

APPENDIX 7.5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This appendix sets out the landscape character baseline information for the study area and the areas within with ZTV.
- 1.1.2 The appendix should be read in combination with drawings 011 to 063, illustrating the extent of landscape character areas at national, regional/local and site levels.

2 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- 2.1.1 Natural Resources Wales produces mapping and written descriptions of the landscape character of Wales within National Landscape Character Areas (NLCAs). The aim is to assist those who make decisions regarding local plans to consider how best to enhance and respect local distinctiveness. The site is within NLCA 37: South Wales Valleys and NLCA 30: Brecon Beacons & Black Mountains lies in the north of the study area.
- 2.1.2 The following key characteristics of each of the NCAs that are applicable to the study area are outlined below.

NLCA Profile 37: South Wales Valleys

- 2.1.3 The key characteristics of this area are listed below:
- ***“Extensive Upland plateaux*** – typically wild and windswept, often with unenclosed tracts, running roughly north-south as ‘fingers’ parallel between intervening deep valleys.
 - ***Numerous steep-sided valleys*** - typically aligned in parallel, flowing in southerly directions, shaped by southward flowing glaciers, leaving behind distinctive corrie ('cwm') and crag features. Major rivers include the Tawe, Taff and Rhymney.
 - ***Ribbon urban and industrial areas in valleys*** – in places extending up valley sides and to valley heads. The area is sometimes regarded as being part of a ‘city region’. Middle and eastern valleys tend to be the most heavily and continuously developed, e.g Rhondda Valley. The uplands by comparison have little or no settlement.
 - ***Extensive remains of heavy industry*** – with a mix of derelict, preserved and largely redeveloped areas, notably for coal mining. Preserved as heritage (World heritage Site) at Blaenafon this typically includes old railway alignments,

buildings and former tips.

- **Contrast of urban valley activity next to quiet uplands** – e.g. busy roads, new developments, traffic noise, night lighting, verses the adjacent wilder, remoter, quieter uplands.
- **Large blocks of coniferous plantation and deciduous woodland fringes** – covering many steep hillsides and hilltops, most notably in the middle to western portion of the area, providing a softer contemporary landscape where there was once industry.
- **Heather, rough grassland and steep bracken slopes** – dominate many plateaux and are grazed mainly by sheep. Much is common land.
- **Improved pastures on some lower valley sides** - grazed by sheep and some dairy cattle.
- **Field boundaries** - dry stone walls mark the boundary of common land while fields on lower slopes are bounded by dense hawthorn hedges, interspersed with swathes of broadleaved woodland.
- **Transport routes restricted to valleys** – the intervening topography makes valley to valley travel difficult, except at heads and bottoms of valleys. Occasionally there are roads that climb steeply over passes with dramatic views and ‘hair pin’ bends.
- **Iconic cultural identity** – many popular images of a tough, rugby-playing, religious, radically-minded society still remain associated with the South Wales Valleys, however today’s post-industrial, internet-connected reality is somewhat different.”

NLCA Profile 30: Brecon Beacons & Black Mountain

2.1.4 The key characteristics of this area are listed below:

- **The highest mountains in South Wales** - distinctive flat-topped mountains and a prominent escarpment of Devonian Old Red Sandstone, with smaller bands of Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit in the south.
- **Heavily glaciated** – classic upland cirque formations, ridges, glacial lakes and moraines, over-deepened and ‘U’ shaped valleys.
- **The source of a number of rivers** - Four major rivers, the Usk, Neath, Tawe and Aman, flow generally south through the landscape, fed by fast flowing streams and waterfalls from the surrounding uplands.

- **Numerous reservoirs** - have been created forming notable landscape features.
- **Rough moorland habitats** - open, exposed, mainly sheep grazed, some commons.
- **Classic limestone scenery** – to lower parts to the south including clints, grykes and caves, the best examples in South Wales, waterfalls, stone walls and buildings. However there are also a number of old limestone quarries and associated remnant infrastructure.
- **Strong field pattern with many small fields** - pasture enclosed by stone walls at higher altitudes and in limestone areas but thick hedgerows elsewhere and in the valley bottoms, with improved pasture fields found on the lower valley slopes.
- **Large conifer blocks** - cover some valley side slopes in certain areas.
- **Bio- and geodiversity** - large parts are designated. Features include arctic-alpine cliff flora and species-rich limestone grasslands.
- **Tourism** - the Brecon Beacons National Park symbolises the iconic beauty of South Wales and attracts thousands of visitors each year.
- **Scattered, small settlements** – confined to valleys; overall the area is sparsely settled.
- **Highly tranquil** - The windswept uplands display little intrusion of modern forms. High points afford panoramic views across the area and far beyond. The area is recognised for its dark skies.

3 HEADS OF THE VALLEYS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

3.1.1 The Heads of the Valleys Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2015)¹ covers the study area south of the National Park and defines Landscape Units using the LANDMAP aspect areas, these are illustrated on drawing 039.

3.1.2 The following section sets out information from this study relevant to the site, the study area, the ZTV and the proposed development. The study includes consideration of a very large wind turbine typology for any number of turbines over 109m in height, therefore the findings of the study in relation to this typology are summarised below.

3.2 Unit 16 Rhymney Valley from Rhymney to Bargoed

¹ [Heads of the Valleys Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development 2015](#)

3.2.1 The site is located in the north of this unit. The findings of the study for this unit are summarised below.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 16		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Medium scale landscape	Medium
Landform	Valley landscape extending north south across the study area.	High
Land cover pattern	A quarter of the land use is residential with the remainder being a combination of grazed slopes, upland valleys and plateau	Medium
Built Environment	Settled valley bottom with a variety of development types.	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	No distinct skylines. Valley setting for development and approaches to Rhymney and Bargoed	Low
Movement	Variations across the unit. Busy in the valley bottom along major transport route (A 469) but quieter on the valley sides.	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Enclosed valley bottoms with views up and down the valley interrupted by built form. Higher up the steep valley sides the landscape is more open and there are views across the valley and to the uplands.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	The upland areas adjacent have views down into this unit	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Residents, road users and walkers. Rhymney Valley Ridge walk (promoted route) on the west valley ridge	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	None apparent.	Low
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Busy landscape that in the main is easily accessible and not particularly remote or accessible.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Unit includes the Upper Rhymney Valley SLA	Medium
Historic value		Medium

3.2.2 The study concluded that the unit is of high sensitivity to the very large typology *“which could adversely affect residential amenity”*. *“Although some indicators suggest this area has low to medium sensitivity the settled character of the area means that residential amenity issues are likely to arise particularly with larger development.”*

3.2.3 The study also includes guidance on siting as follows:

- *“Protect the settings of designated and other important cultural heritage features and the key views to and from these features.*
- *Consider views from the Rhymney Valley Ridgeway walk.*
- *Avoid sequential cumulative impacts from the A4049 in the valley bottom by ensuring visual separation between turbines/small groups of turbines.*
- *Ensure new access tracks do not damage historic field patterns. Replant any hedges and replace any walls affected by construction.*
- *Avoid siting wind turbines on the steep slopes and their associated tops.*
- *Maintain the natural beauty of SLAs in the area and their special qualities.*
- *Maintain the distinctive visual and sensory landscape features and characteristics of the Visually Important Local Landscape*
- *Avoid the loss of trees and woodland cover.*
- *Avoid diminishing the scale of the valley through inappropriate turbine siting.*
- *Protect the immediate setting of the towns in the valley bottom.”*

