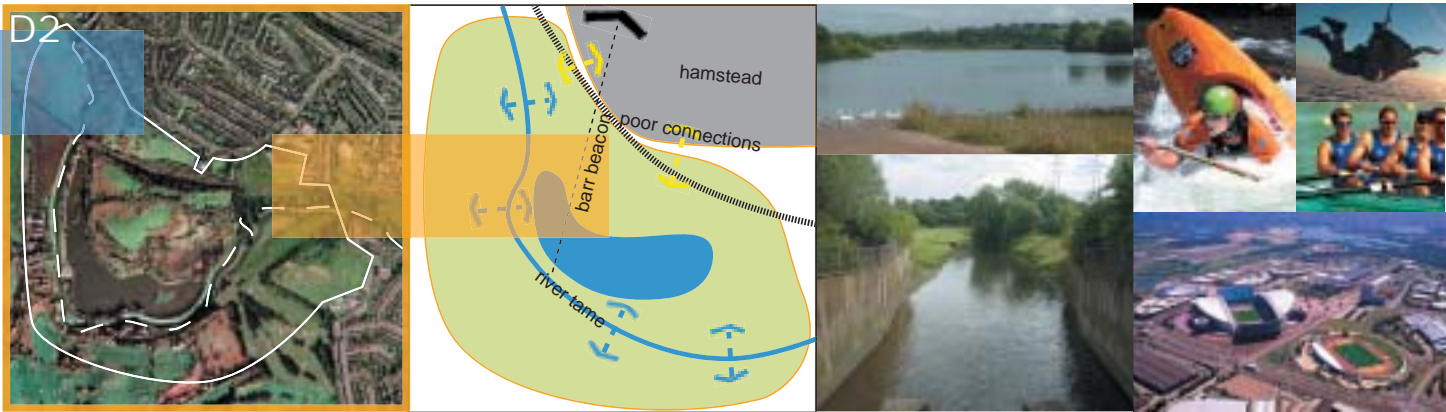
# D : hydrology

The BC contains two watersheds – the Stour and the Tame valleys. These two valleys provide significant opportunities to:

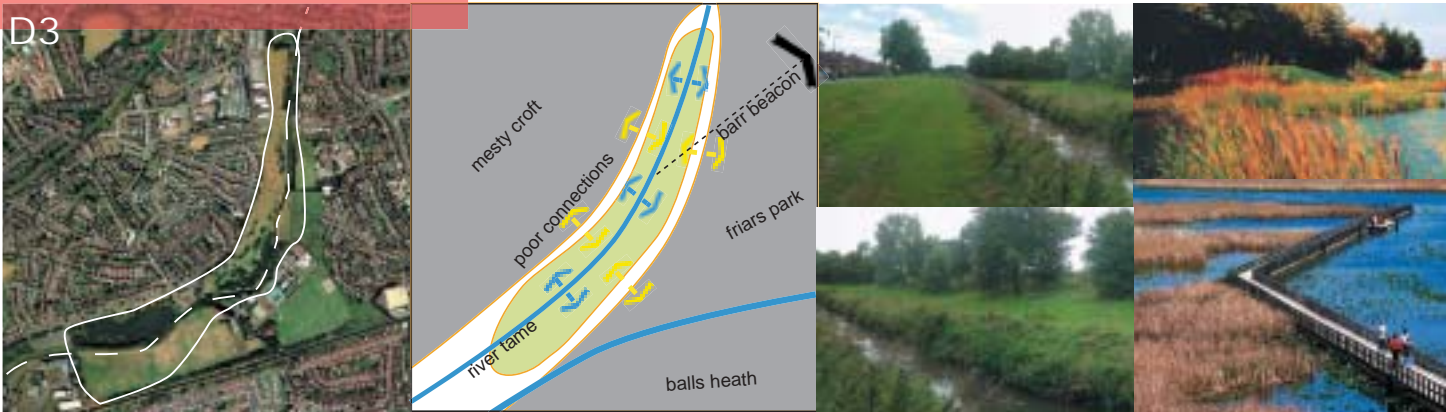
- : Raise ecological values though dramatic flooding and 'de-culverting' of urban watercourses
- : Promote new leisure and recreation sites
- : Re-create lost wetland landscape typologies



