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Black Country Joint Core Strategy

Stage 2: Infrastructure and Deliverability Study

Technical Note 9: Physical Environment

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1 Environmental Capacity – Physical Environment

This Technical Note considers land available for redevelopment, environmental designations and the historic environment within the Black Country. Each of these three topics have been looked at in turn in the following sub-sections.

1.1 Land Availability

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. For this reason, it is not envisaged that land availability will be a 'showstopper' to the delivery of the BCJCS.

Figure 1 provides some detail on the amount of green space that is available within the sub-region. Areas of Green Belt are clearly visible on the map, represented by the solid dark green colour. Green Belt land should be avoided where possible when considering new development and instead brownfield sites (i.e. land that has previously been developed) utilised. Figure 2 provides detail on a district level of where there is a high proportion of brownfield land. The availability of brownfield land is more pronounced in the districts of Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. This could suggest that the opportunities to redevelop sites are greater within these districts.

Figure 1: Green Space Availability

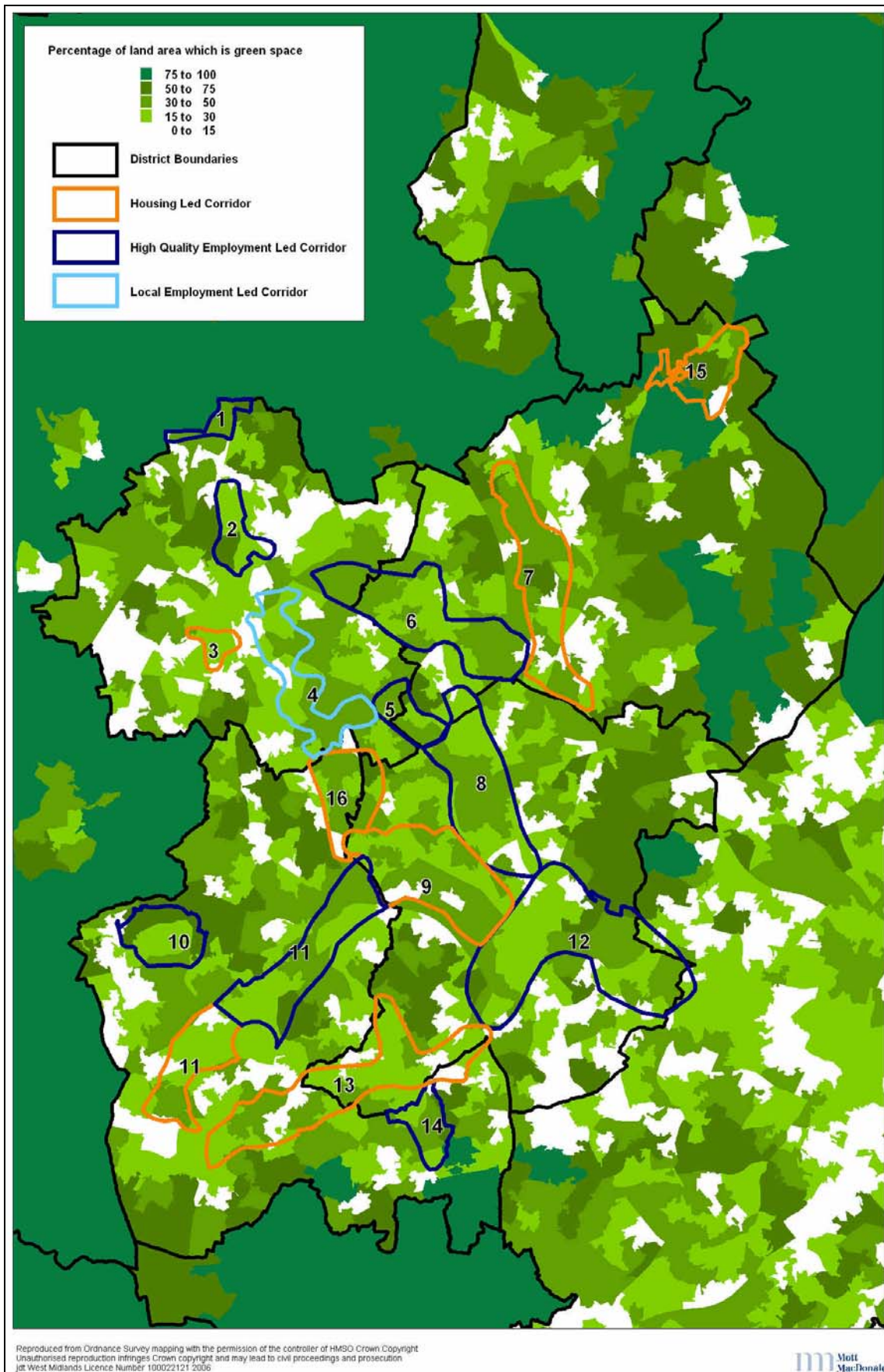
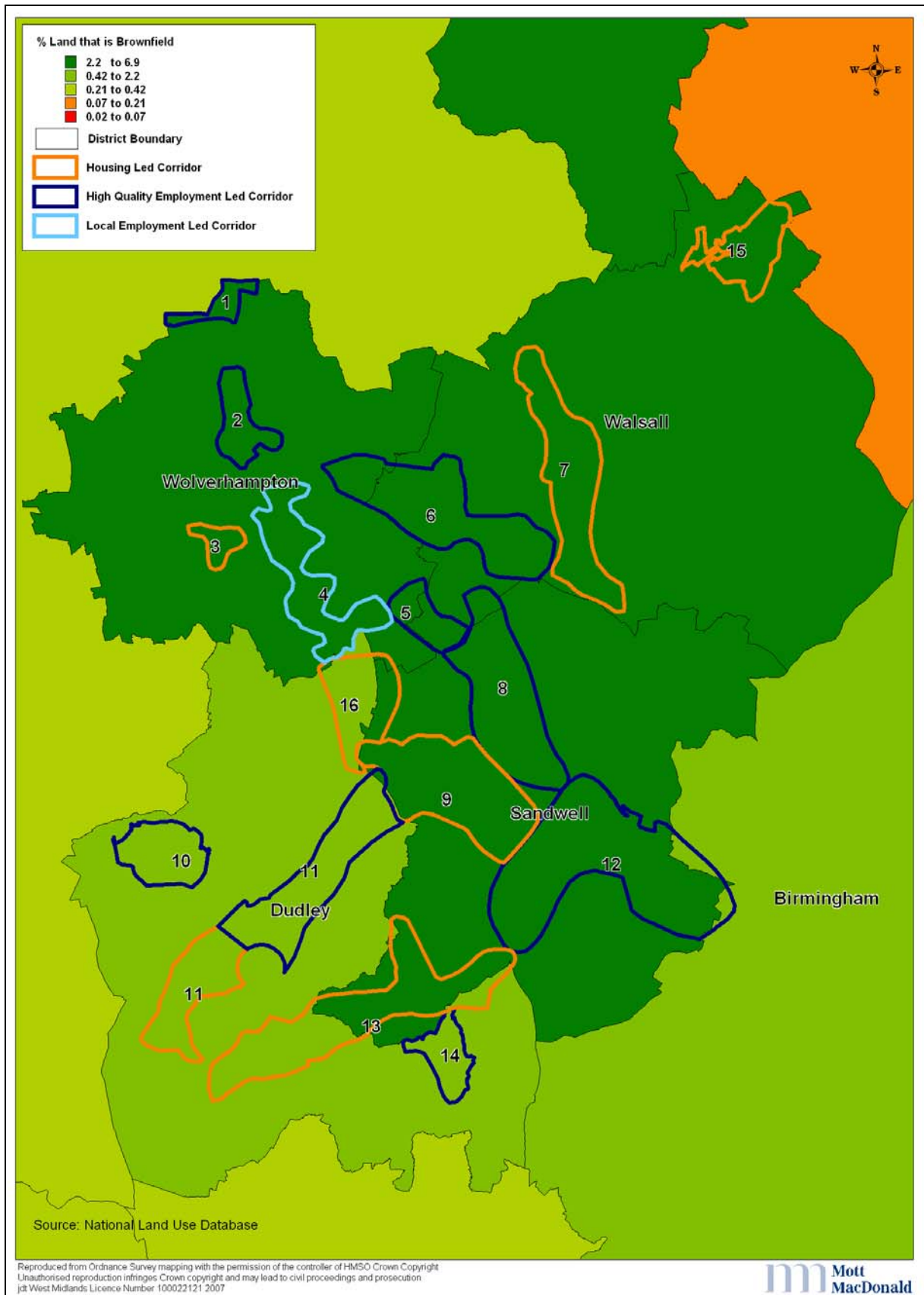