3.3 Unit 1 Forested upland and plateau at Treherbert

3.3.1 This Landscape unit 1 is in the western part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, over 12km to the west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 1		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale	Low
Landform	Upland gently undulating plateau with well-defined scarp slope to the north and ridges to the south. Numerous dramatic glaciated landforms including cwms and outcrops on the scarp slope to the north and features adjacent to the Rhondda Fawr Valley to the south. Susceptibility is very high on and close to the scarp slope and dramatic landforms but	Medium

	overall assessed to be medium for the unit	
Land cover pattern	Upland landscape with large scale forestry and grazing	Medium
Built Environment	Very little built form in the unit. Large scale forestry present and some medium/large scale wind turbine development	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Skyline of the upland edge is distinctive e.g. Pen-tych tabletop plateau west of Blaenrhondda, Craig y Llyn and Tarren y Bwlch to the north and Tarren y Bwllfa to the east. Sharp contrast between the steep sided valleys and the forested plateau tops	High
Movement	Calm landscape with occasional wind turbine movement. Quiet. Presence of turbines reduces sensitivity	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Elevated views from within the unit. Views outside the unit look up into the unit at close quarters. Scenic viewpoints, at Craig y Llyn and Bwlch y Clawdd.	Low
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	Some intervisibility with adjacent landscapes particularly across valleys. Views from the northern part of the unit to BBNP.	Medium
Types of receptors	Road users have transitory views of the unit. Walkers using public footpaths are not very numerous. Residents of settlements in the valley bottoms have views up the steep valley slopes to valley tops but are not within the unit. Overall few receptors in the unit.	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	The southern and western part of this unit is in the Rhondda Landscape of Historic Interest. The landscape seen today was created in the latter part of the 19th century. The large areas of forestry are linked to the industrial past.	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	The unit is large and remote in places. However, roads and valley communities are nearby.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Unit includes 3 SLAs	Medium
Historic value		High

3.3.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“The landscape unit is characterised by a Medium - high sensitivity to very large development on account of*

historic value and presence of existing large scale wind farm.”

3.4 Unit 2 Hillside landscape south and west of Hirwaun

3.4.1 This Landscape unit 2 is in the western part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, over 11km to the west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 2		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large/vast scale overall with some medium scale	Low
Landform	Sloping land facing north towards the BBNP well defined scarp slope to the south and dramatic glaciated landforms.	High
Land cover pattern	Mixed land cover pattern ranging from fieldscapes with hedgerow boundaries to disturbed land resulting from mining. The fieldscapes east of Rhigos are reclaimed to very high standard	Medium
Built Environment	Sparsely settled hillside,	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Sloping land below the upland forested landscape of unit 2 generally without distinctive skyline. Hirwaun Common has a distinctive skyline on the boundary with unit 1 and has high susceptibility.	Medium
Movement	Generally little human activity in this rural hillside landscape away from roads	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Hillside generally open with pockets of enclosure close to built form and woodland/forestry. More exposed on higher ground.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	The unit is intervisible with the BBNP and with the developed valley floor of the Afon Cynon settled valley landscape. The former providing attractive views and the latter less attractive views	Medium
Types of receptors	Road users, cyclists, walkers using public footpaths, residents in the valley bottoms. Although not densely settled there are some sensitive residential receptors.	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Views north towards BBNP and views from the BBNP into the unit.	High
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		

Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	The unit is large and remote in places.	Low
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value		High
Historic value		High

- 3.4.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“The unit has medium to high sensitivity to large or very large development as a result of its intervisibility with the BBNP and the settled Afon Cynon valley and its overall high value. The scarp slope in particular has high sensitivity.”*

3.5 Unit 4 Afon Rhondda Fach Settled Valley

- 3.5.1 This Landscape unit 4 is in the eastern part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, over 14km to the south-west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 4		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Medium scale valley bottom becoming larger scale up the valley sides. Incorporates the settlements of upper Rhondda Fach.	Medium
Landform	Upland glaciated U valley landscape. Steep sides above valley bottom. Narrow Cefn Rhondda ridge top on the west boundary with unit 3	High
Land cover pattern	Settlement in the upland valley bottoms and farmed landscape on slopes and unsettled valley bottom	Medium
Built Environment	Sparsely settled hillside with settled upland valley bottom. Linear development.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Rural valley setting for the town and villages. Ferndale wind farm (8 turbines) to the west on boundary of unit 3 and 4.	Medium
Movement	Settled valley in a rural setting. Generally quiet and calm away from development	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Views in valley bottom and town and village restricted. Views on upper valley side across valleys and to upland beyond.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	Views of Ferndale windfarm on the ridge to the west and Maerdy to the north. Attractive views to the surrounding landscape. Detractors include wind turbines and masts	Medium

	both inside and outside the unit and development within.	
Types of receptors	Large number of residential, commercial and recreational receptors in addition to road users.	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	This valley is part of the Rhondda Landscape of Historic Interest which is identified for its mining past and associated development. The settlements are not particularly attractive themselves but have important historic interest	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Developed valley with evidence of former industry (mining and quarrying.	Low
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	The unit is in the Rhondda Landscape of Historic Interest.	Medium
Historic value		High

3.5.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“Landform, built environment, the number of sensitive receptors and historic value all contribute to medium-high landscape sensitivity to large and very large development.”*

3.6 Unit 5 Cwmaman upper valley slopes and upland

3.6.1 This Landscape unit 5 is in the eastern part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, over 10km to the south-west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 5		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large to medium scale landscape.	Low
Landform	Upland landscape incorporating valley sides to the east of the area above Unit 6	Medium
Land cover pattern	At higher elevations large areas of forestry. On the slopes there are grazed fields.	Medium
Built Environment	Very little built development throughout.	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Forestry covers much of the higher ground. Skyline smooth overall. This upland area provides the setting for settlement in the valley to the east below. (Cwmaman, Aberdare, Mountain Ash and Aberaman). To the west the upper part of the unit	Medium

	contributes to the setting of Ferndale and Maerdy. Skylines of particular note are: Rhos Gwawr/Craig Fforchaman Cwm Aman/Craig Tir Llaethdy Craig Darren Las Cwm Rhondda Fach/ Craig y Gilwern	
Movement	Very little human activity and movement in the area large parts of which are forested.	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Views are limited in the upper parts of the area by forestry. Where there are views they extend down into the valleys to upland across the valleys.	Low
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views out of the unit away from the forestry. Many views into the area are restricted due to its elevation and forestry although rounded hills and ridge edges have greater visibility in particular from the Cynon Valley.	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Road users and walkers.	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Views from ridge line in the Rhondda Landscape of Historic Interest to the south west.	Low
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character	Forestry provides sheltered feel in upper elevations and slopes of the hillside below are also relatively sheltered. Although not much settlement in the area it is adjacent to settled valleys.	Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity		Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Hirwaun Common, Cwm Dare & Cwm Aman SLA Ridge line on south west side of the unit is within the Rhondda Landscape of Historic Interest.	Medium
Historic value		High

3.6.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“Medium to high Very large development would affect views across a large area due to elevation of the unit.”*