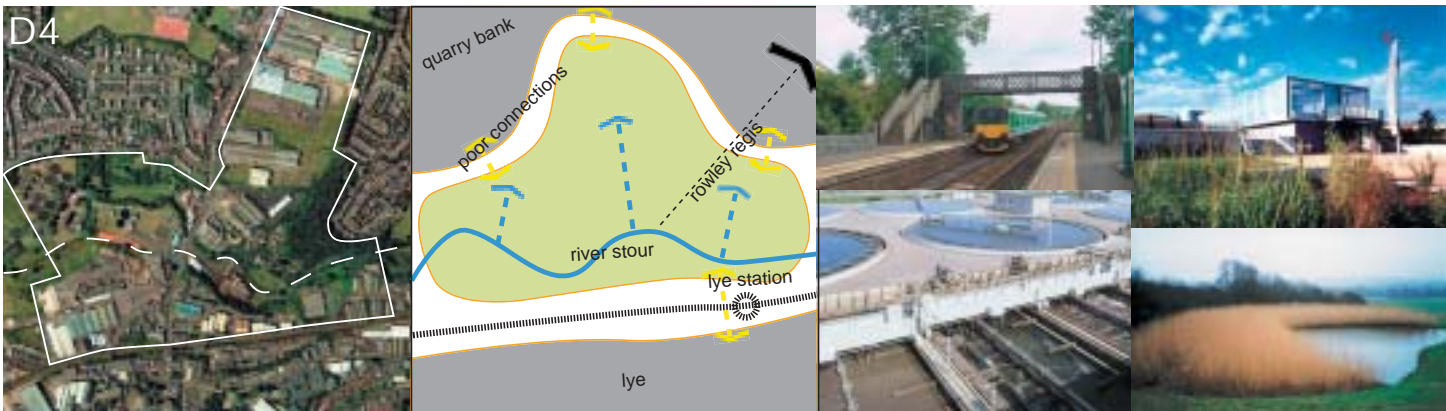
**sheepwash park - national**  
showcase ecological park. flooding, un-canalise river tame, bring river on-line. new some residential to front onto park, improve permeability, break through surrounding built form.....



**sandwell valley park - international**  
part of the olympic playground, connects with the west bromwich - walsall corridor. create new aquatic sports course on the river tame and associated lakes.....