Figure 2: % Land Unused or May Be Available for Redevelopment, 2005



1.2 Environmental Aspects

1.2.1 Appropriate Assessment

Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora requires that any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a designated habitats site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is to be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects. Part IV of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 implements this for specified planning and other similar consents. In October 2005 the European Court of Justice ruled that this requirement extended to land use plans. This has now been set out in the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 which inserts a new Part IV A into the 1994 Regulations and came into force on 21 August 2007.

Land use plans to which Appropriate Assessments are applicable include Regional Spatial Strategies, Transitional Plans, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. This has important implications for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities who are responsible for assessing whether an Appropriate Assessment is necessary for land use plans they prepare, and carrying out the Appropriate Assessment where it is required.

1.2.2 Environmental Designations

Figures 3 and 4 spatially illustrate the location of environmental designations within the Black Country which are of local, national and international importance. Table 1 also provides a summary of the types of environmental designations within each of the Regeneration Corridors where applicable.

There are a number of sites within the Black Country sub-region that are of environmental importance. With regard to the Regeneration Corridors, RC5, RC9, RC11 and RC13 all contain Local Nature Reserves; RC10 contains a Site of Special Scientific Interest which is of national importance; and RC14 contains sites which are of both local and national importance.

When considering where new development is to be located, it is also important to take account of environmental designations within the vicinity of the Regeneration Corridors, especially those that border the Corridors. Sites of environmental importance that border the Regeneration Corridors can be at the same risk level of adverse impact from development works within the Corridors as those sites within the Corridors if appropriate mitigation measures are not put in place. Having considered this, RC7, RC8, RC11 (North) and RC15 would need the same level, if not higher, of environmental risk/impact assessments as for those Corridors in which environmental designations have been identified.

Liaisons with specialists in the environmental field such as Environmental Council Officers and Natural England, who are an independent public body working to protect England's natural environment, should be undertaken to ensure that all potential risks from development works have been identified and appropriate mitigation measures put in place where required.

Table 1: Environmental Designations by Regeneration Corridor

Regeneration Corridor	Level of Statutory Protection	Environmental Designations
Employment Led (All/ Majority High Quality)		
RC5: Loxdale – Moxley	Local	Local Nature Reserve
RC8: Hill Top	(Borders a local site)	Borders a Local Nature Reserve
RC10: Pensnett – Kingswinford	National	Local Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest
RC11 (North): Dudley – Brierley Hill	Local (borders a national and international site)	Local Nature Reserve (borders a Site of Special Scientific Interest and an Ancient Woodland)
RC14: Coombs Wood – Halesowen	Local and national	Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest
Employment Led (All/ Majority Local)		
RC7: Bloxwich – Birchills – Bescot	(Borders a local site)	Borders a Local Nature Reserve
RC15: Brownhills	(Borders a national site)	Borders a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ancient Woodland
Housing Led		
RC9: Tipton – Dudley Port – Brades Village	Local	Local Nature Reserve
RC11 (South): Brierley Hill – Stourbridge	Local	Local Nature Reserve
RC13: Rowley Regis – Jewellery Line	Local	Local Nature Reserve and borders an Ancient Woodland