3.7 Unit 8 Cynon Taff Ridge

3.7.1 This Landscape unit 8 is in the eastern part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, over 7km to the south-west west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 8		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Generally large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Upland area. Broad ridge line between two valleys	High
Land cover pattern	Coniferous plantations on higher slopes.	Medium
Built Environment	Very little built development	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Smooth forested broad ridge line. Skyline setting for settled valleys. Views across valleys to ridges and north to BBNP although forestry restricts views	Medium
Movement	Generally, a calm landscape with little human activity	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Forestry and landform help to enclose parts of the area but other parts are exposed.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views into and out of the area from adjacent landscapes and across valleys from high ground.	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Residents, road users and walkers.	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Intermittent views to Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest from forested high ground between the Taff and Cynon valleys.	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Mostly a sheltered landscape with areas of exposure. Neither remote nor accessible - secluded.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	SLAs in Rhondda Cynon Taf to the south and north ends of this linear unit	Medium
Historic value		High

3.7.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to large and very large scale wind energy development which could adversely affect the skyline setting of Merthyr Tydfil.”*

3.8 Unit 9 Merthyr Tydfil west valley side

3.8.1 This Landscape unit 9 is in the western part of Merthyr Tydfil, over 5km to the south-west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 9		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale landscape	Low
Landform	East facing valley side between town and ridge line	High
Land cover pattern	Varied complex landcover pattern on the hillside comprising a mix of settlement, fieldscapes, marginal land and extraction	Medium
Built Environment	Sparsely settled hillside with two main small settlements and country park.	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	No distinctive skyline. Area provides setting for Merthyr Tydfil to the east	Medium
Movement	Secluded landscape away from main settlement but accessible	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Generally open across the valley side. Views of the town. Enclosed where wooded/forested.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views from this hillside landscape to the town and north to the BBNP although landform, built form and tree cover restricts some views	Medium
Types of receptors	Residents and visitors, road users and walkers within the area. Residents of Merthyr Tydfil out of the area.	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	BBNP boundary on north edge of this area. Some views into the BBNP. The unit is in the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest which extends into unit 10 and 12 to the east. Potential views from Cyfarthfa Castle and gardens	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character	Mixed attributes presenting a complicated picture.	Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Close to major settlement yet contains areas that appear tranquil and remote.	High
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Importance.	Medium
Historic value		High

3.8.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to medium to very large development that would affect the historic setting of Merthyr Tydfil.”*

3.9 Unit 10 Merthyr Tydfil

3.9.1 This Landscape unit 10 is in the central part of Merthyr Tydfil, 1km to the west of the site at the closest point.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 10		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Generally medium scale	Medium
Landform	Glaciated valley with the River Taff meandering through.	High
Land cover pattern	Complex mix of urban development with mixed use on the urban edge including quarrying, recreation, and designed landscapes.	Low
Built Environment	Densely settled broad valley bottom and lower slopes that are not too steep. Nucleated settlement	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	views to broad ridges at tops of valleys outside the unit. Skylines within dominated by built development - mainly residential	Medium
Movement	Busy landscape with road corridors at the edges.	Low
Visibility, key views, vistas.	enclosed by surrounding valley sides and by built development.	Low
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	Views out of the area to surrounding landscape are limited due to landform and built form. However there are views into the unit from surrounding high ground.	Medium
Types of receptors	Broad range and a large number of visual receptors - residents, commercial users, road users, visitors	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Built form restricts views but landform gives rise to elevated locations with views across the unit. Cyfarthfa castle and parkland is an important site in the urban area and has framed views of the settlement and surrounding countryside to the west	High
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Low
Remoteness and tranquillity	Very busy landscape with a wide variety of human activity and movement.	Low
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest Cyfarthfa Castle and school (Grade 1 listed), Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of	Medium

	Historic Interest in Wales	
Historic value		High

3.9.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to medium to very large development which would be out of keeping with the character of the settlement and affect residential amenity”.*

3.10 Unit 11 Taff Valley Southern Reach

3.10.1 This Landscape unit 11 is in the southern part of Merthyr Tydfil, over 5km to the southwest of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 11		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Medium to large scale valley landscape	Medium
Landform	Glaciated valley bottom and sides incorporating pockets of land above the top edge of the steep sided valley slopes.	High
Land cover pattern	Mix of uses. Valley floor settled and major transport corridor. Valley sides a combination of woodland/forestry and grazed fields.	Low
Built Environment	Densely settled valley floor with a variety of residential and commercial development types.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Views of skylines at top of steep valley slopes generally smooth with no distinctive features. Valley sides provide setting for settled valley bottom and approach to Merthyr Tydfil to the north.	Medium
Movement	Busy settled valley landscape. Tops of valleys and beyond are quieter	Low
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Valley topography, woodland/forestry and built form serve to restrict views.	Low
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views in and out of the area particularly from the upper valley slopes and beyond.	Medium
Types of receptors	Residents of villages/towns in the valley bottom and on valley sides.	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Aberfan Cemetery, Garden of Remembrance and former tip and slide area is located at the north end of the unit and this area has historic and cultural significance and is designated as an Historic Park and Garden	High

AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Mixed. Areas which are unattractive, noisy and easily accessible. Steep valley slopes not as accessible.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Aberfan Cemetery, Garden of Remembrance and former tip and slide area (Historic Park and Garden)	Medium
Historic value		High

3.10.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to larger development out of keeping with the scale of the landscape and character of built development.”*

3.11 Unit 12 Merthyr Tydfil east valley side

3.11.1 This Landscape unit 12 is in the eastern part of Merthyr Tydfil, directly to the west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 12		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Large scale disturbance and man-made landform associated with a large-scale coal recovery scheme (Ffos y Fran) apparent.	Low
Land cover pattern	Mix of land cover dominated by man-made landform of the coal recovery scheme to the north of the unit. Away from this area pattern is more traditionally rural with marginal land, fieldscapes and woodland.	Medium
Built Environment	Despite obvious industrial activity in the area there is little built form	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Man made landform of the coal recovery scheme dominates skyline when viewed from the north. The unit provides the landscape setting for the east side of Merthyr Tydfil and despite the man-made nature of landform to the north the southern end of the unit provides a rural back drop to the setting of the town	Medium
Movement	Adjacent to Merthyr Tydfil much of the area is accessible	Medium

Visibility, key views, vistas.	Not a lot of tree cover or built form and extensive views from the valley sides in places.	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views to the surrounding landscape. Detractive views appear to dominate.	Low
Types of receptors	Few receptors although Merthyr Tydfil to the west contain numerous and varied visual receptors.	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Views to and from the BBNP. Landform within the unit already changed considerably due to coal recovery scheme and will continue for several years before restoration complete.	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Low
Remoteness and tranquillity	Area very influenced by man's activity and generally accessible.	Low
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest	Medium
Historic value		High

3.11.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *"The proximity of Merthyr Tydfil and the size of this unit results in medium-high sensitivity to large development. The proximity of Merthyr Tydfil and the size of this unit results in high sensitivity to very large development."*

3.12 Unit 13 Upland moorland between Taff and Rhymney Valleys

3.12.1 This Landscape unit 13 is in the eastern part of Merthyr Tydfil, it is immediately to the south of the site and extends along the three upland areas between the valleys.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 13		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Upland gently undulating broad ridges between valleys.	Medium
Land cover pattern	Upland grazing and moorland dominates	Low
Built Environment	Very little built development in the areas	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Broad ridge tops have a smooth profile. Unit provides the setting for valley landscapes and their villages/towns.	High
Movement	Some human access but limited to roads and	Medium

	footpaths.	
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Exposed upland landscape with gently undulating landform and no cover	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are attractive and detractive views in and out of the area. Given the elevated position there are views from and into the valley bottoms and to uplands across valleys and beyond.	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Residents, road users and walkers	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Distant views to and from BBNP. Unit overlooks Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest to the west and includes a small area of the designation. Also overlooks and includes the Gelli-gaer Common Landscape of Historic Interest. Numerous SAMs possibly prehistoric, Roman and Medieval	High
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Very mixed. Overall exposed. Some sense of remoteness but also accessible by minor roads that appear well used.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest Gelli-gaer Common Landscape of Historic Interest SLA covers approximately 15% of the unit Gelli-gaer Common SLA in Caerphilly	Medium
Historic value		High