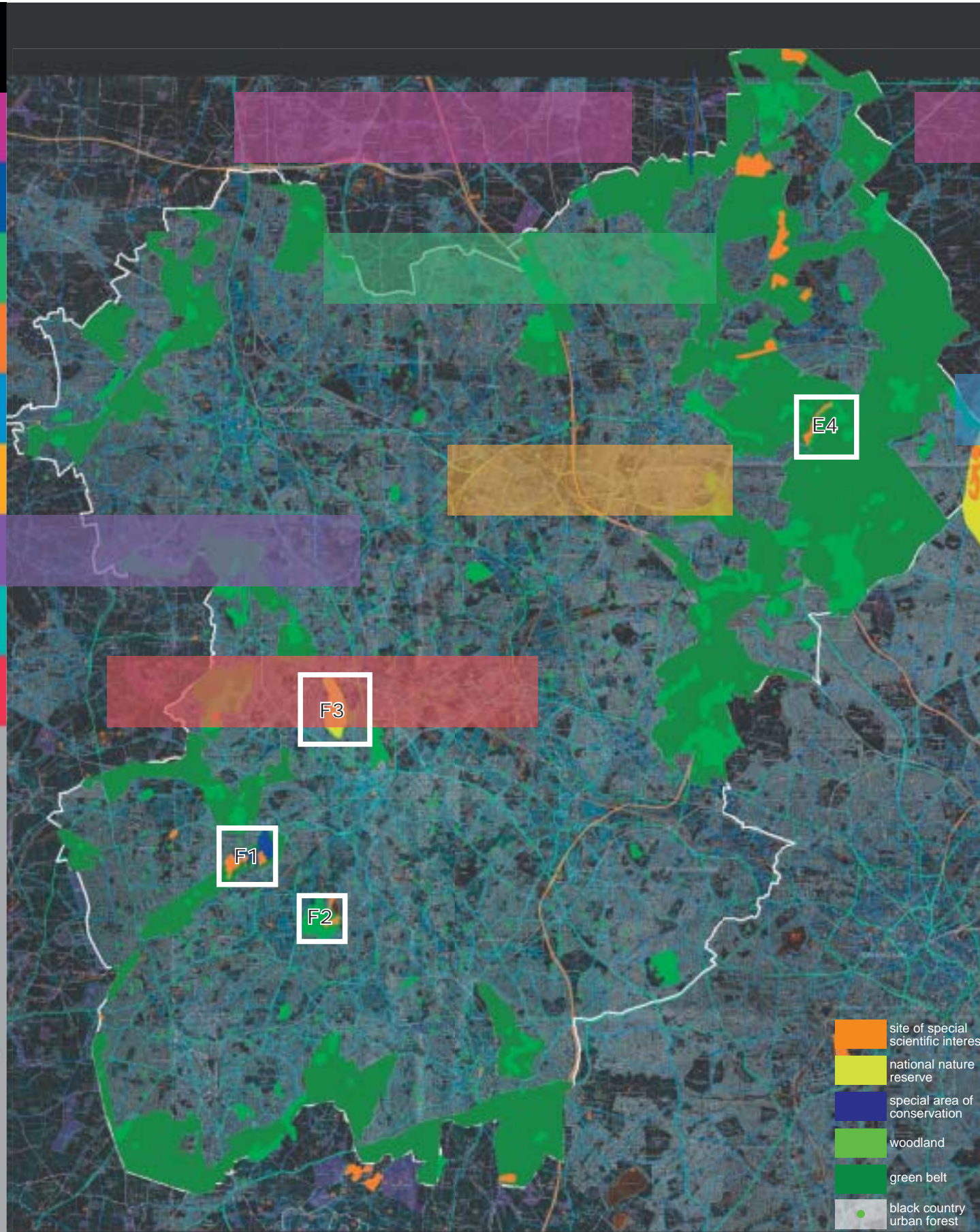


**river tame, wednesbury - local**  
part of the smurf project - text info to the right.....



**river stour - national**  
national showcase for grey water cleaning and recycling. intensive and reed bed systems. education centre on water recycling, resource, value and using less.....  
river stour to be 'opened' up visually and to be un-canalised.