Figure 3: Environmental Designations

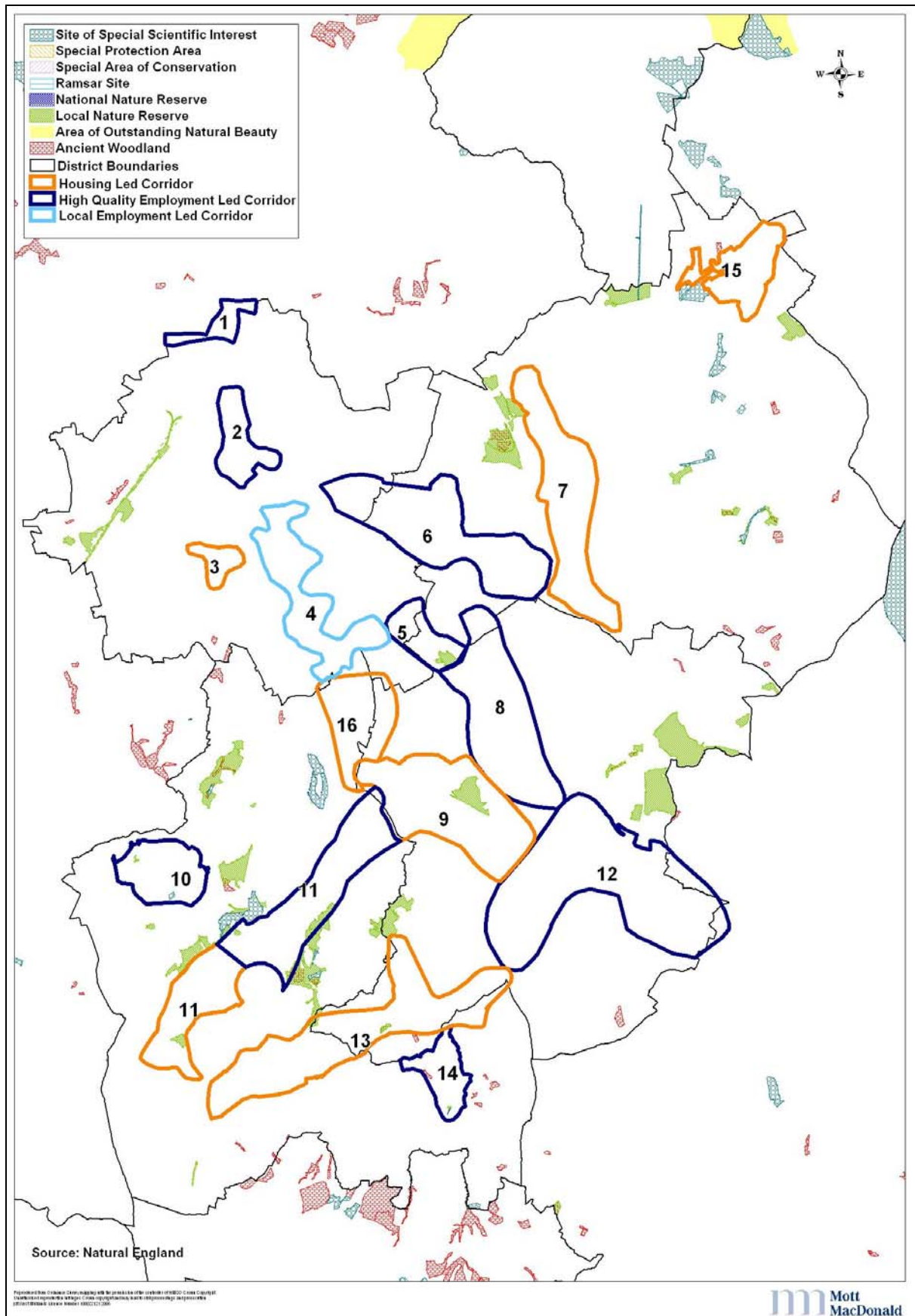
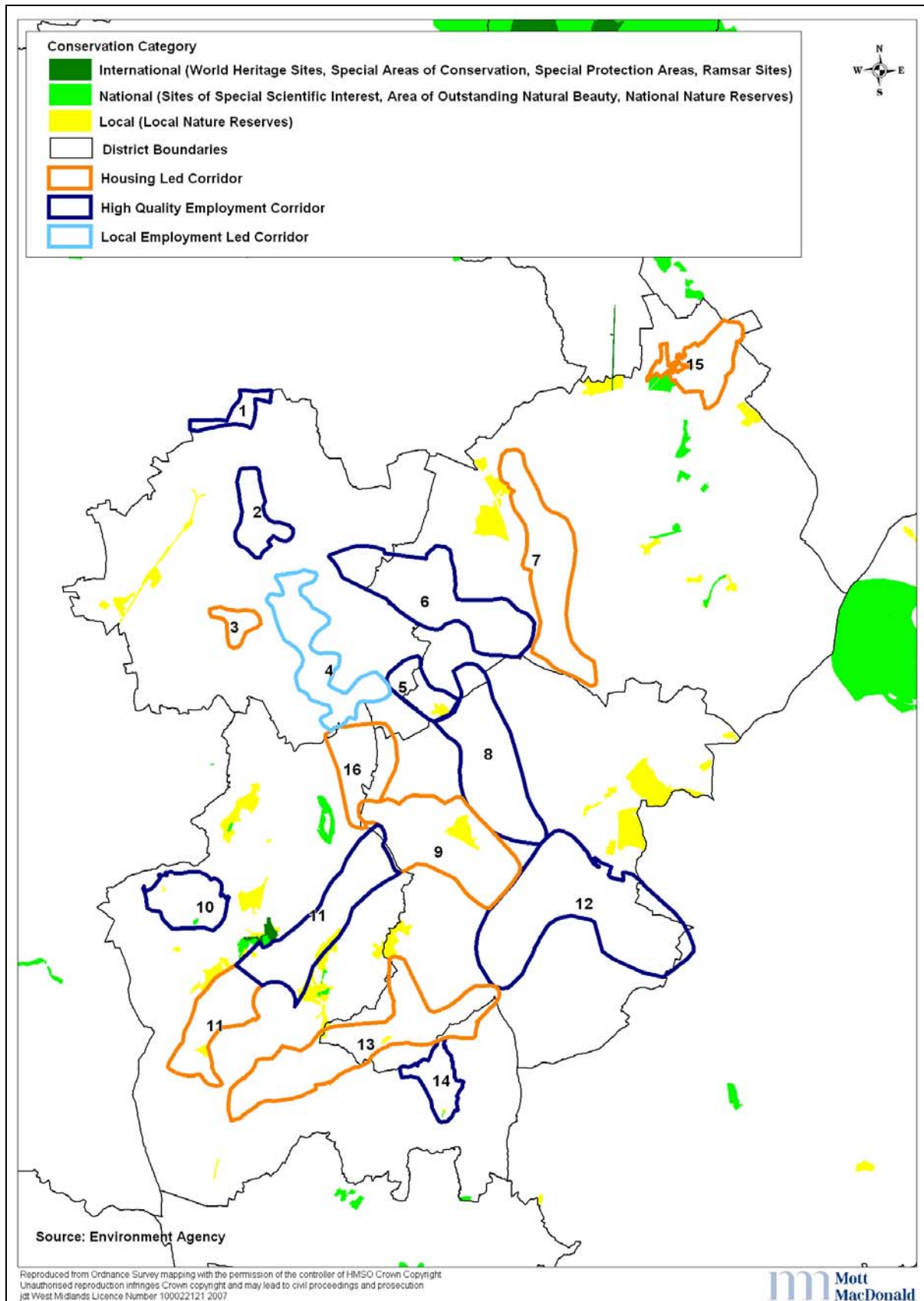


Figure 4: Environmental Designation by Level of Statutory Protection



1.3 Historic Environment – Listed Buildings

This section considered the number of listed buildings within each of the Regeneration Corridors. Figure 5 illustrates, using 5km grid references, the density of listed buildings within the Black Country. Further detail to support this map has also been provided in Table 2.