3.12.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“Medium sensitivity where the area is affected by existing activity at the northern end of the unit but high sensitivity towards the south. High sensitivity to very large development which could affect the historic landscape and long distance views.”*

3.13 Unit 14 Bedlinog Valley and farmed upland landscape

3.13.1 This Landscape unit 14 is in the southeastern part of Merthyr Tydfil, over 2.5km south-south-west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 14		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Generally large scale with some medium scale areas	Low to medium
Landform	Valley landscape with steep slopes.	High

Land cover pattern	Settled valley bottom with farmed valley slopes comprising mix of grazing and pockets of woodland and moorland	Medium
Built Environment	One major settlement in valley bottom with scattered settlement throughout.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	None that are distinctive, Valley sides provide setting for settled valley bottom	Medium
Movement	Busy valley bottom, quiet valley sides	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Unit is enclosed by valley slopes, views out from lower levels are restricted.	Low
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes		Medium
Types of receptors	Residents in valley bottom, road users, visitors, walkers	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Overlooked by upland areas of Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest and Gelli-gaer Common Landscape of Historic Interest	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Overall tranquil, attractive sheltered. Community is remote at the top of the valley but also accessible by road.	High
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest in a small area to the north of the unit and unit shares boundary with to Gelli-gaer Common Landscape of Historic Interest on upland between landscape units 14 and 15 Taff Bargoed Community Park	Medium
Historic value		High

3.13.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to large or very large development which would affect views along the valley and be out of scale with the built environment.”*

3.14 Unit 15 Darran Valley and hillsides

3.14.1 This Landscape unit 15 is in the eastern part of Merthyr Tydfil and the western part of Rhymney, over 2km to the south of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 15		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Medium scale landscape	Medium
Landform	Upland glaciated valley with narrow valley bottom and steep valley sides. Incorporates grazed farmland above the top valley edge	Medium
Land cover pattern	Narrow settled valley floor with steep sided slopes comprising marginal land and grazed fields where the gradient is not so steep.	High
Built Environment	Some development - villages in the valley bottom.	Medium
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	No particularly distinctive skylines. Valley sides and tops provide setting for villages in valley bottom.	Medium
Movement	Some human activity in the valley landscape but not as busy as adjacent valleys.	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Valley landscape with views up and down and across the valley	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views up and down the valley and across the valley from higher slopes.	Medium
Types of receptors	Residents of the valley settlements have views up and down and across the valley. Additionally, there are visitors and road and footpath users. Rhymney Valley Ridgeway walk through the area has views across the unit.	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Overlooked by the Gelli-gaer Common Landscape of Historic Interest.	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Remote village at the head of the valley but area is accessible on the whole.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	SLA covers approximately 38% of the unit. Gelli-gaer Common SLA on the west side of the valley is an extension of Gelli-gaer Common Landscape of Historic Interest to the west. Cwmllydrew Meadows Nature Reserve	Medium
Historic value		High

3.14.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to large and very large development which would affect views along the valley and be out of scale with the built environment.”*

3.15 Unit 17 Upland north of the heads of the valley corridor

3.15.1 This Landscape unit 17 is in the northern part of Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly, 1km to the north of the site at the closest point.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 17		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale to vast landscape with smaller areas of medium scale.	Low
Landform	Varied upland topography with rolling undulating landform	High
Land cover pattern	Upland grazing and moorland dominate the area with pockets of valleys and excavation. Large quarry at Trefil.	Low
Built Environment	Very little settlement, mainly concentrated on Heads of the Valleys road corridor and along small upland valleys.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Skyline is smooth with few focal points. Two single medium scale wind turbines in the area interrupt the skyline from certain vantage points. The unit is adjacent to the BBNP and part of the setting of the BBNP.	High
Movement	Sparsely populated area with limited movement. The Heads of the Valley Road Corridor on the south boundary is busy. Two single turbines have introduced movement. Consented race track will increase movement within this area	Medium
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Views of the unit from the Brecon Beacons to the north	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	Views of the unit from the Brecon Beacons to the north. Attractive views in and out Some detractive views out but few within	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Residents, road users and walkers. Visitors to the BBNP.	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage	Intervisible with the BBNP. Unit provides setting for BBNP and is a buffer between the developed Heads of the Valley road corridor	High

features	and BBNP. Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest at the west end of the unit and Clydach Gorge Landscape of Historic Interest to the east end of the unit	
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		High
Remoteness and tranquillity	Sense of remoteness along north boundary with the BBNP away from the Heads of the Valley road corridor	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	SLA covering approximately 77% of the unit: Upper Rhymney Valley SLA (Caerphilly) Trefil and Garnlydan surrounds SLA Clydach Gorge Landscape of Historic Interest at the eastern end of the unit in the BBNP. Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Historic Interest at the west end of the unit.	High
Historic value		High

3.15.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“Large/vast scale and upland land moorland and grazed landscape has medium to high sensitivity to large development on the edge of the BBNP. Large/vast scale and upland land moorland and grazed landscape has high sensitivity to very large development on the edge of the BBNP.”*

3.16 Unit 18 Mynydd Bedwellte and associated upland

3.16.1 This Landscape unit 18 is in the western part Blaenau Gwent, 1.5km to the east of the site at the closest point.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 18		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Vast to large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Broad ridge of upland between valleys	High
Land cover pattern	Simple upland moorland and grazed landscape between Tredegar and Rhymney incorporating upper valley sides.	Low
Built Environment	Very little built development in the unit.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Distinctive open skyline. Cairns and the Cefn Golau cholera cemetery, seen from valleys on either side. Upland setting for neighbouring settled valleys.	Medium
Movement	Secluded place with some human access. A	High

	minor road crosses the area and there are farms on lower slopes	
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Upland landscape with few trees or buildings and extensive views out of the area and into the area.	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	This elevated areas is visible from other uplands in the study area and from some distant vantage points in the BBNP.	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Residents, road users and walkers.	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Panoramic views across to other uplands to the west, and north to Brecon Beacons, & into valley from Cefn Golau.	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		High
Remoteness and tranquillity	Overall there are remote parts to this unit away from the road. Isolated in places.	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Approximately 84% SLA: Mynydd Bedwellte, Rhymney Hill and Sirhowy SLA (BG) Upper Rhymney Valley SLA (Caerphilly)	Medium
Historic value		High

3.16.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“Large and very large development would be seen from the BBNP and neighbouring uplands and impact on value.”*