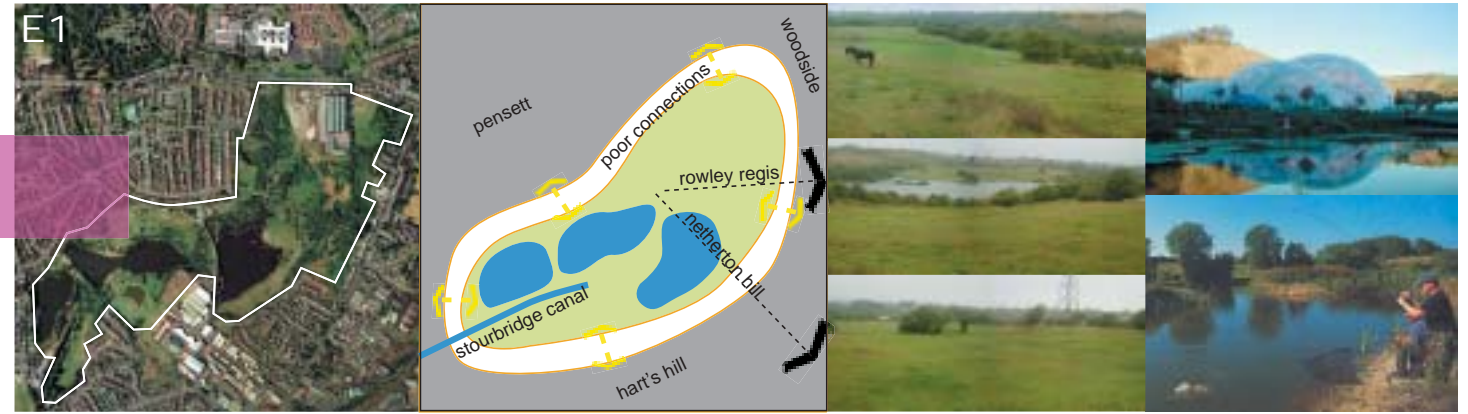




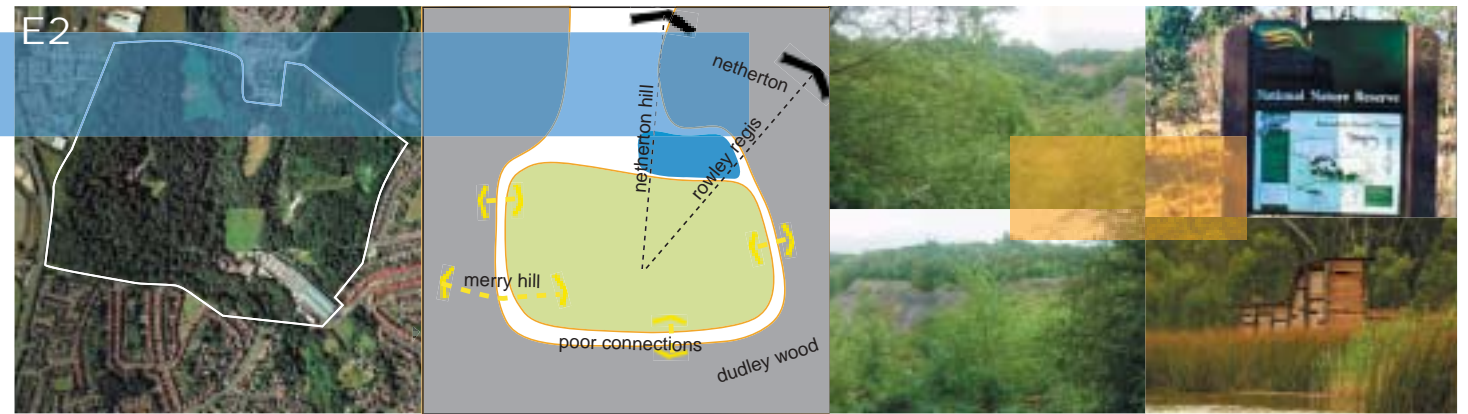
# E : ecological assets

The BC contains national status environmental assets. It should be sought to:

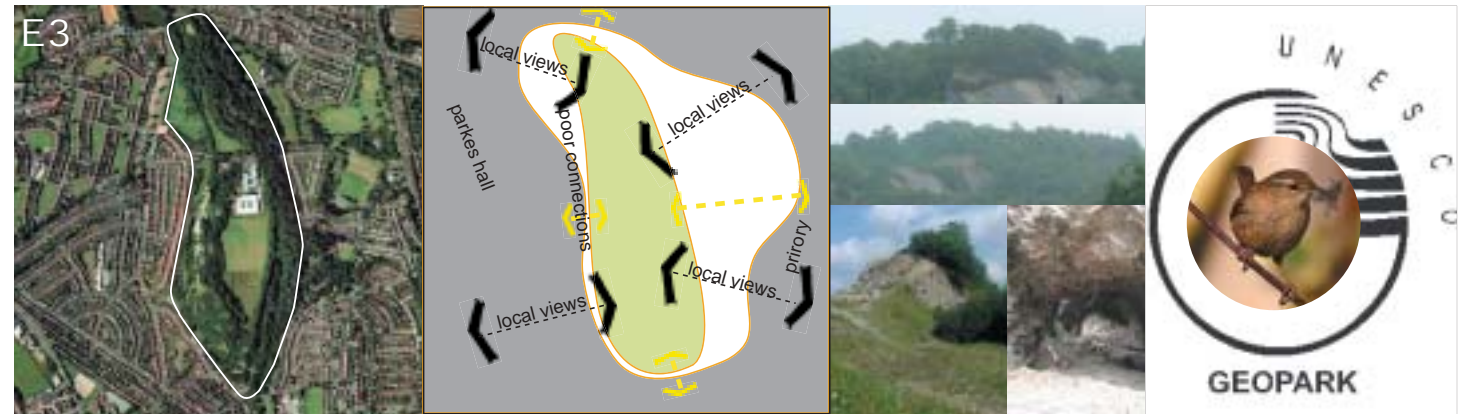
- : Emphasise access and awareness.
- : Protection of their unique qualities is vital.
- : Opportunities exist to promote key sites as destinations / attractions (eco-park.....).