RC3, RC4, RC9, RC10 and RC16 have the most densely populated areas of listed buildings within the sub-region. It is important that when development works within the Black Country are undertaken to provide for the growth of the sub-region, the locations of these buildings are taken into account and mitigation measures put into place to protect them if they are within the vicinity of development land.

English Heritage is an organisation that works towards protecting and promoting England's historic environment and is a key organisation to liaise with regarding new development within the vicinity of listed buildings, and for the identification of appropriate mitigations measures if applicable.

However, as there is a move within local planning to (re)develop infrastructure so that it is in-keeping with its surroundings, housing and infrastructure development within the Black Country will take into account local settings and seek to maximise the benefits of the existing historic environment, and add to the local character of the sub-regions towns and cities.

Table 2: Listed Buildings by Regeneration Corridor

Regeneration Corridor	Listed Buildings
Employment Led (All/ Majority High Quality)	
RC1: Pendeford/ Fordhouses	Located within a 5km area containing 75 to 100 listed buildings
RC2: Stafford Road	Located within a 5km area containing 75 to 100 listed buildings
RC5: Loxdale – Moxley	Located within a 5km area containing 25 to 50 listed buildings
RC6: Wednesfield – Wilenhall – Darlaston	Predominantly located in a 5km area containing 25 to 50 listed buildings. The east side of RC 6 overlaps a 5km area containing 75 to 100 listed buildings. The northern boundary of RC 6 overlaps a 5km area containing 0 to 25 listed buildings
RC8: Hill Top	Located across four 5km areas with different designations for the number of listed buildings; 75 to 100 (NE), 50 to 75 (SE), 100 to 774 (SW), 25 to 50 (NW)
RC10: Pensnett – Kingswinford	Located in a 5km area with 25 to 50 listed buildings.
RC11 (North): Dudley – Brierley Hill	Located across two 5km areas; 25 to 50 and 100 to 774 listed buildings
RC12: Oldbury – West Bromwich – Smethwick	Predominantly located in an area with 50 to 75 listed buildings. A small section overlaps a 5km area containing 681 listed buildings
RC14: Coombs Wood – Halesowen	Located in a 5km area with 25 to 50 listed buildings
Employment Led (All/ Majority Local)	
RC4: Wolverhampton – Bilston	Located across two 5km areas; 100 to 774 and 25 to 50 listed buildings
RC7: Bloxwich – Birchills – Bescot	Located across two 5km areas; 0 to 25 listed buildings (north half) 75 to 100 listed buildings (south half)
RC15: Brownhills	Located in a 5km area with 0 to 25 listed buildings
Housing Led	
RC3: South of Wolverhampton City Centre	Located in a 5km area with 100 to 774 listed buildings
RC9: Tipton – Dudley Port – Brades Village	Located across two 5km areas; 100 to 774 and 50 to 75 listed buildings
RC11 (South): Brierley Hill – Stourbridge	Located in a 5km area with 25 to 50 listed buildings
RC13: Rowley Regis – Jewellery Line	Predominantly located in an area with 25 to 50 listed buildings. Two small sections to the east and west overlap 5km areas with 50 to 75 listed buildings
RC16: Coseley – Tipton – Princes End	Predominantly located in a 5km area with 100 to 774 listed buildings. A small top section overlaps a 5km area with 25 to 50 listed buildings

Figure 5: Listed Buildings