3.17 Unit 19 Heads of the Valley Corridor

3.17.1 This Landscape unit 19 is in the norther part of Blaenau Gwent, over 2km to the north-east of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 19		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large to medium scale landscape	Medium
Landform	Rolling/ undulating	High
Land cover pattern	Complex mix of land uses in this developed upland area at the Heads of the Valleys. Dominated by development	Medium-low
Built Environment	Developed landscape along the road corridor and at the Heads of the Valleys. Includes narrow corridor of Clydach Gorge to the east	Low

	which is a Registered Historic Landscape.	
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	No distinct skyline.	Low
Movement	Busy developed landscape with major road corridor.	Low
Visibility, key views, vistas.		Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	The intervisibility with neighbouring units is influenced by topography and built form.	Medium
Types of receptors	Large number of residential receptors as well as commercial and road users	High
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	There is some intervisibility with the southern edge of the BBNP but Unit 17 acts as a buffer.	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Low
Remoteness and tranquillity	Not remote. Very accessible area	Low
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	Clydach Gorge Registered Historic landscape Bedwellte Park, Tredegar Registered Park and Garden 24% SLA - small portions of several SLAs that surround the unit. Mynydd Bedwellte, Rhymney Hill and Sirhowy SLA Cefn Manmoel SLA Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail SLA Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James (northern slopes) SLA Trefil and Garnlydan surrounds SLA Beaufort Common SLA	Medium
Historic value		High

3.17.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“This settled unit is potentially very sensitive to large and very large wind energy developments which would be out of scale with existing built form. In addition the large number of sensitive receptors (i.e. residents) increases sensitivity to large or very large development.”*

3.18 Unit 22 Northern Manmoel ridge

3.18.1 This Landscape unit 13 is in the western part of Blaenau Gwent and the northeastern part of Caerphilly, over 4.5km to the east of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 22		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Ranges from vast to medium scale	Low
Landform	Broad ridge of upland between valleys.	High
Land cover pattern	Various fieldscapes and open moorland with evidence of quarrying	Medium
Built Environment	Very little build development in the unit.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Distinctive open skyline seen from valleys on either side	High
Movement	Generally quiet and calm landscape with little activity in the area.	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Upland viewed from adjacent upland across valleys. Some enclosed due to land form and woodland /forestry.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	Views from this upland area are across valleys to adjacent uplands and BBNP to the north.	Medium
Types of receptors	Few receptors. Residents, road users and walkers.	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Sirhowy valley walk (promoted) runs through the area along the broad ridge and has views down into the valley and to upland across the valleys. Panoramic views across to other upland areas and the BBNP	High
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Sense of remoteness due to lack of roads and limited human access despite proximity to development in the valleys	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	65% Cefn Manmoel SLA	Medium
Historic value		Medium

3.18.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity to large and very large development due to distinctive skyline and visibility of the elevated areas in the BBNP.”*

3.19 Unit 24 Mynydd Carn-y-cefn & Cefn yr Arail

3.19.1 This Landscape unit 24 is in the southern part of Blaenau Gwent, over 7km to the east of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 24		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Generally large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Broad upland ridge	Medium
Land cover pattern	Open upland moorland in the main with very few fields at the edges. Marginal land.	Low
Built Environment	No significant development in this upland area. No farmsteads or buildings in the unit. Golf course at the northern end of the unit but the club house is in unit 25	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	This upland unit forms prominent skyline from both valleys to east and west	Medium
Movement	Very little human activity in the area. No roads. Some footpaths and bridle ways.	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Open/exposed upland landscape with no buildings or tree cover	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	Views up to the ridge and from and to other uplands.	High
Types of receptors	Footpath and bridleway users plus users of the golf course within the areas	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Nonapparent	Low
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character	The open upland of the Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn SLA has a distinctive skyline seen from the neighbouring valleys	Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Feels remote although it is a narrow area close to settled valleys.	High
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	100% Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail SLA	High
Historic value		Medium

3.19.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“The narrow upland area has higher sensitivity to large and very large development due to its intervisibility with surrounding landscape and the BBNP.”*

3.20 Unit 27 Mynydd James and Coety Mountain

3.20.1 This Landscape unit 27 is in the southeastern part of Blaenau Gwent and the western part of Torfaen, over 10km to the east of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 27		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Vast landscape	Low
Landform	Series of high open rounded ridges contains the highest point in the study area (Coety Mountain 578m)	High
Land cover pattern	Grazed upland landscape.	Low
Built Environment	Very little development	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Rounded/smooth ridges from a simple skyline. Provides the setting from Blaenavon WHS to the west.	High
Movement	One road crosses the area to the south and there are numerous footpaths and bridleways.	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Exposed upland landscape with very little tree cover and landform that does not provide shelter.	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	The unit has intervisibility with other uplands in the study area and within the BBNP to the north.	High
Types of receptors	Few receptors within the area. Mainly walkers/cyclists.	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	Distant views to the BBNP to the north. Views of the Blaenavon WHS part of which is in the unit above Blaenavon	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		High
Remoteness and tranquillity	Remote area not accessible by road	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	85% SLA Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James SLA (BG) Blaenavon Heritage Landscape SLA Western Uplands Blaenavon WHS and potential buffer zone. Blaenavon Landscape of Historic Interest	High
Historic value		High

3.20.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“High sensitivity where likely to impact upon the setting of the WHS and its designation. Large or very large*

development may be viewed from the BBNP and would impact on the relatively tranquil character of this area.”

3.21 Unit NP31 Waterfall County and Southern Valleys

3.21.1 This Landscape unit NP31 is in the western part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, to the west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT NP31		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Varied upland land form	High
Land cover pattern	Intricate pattern of fields on hillsides.	High
Built Environment	Scattered rural development including village of Penderyn.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Largely valley landscape with no distinct skyline but when viewed from the south provides the foreground in views to the Brecon Beacons. Important to the setting and status of the BBNP	High
Movement	Quiet rural landscape disturbed only by the A4059 which runs through it.	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	The hill side and valley landscape is generally open with some tree cover to interrupt views.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There is intervisibility with the landscape to the south (unit 2 and unit 6) which contain detractors. Views into the unit are across the valley.	High
Types of receptors	Few receptors - mainly village residents and rural residences and visitors to the BBNP.	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	The unit is in the BBNP and has views of the steep scarp slope geological feature in unit 1	High
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		Medium
Remoteness and tranquillity	Exposed landscape on the hillside within the BBNP. There are more sheltered and remote areas within the unit further into the NP	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	The unit is within BBNP	High

Historic value		High
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3.21.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“National Park status results in high sensitivity to all other wind turbine typologies that have the potential to impact on views, the built environment, tranquillity and perceived value.”*

3.22 Unit NP32 Fforest Fawr

3.22.1 This Landscape unit NP32 is in the northern part of Rhondda Cynon Taf, to the west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT NP32		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large scale landscape	Low
Landform	Upland that is undulating	Medium
Land cover pattern	Upland grazing.	Low
Built Environment	No development in the area.	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	Area does not have a prominent skyline but does provide the foreground of views to the Brecon Beacons from the south.	Medium
Movement	Very little activity in the area.	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Elevated upland with no tree cover.	High
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	There are views out of the area to the surrounding landscape and views of the area from within the BBNP.	High
Types of receptors	Few receptors - hill walkers and off road cyclists. Users of a minor roads	Low
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	The area is within the BBNP and provides the initial setting for the BBNP from the south	High
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		High
Remoteness and tranquillity	Remote area with one road crossing it and few footpaths	Medium
VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	BBNP	High
Historic value		High

3.22.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“This wild upland landscape in the BBNP has high sensitivity to all types of wind turbine development. It is sensitive*

to change due to the exposed nature of the unit and the lack of any development in the area as well as its National Park status. Wind turbine development has the potential to impact on views and the tranquillity and perceived value of the area.”