**fenns pools - national**  
fishing combined with ecological enhancement. intensive public fishing centre, competitions etc. on one of the pools, other pools to be given over to nature, **improve connections.....**



**doultons clay pit - local**  
public nature reserve. public interaction with nature - bird hides, pond dipping, interactive signs, board walks, improve connections etc.....

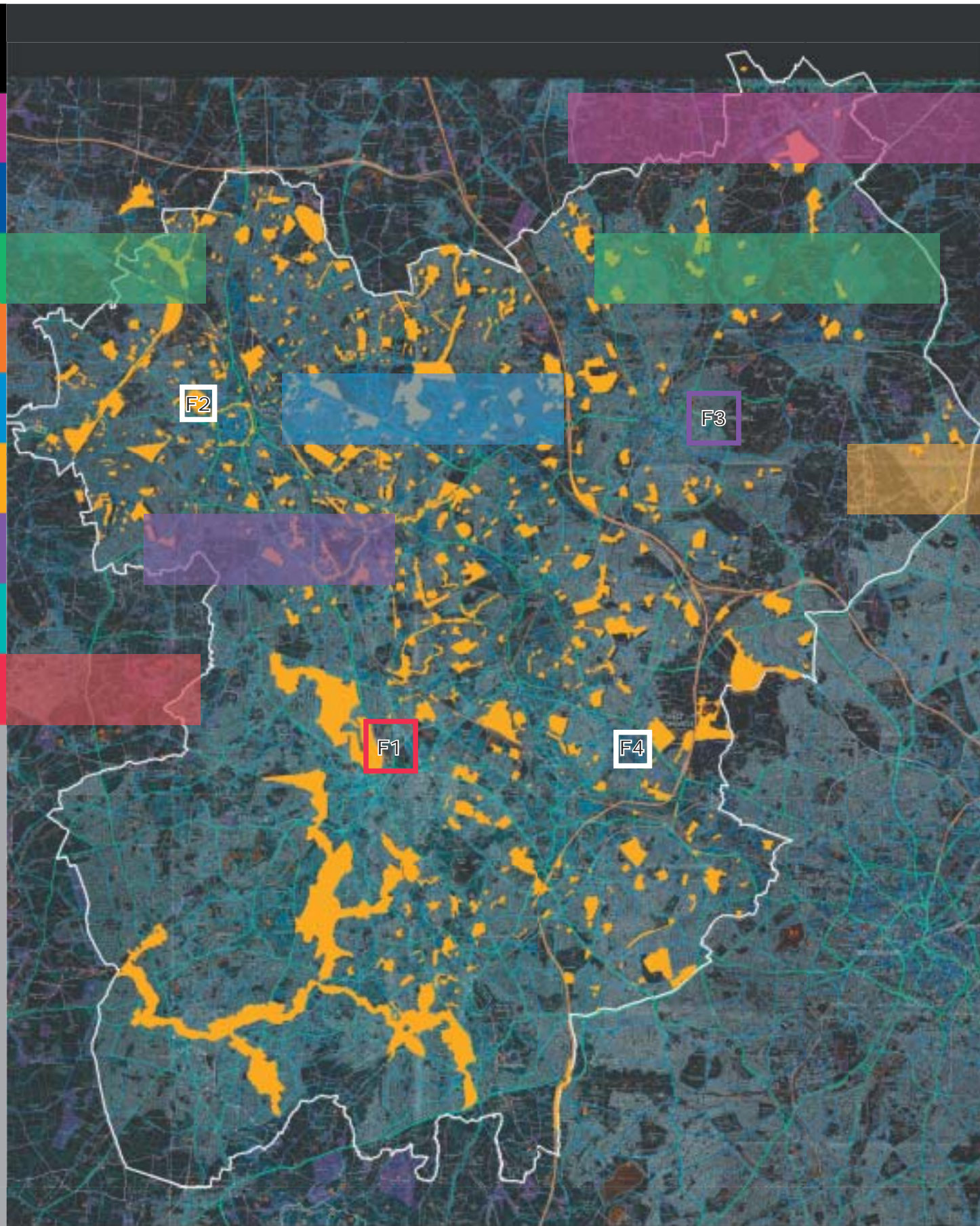


**wrens nest**  
geo park (read text to right), improve connections.....



**cuckoos nook**  
nature reserve with improved public access - part of the wasall - barr beacon corridor, via the arboretum, beacon way (which runs through the site).....





# F : urban floor

The BC has a large volume of open space, much of which is in poor condition and costly to maintain. How can the health and lifestyle benefits of open space be provided to the wider population of the BC? Specific attention should be paid to:  
: Investigating the concept of local showcase parks, which are sited for maximum access and contain key leisure and cultural related activities.

F1

**dudley - regional**  
this development at this strategic site in dudley will connect dudley town centre with the castle - the black country museum - and the castlegate leisure park. further connections are to be made along the brierley hill - dudley corridor to run alongside the proposed metro and stourbridge canal. a prestigious contemporary urban square is to be the setting for a high quality mixed use development. difficult connections should be made over the railway and also up into the town centre. the proposed metro line is to run alongside the site. visual reference is to be made with dudley castle.....

F2

**west park - regional**  
festival park, busy, activities, cultural events. close to city centre but unconnected because of ring road - reestablish these connections.