3.23 Unit NP33 Talybont and Taff Reservoirs

3.23.1 This Landscape unit NP33 is in the northern part of Merthyr Tydfil, to the west of the site.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT NP33		
LANDSCAPE		SUSCEPTIBILITY
Scale	Large to vast scale landscape	Low
Landform	Varied upland landform taking in the valley and adjacent upland to the east.	Medium
Land cover pattern	Varied land cover pattern due to the varied landform. The reservoir is a dominant feature in the valley bottom.	Medium
Built Environment	Built development limited to the valley and A470 corridor	High
VISUAL		
Skylines and settings	The upland moorland area to the east has a smooth featureless skyline. However, it is important to the views of and within the BBNP	Medium
Movement	Road corridor is quite busy but away from the corridor and associated valley there is little human activity	High
Visibility, key views, vistas.	Valley landscape limits views where as there are extensive views from the upland areas which are devoid of trees in this area.	Medium
Intervisibility, associations with adjacent landscapes	This area has intervisibility with other parts of the BBNP along the road corridor and from the upland area within the unit.	High
Types of receptors	Road users and visitors/tourists will be the main visual receptors. Few residents	Medium
Views to / from landscape and cultural heritage features	The unit is within the BBNP. Views are restricted on the slopes and valley bottoms due to landform and tree cover	Medium
AESTHETIC, PERCEPTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL		
Scenic quality and character		High
Remoteness and tranquillity	Varied perception. A470 road corridor not remote. Upland areas exposed, remote and wild.	High

VALUE		VALUE
Landscape value	BBNP	High
Historic value		High

3.23.2 Sensitivity assessment to wind turbine **within** the unit: *“Medium to high sensitivity to micro development that is placed to respect landform, skylines and existing built form. National Park status results in high sensitivity to all other wind turbine typologies that have the potential to impact on views, tranquillity and perceived value of this unit.”*

4 BREACON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

4.1.1 The following Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) have been identified within the Brecon Beacons National Park which are within the study area and have areas of land within the ZTV, based on the Brecon Beacons National Park Landscape Character Assessment, August 2012².

4.2 Area 9 Mynyddoedd Llangatwg & Llangynidr

4.2.1 This LCA is located on the southern edge of the National Park, stretching between the settlements of Merthyr Tydfil and Brynmawr, 3km north of the site at the closest point.

4.2.2 Key characteristics:

- *“A north-facing scarp formed by Carboniferous Limestone; the moors to the south having a thin cover of Twrch Sandstone and displaying karstic features including cliffs, caves, shake holes and limestone pavement. Area of lowermost South Wales Coal Measures sandstones (‘Farewell Rock’) and mudstones in the east.*
- *An elevated plateau-like landform, mostly above 400m ASL. From high ground, horizons appear low and smooth.*
- *Boggy ground and springs forming the sources of several rivers. Few waterbodies, including small upland pools and Llangynidr reservoir.*
- *Land use almost entirely open grazing on unenclosed common land. Extensive quarries (no longer worked), and small area of plantation on southern edge.*
- *An open landscape with no field boundaries and very few trees.*
- *Semi-Natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including dry dwarf shrub heath, marshy grassland, unmodified blanket bog, modified blanket bog, acid/*

² [Landscape Character Assessment | Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority](#)

neutral flush and limestone cliff habitats.

- *A concentration of prehistoric archaeological sites, including numerous Cairns on high ground, plus more recent archaeology associated with quarrying.*
- *Very limited settlement, but views to settlement in the Usk valley to the north, and other development (e.g. roads, pylons) beyond the southern boundary of the National Park.*
- *An exceptionally open landscape, with subtle changes in texture and seasonal colour resulting from variations in moorland vegetation.”*

4.3 Area 8 Talybont and Taff Reservoir Valleys

4.3.1 This LCA is located in the south of the National Park, and abuts its southern boundary near Merthyr Tydfil, 4km to the north-west of the site at the closet point.

4.3.2 Key characteristics:

- *“Mostly underlain by Devonian age sandstones of the Brownstones Formation, with small areas of the upper Old Red Sandstone Grey Grits and Carboniferous Limestone in the south, and Twrch Sandstone on the southern margin.*
- *A series of steep V-shaped valleys separated by flatter uplands. The Taff valleys have a strong north-south orientation and drain southwards, whilst the Talybont valley lies broadly north-east to south-west and drains into the Usk.*
- *Chains of artificial reservoirs occur in valleys, linked by rivers. Mountain streams (and occasional waterfalls) flow down the steep valley sides, sculpting sandstone and limestone rocks.*
- *Coniferous forestry is dominant land use, plus reservoirs, pasture and open moorland.*
- *Surviving field boundaries usually stone walls, occasionally patched with post and wire. Some former field boundaries still visible within forestry plantations.*
- *Extensive coniferous forests, with some larch and patches of more mixed deciduous woodland (for example on the western side of the Llwyn-onn valley). Deciduous trees also associated with watercourses.*
- *Semi-Natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including modified blanket bog, marshy grassland, broadleaved and coniferous woodland, flush/spring and acid grassland.*
- *Many historic features lost under reservoirs and forests. Surviving features include*

farms, field boundaries and Vaynor church. Parts of the Brecon and Newport Railway survive, including Pont-sarn viaduct, the opening of the tunnel which connected the Talybont and Taff valleys, and some track (now the Brecon Mountain Railway) and station buildings.

- *Very limited settlement within the LCA (Llwynonn, Pontsticill and occasional farms). Other built development includes housing for reservoir workers, large-scale water treatment works below dams, and former limestone quarries.*
- *Recreation provision e.g. car parks, picnic areas, trails, Garwant Forest Visitor Centre, watersports.*
- *Generally a simple landscape composition, with large blocks of forest in simple valley landform. Forests appear strongly textured (especially where they include deciduous trees) and contrast in colour with surrounding open moorland."*

4.4 Area 7 Central Beacons

4.4.1 This LCA is located in the centre of the National Park, and includes Pen y Fan, its highest point. It is approximately 7km north-west of the site at the closest point.

4.4.2 Key Characteristics:

- *"Geology of Devonian Senni and Brownstones Formations, highly visible in the northern scarp. Covering of plateau beds on the highest land gives the ridges a flat-topped appearance.*
- *A glacially-sculpted landscape with a dramatic northern scarp, below a line of dramatic peaks including Pen y Fan (the highest point in the Brecon Beacons at 886m ASL). A series of horseshoe-shaped valleys radiate out from the centre, with a gradual slope downward to the south.*
- *Fast-flowing streams (fed from springs or upland bogs) radiate out from this central point. The source of the River Taff is in this LCA. Small glacial lake at Llyn Cwm Llwyd below Corn Du.*
- *Land use almost entirely open grazing on unenclosed common land.*
- *An open landscape, with trees limited to small patches of wood pasture on sheltered valley sides, although there are views across the adjacent plantations of the Talybont and Taff Reservoir Valleys.*
- *Semi-Natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including marshy grassland, montane heath, modified blanket bogs, and dry heath/ acid grassland mosaic.*

- *A range of historic features, including abandoned settlements to 20th century artefacts including pill box, tank traps and military memorials. Relatively few prehistoric sites compared to other LCAs.*
- *Very little settlement or other development within this LCA. However, views from the area encompass the surrounding settled landscape. The A470 follows the western boundary of the LCA.*
- *An open, expansive landscape with a sense of airy spaciousness and of being ‘on the top’. The simple texture of the vegetation contrasts with the rough, stripy appearance of the crags. A dramatic, repeating pattern of triangular-shaped faces on the northern scarp, and lines of flat topped ridges extending into the distance to the east and west. “*

4.5 Area 3 Fforest Fawr

4.5.1 This LCA is located towards the west of the National Park, approximately 10km west of the site at the closest point.

4.5.2 Key Characteristics:

- *“Complex underlying geology, with the Senni and Brownstones formations of the Old Red Sandstone in the north, a broken band of Carboniferous Limestone across the middle, and Marros Group sandstones and mudstones in the south. All three units form north-facing escarpments, that of the Old Red Sandstone being the most imposing.*
- *A glaciated landscape with a steep northern escarpment and a series of elevated summits. Cwms, and deep valleys are separated by intervening ridges (generally running northsouth). Landform in the south of the LCA is less dramatic, forming a gently sloping plateau dissected by river valleys.*
- *Steep, fast flowing and rocky mountain streams (often spring-fed, or sourced from upland bogs), flow into larger rivers in valley bottoms. Ystradfellte Reservoir located near centre of LCA.*
- *Predominantly unenclosed moorland used for open grazing, with some forest blocks, particularly in the south and west of the LCA.*
- *Trees almost entirely coniferous, planted in forestry blocks often with sharp outlines. Distinctive coniferous shelter belts in the northern part of the area.*
- *Very few field boundaries, but dry-stone walls marking estate boundaries are distinctive to this LCA. Occasional post-and-wire fences.*

- *Semi-Natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including marshy grassland, dry heath, acid/ neutral flushes and small areas of blanket bog. Vegetation composition reflects variations in underlying geology.*
- *Extensive prehistoric ritual landscapes, particularly in the south-east. Also evidence of Roman road, medieval settlements, industrial archaeology, WW2 defences and estate influences.*
- *A very lightly-settled landscape today, with occasional estate cottages and farms at its periphery. However, in the past it has been much more densely settled, and the landscape contains evidence of settlement over millennia.*
- *An elevated, simple, and expansive landscape, with colours and textures varying subtly with the underlying geology. Much of the LCA remains inaccessible except on foot, giving a sense of tranquillity, remoteness and relative wildness.”*

4.6 Area 13 The Black Mountains

4.6.1 This LCA includes the highest land associated with the Black Mountains. It is located on the eastern edge of the National Park, and its character extends beyond the National Park boundary into England. It is approximately 15km north-east of the site at the closest point.

4.6.2 Key Characteristics:

- *“High ground formed by Senni formation sandstones creating the steep scarp which forms the northern edge of the LCA. Highest land formed by Devonian Brownstones which dip down slightly towards the south. Older mudstones occur in the depths of the Vale of Ewyas and Rhiangoll valley. Plateau Beds form the sloping tableland south from Pen Allt-mawr and a small area of Carboniferous rocks form the upper slopes of Pen Cerrig-calch.*
- *Distinctive ridged landform with flat tops, and dramatic scarps along the northern face. In long views from the west, the horizontal ridges have a profile similar to breakers on a beach. Landslips such as Cwmyoy create distinctive landforms.*
- *A series of rocky rivers (fed by tributary streams sourced in upland bogs and streams) draining southwards into the Usk or Monnow along V-shaped valleys. Reservoir at Grwyne Fawr constructed in the early C.20th to supply water to Abertillery.*
- *Higher land used for open grazing of sheep ponies and some cattle on unenclosed common land. Pastoral farming and forestry in valleys.*

- *Deciduous woodland limited to valley floors, particularly in south of LCA. Extensive forestry in central part (Mynydd Du Forest) with pockets in other valleys. Field boundaries generally hawthorn hedges enclosing semi-regular fields. Some hedges trimmed (especially in valleys) whilst others grown out, with hedgerow trees.*
- *Semi-natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including dry modified bog, wet modified bog, blanket bog, bare peat, flushes, acid dry dwarf shrub heath, acid and neutral grassland and broadleaved woodland.*
- *Numerous prehistoric sites (ritual and defensive) surviving in their landscape context, particularly on higher land. Medieval ecclesiastical sites include Llanthony Priory and Cwmyoy church.*
- *Very limited settlement within the LCA (scattered farms and hamlets) but visual connections with towns beyond (e.g. Hay-on-Wye & Crickhowell). Roads generally restricted to valley bottoms.*
- *Upland areas large in scale, appearing empty and spacious, with distinctive flat horizons. Valleys more enclosed and intimate, with more complex patterns and varied textures. Ridges and valleys create a repeating rhythm in the landscape.”*

5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS DERIVED FROM LANDMAP

5.1.1 Descriptions of the existing landscape character within the south of study area not covered by the Heads of the Valleys study are provided below. These descriptions have been derived through a combination of analysis of published landscape character assessments (see above) and informed by LANDMAP data from all five Aspect Areas (Visual and Sensory, Landscape Habitat, Geological Landscape, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape), in accordance with NRW Guidance Note 46.

Landscape Character Area	Visual and Sensory Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Geological Landscape	Historical Landscape	Cultural Services	Description
LCA 01 Upland valleys surrounding Pontypool	TRFNVS040 - L TRFNVS028 - M TRFNVS042 - M TRFNVS017 - M TRFNVS018 - M TRFNVS024 - H TRFNVS016 - L TRFNVS019 - H TRFNVS020 - M TRFNVS022 - M	TRFNLH005 - M TRFNLH011 - H TRFNLH037 - M TRFNLH053 - M TRFNLH044 - M TRFNLH050 - H TRFNLH047 - M TRFNLH054 - M TRFNLH020 - H TRFNLH033 - M	TRFNGL027 - M TRFNGL029 - M TRFNGL028 - M TRFNGL009 - L TRFNGL013 - H TRFNGL003 - H CYNONGLO01 - H TRFNGL002 - M TRFNGL004 - M	TRFNHL011 - O TRFNHL012 - O TRFNHL017 - O TRFNHL018 - H TRFNHL008 - M TRFNHL007 - O TRFNHL013 - H	TRFNCLS026 TRFNCLS035 TRFNCLS036 TRFNCLS010 TRFNCLS034 TRFNCLS020 TRFNCLS011 TRFNCLS012 TRFNCLS014 TRFNCLS015	The valley landscape encompasses upper and lower slopes ranging from 150m to 300m AOD, featuring a mix of broadleaf woods and fields. It maintains a tranquil, rural character amidst urban centers, with polarized views to attractive upland areas and less appealing urban forms. Pontymoile Valley exhibits evidence of ground