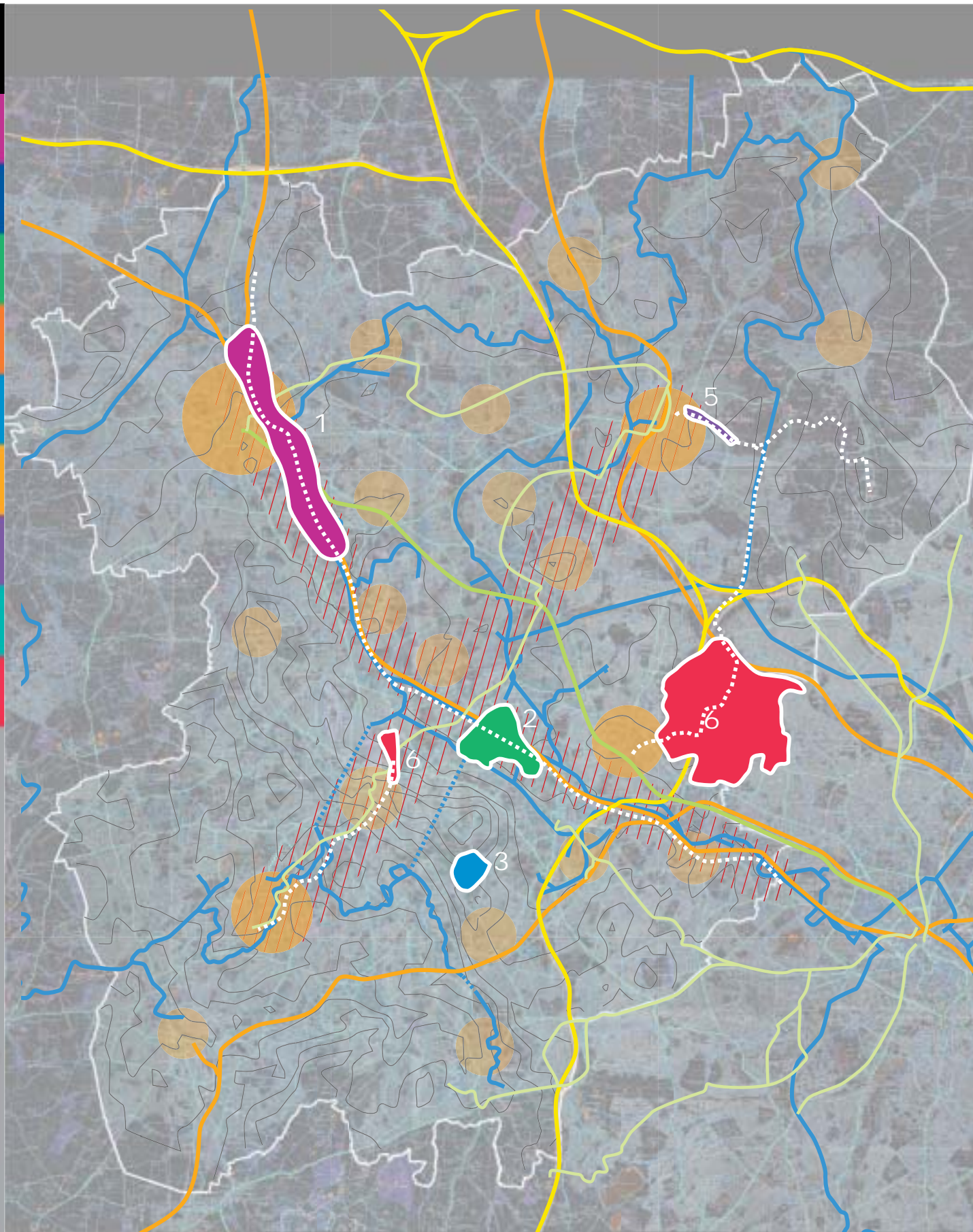
F3

**walsall arboretum - regional**  
this site is part of the walsall - west bromwich strategic corridor. the route will enter walsall via the arboretum. along the route and located in the arboretum will be a number of cultural celebrations. these may take the form of art sculptures, events or activities. this site will built on the already important cultural focus that walsall has earned. connections and involvement will be made with the art gallery in the centre of the town. as well as connections to west bromwich and the olympic playground, physical and visual connections will also be made with barr beacon.

F4

**west bromwich - regional**  
part of west bromwich - walsall corridor. connections to sandwell valley park and the olympic playground. prestigious plaza as a setting for the pUBLIC arts building.....





: flagship composite

## 1 wolverhampton strategic corridor



## 2 sheepwash strategic corridor



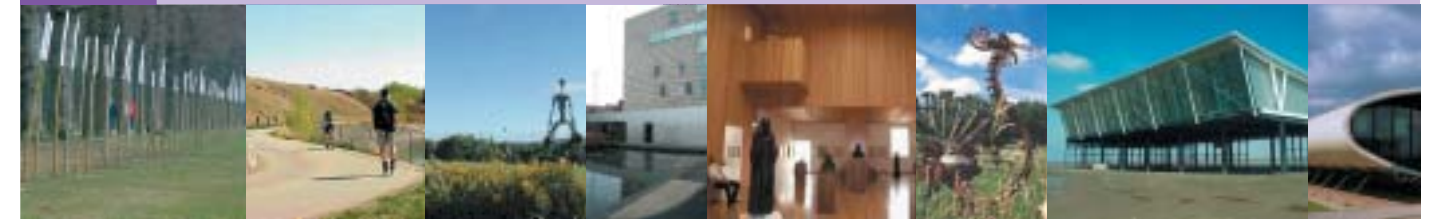
## 3 rowley hills beacon



## 4 sandwell valley olympic playground



## 5 walsall cultural corridor



## 6 dudley connections mixed use development