Landscape Character Area	Visual and Sensory Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Geological Landscape	Historical Landscape	Cultural Services	Description
	TRFNVS026 – M TRFNVS036 – M	TRFNLH031 – H TRFNLH004 – M			TRFNCLS013	disturbance, transitioning into mixed grazing and woodland. Enclosed side valleys feature moorland slopes and remnants of former mining. Secluded bowl-shaped valleys offer privacy, while rural valleys boast mixed land cover and a visual link to adjacent upland grazing. Additionally, outliers of upland provide panoramic views and tranquility, albeit with occasional damage from joyriders.
LCA 02 – Upland hills and plateaus east of Newbridge Cwmcarn Forest and surrounding uplands	CYNONVS372 - M CYNONVS214 - M TRFNVS044 - H	CYNONLH140 - M CYNONLH149 - L CYNONLH151 - M CYNONLH136 - L CYNONLH149 - L CYNONLH150 - H CYNONLH161 - H TRFNLH045 - H CYNONLH158 - L	CYNONGL001 - H CYNONGL002 - M TRFNGL002 - M TRFNGL001 - H CYNONGL005 - O CYNONGL006 - H	CYNONHL724 - M CYNONHL735 - L CYNONHL816 - M CynonHL007 - M CYNONHL405 - M CYNONHL278 - M TRFNHL009 - M CYNONHL374 - H	CYNONCLS050 CYNONCLS026 TRFNCLS038	The upland area features ridges reaching 450m AOD and valleys at approximately 200m AOD, with a mix of conifer and mixed woodland. Open ridgelines and woodland spaces offer views across adjacent wooded valleys and urban areas but are marred by overhead power lines and a telecom mast. Heath and grassland areas on the western slopes of Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Llwyd are flanked by coniferous plantation woodland. Rough grazing slopes below, ranging from 200m to 350m AOD, connect to the higher area of Cwmbran. Dramatic views overlook the valley and Cwmbran, while urban development dominates lower slopes, punctuated by field patterns and broadleaf woodland, with visual detractors including the sharp urban edge and overhead electricity cables.
LCA 03 – Upland Fieldscapes east of Blackwood Oakdale upland fieldscapes	CYNONVS144 - M	CYNONLH137 - M CYNONLH136 - L CYNONLH134 - L CYNONLH138 - H CYNONLH132 - H CYNONLH127 - M	CYNONGL009 - M	CYNONHL465 - H CYNONHL558 - H CYNONHL636 - M	CYNONCLS017	Elevating between 200m and 400m AOD, this rolling, hilly terrain offers an increasingly upland ambiance with elevated vistas and reduced urban influence. Characterized by rough grassland, scattered woodland, hedgerows, and narrow lanes, the area retains its pastoral charm despite recent expansions, notably at Oakdale.
LCA 04 – Blackwood and neighbouring settlements	CYNONVS114 - L	CYNONLH136 - L CYNONLH144 - H CYNONLH129 - O CYNONLH128 - M CYNONLH143 - M CYNONLH142 - H	CYNONGL009 - M CYNONGL010 - O	CYNONHL701 - H CYNONHL695 - M CYNONHL660 - H	CYNONCLS010	A conglomeration of settlements meld into an eclectic environment, resembling a large town interspersed with pockets of fields and open spaces within urban sprawl. Despite the rolling topography and north-south valleys, the landscape's character is somewhat obscured by development. However, the stark contrasts in elevation, from valley

Landscape Character Area	Visual and Sensory Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Geological Landscape	Historical Landscape	Cultural Services	Description
		CYNONLH133 - H CYNONLH131 - H				floors at 100m AOD to hilltops reaching 229m AOD, remain distinct, adding to its unique identity.
LCA 05 – Sirowy Valley Uplands surrounding Cwmfelinfach	CYNONVS259 - M CYNONVS895 - M CYNONVS854 - H CYNONVS968 - M CYNONVS190 - L CYNONVS668 - M CYNONVS129 - M CYNONVS260 - M	CYNONLH146 - M CYNONLH147 - H CYNONLH157 - H CYNONLH148 - M CYNONLH156 - M CYNONLH145 - M CYNONLH144 - H CYNONLH155 - H CYNONLH153 - M CYNONLH154 - H	CYNONGL001 - H CYNONGL004 - M CYNONGL010 - O	CYNONHL936 - M CYNONHL755 - M CYNONHL660 - H CYNONHL556 - O CYNONHL701 - H	CYNONCLS027 CYNONCLS114 CYNONCLS107 CYNONCLS128 CYNONCLS021 CYNONCLS079 CYNONCLS011 CYNONCLS028	This diverse region encompasses steep valley sides shrouded in coniferous woodland, ascending to 370m AOD before meeting the plateau of Mynydd y Lan. Views extend over Crosskeys and Abercarn settlements and to wooded slopes opposite. Adjacent, pastoral farmland gently slopes from 200m to 300m AOD, offering vistas of Sirhowy Valley and Pontllanfraith. An open upland ridge features rough grazing, with panoramic views to the south and coniferous plantations, though pylons slightly disrupt the wilderness. In the lower Sirhowy Valley, coniferous forestry dominates, contrasting with remnants of agriculture. Further northeast, sloping valley sides rise from 100m to 300m AOD, blending pastoral farmland with woodland blocks, bracken, and a remote ridgeline affording dramatic views.
LCA 06 – Upland fieldscapes surrounding Senghenydd	CYNONVS143 - M CYNONVS317 - H CYNONVS544 - L CYNONVS317 - H	CYNONLH142 - H CYNONLH133 - H CYNONLH141 - H CYNONLH097 - M CYNONLH098 - M CYNONLH152 - H CYNONLH098 - H CYNONLH160 - L CYNONLH153 - M CYNONLH159 - H	CYNONGL010 - O CYNONGL015 - H CYNONGL011 - M	CYNONHL290 - H CYNONHL878 - O CYNONHL308 - O CYNONHL448 - M CYNONHL949 - M CYNONHL993 - H	CYNONCLS016 CYNONCLS038 CYNONCLS061 CYNONCLS039	A charming landscape, features rolling farmland away from urban edges like Nelson, Blackwood, and Treforest. This mix includes rural field patterns, isolated settlements, and urban features like pylons, creating a complex character with a rural yet upland feel. Broad views extend across valleys to the dominating hills of Mynydd Eglwysias and Meio. An open upland ridge offers rough grazing and bracken, with old stone walls and panoramic views over valleys, though pylons slightly disrupt the wilderness. Adjacent urban areas, like the B4263, provide views to uplands such as Mynydd Meio, with moderate traffic noise and recent housing development reducing some aspects of this area's charm.
LCA 07 – Pontypridd and Neighbouring valley floor settlements	CYNONVS709 - L CYNONVS337 - L CYNONVS660 - L	CYNONLH090 - L CYNONLH096 - H CYNONLH061 - H CYNONLH097 - M CYNONLH060 - L	CYNONGL015 - H CYNONGL029 - M CYNONGL025 - M CYNONGL031 - H	CYNONHL977 - O CYNONHL497 - H CYNONHL378 - O	CYNONCLS080 CYNONCLS041 CYNONCLS014 CYNONCLS077	A series of towns and villages are nestled within a larger valley landscape, characterized by dominant transport corridors tracing the valley floor. Development sprawls across the valley floor and slopes, with glimpses of upland areas. Persistent traffic noise from

Landscape Character Area	Visual and Sensory Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Geological Landscape	Historical Landscape	Cultural Services	Description
						the A4054 and A473 permeates central areas. The urbanized area, nestled in a narrow valley, juxtaposes housing and commercial/industrial sites. Lacking a centralized focus, development spreads along the valley floor and up subsidiary valleys. Views up the valley sides mitigate the enclosed feel, while the Lower Rhondda Fach bypass enhances movement. Windfarm visibility from Ystrad adds to the valley's features.
LCA 08 – St Gwynno Forest and surrounding uplands	CYNONVS141 - M CYNONVS580 - M CYNONVS903 - M	CYNONLH086 - M CYNONLH085 - M CYNONLH060 - L CYNONLH091 - H CYNONLH087 - H CYNONLH083 - M CYNONLH073 - H CYNONLH072 - H CYNONLH084 - H	CYNONGL018 - H CYNONGL015 - H CYNONGL016 - H CYNONGL029 - M CYNONGL025 - M	CYNONHL352 - L CYNONHL833 - H CYNONHL687 - O CYNONHL870 - M	CYNONCLS013 CYNONCLS068 CYNONCLS115	The landscape, essentially upland in character, features built development and associated elements like pylons and telecom masts. Rough grazing and conifer plantations intermingle with small woodland clumps, creating a mosaic pattern on rolling land between 120m and 320m AOD. The terrain, with strong undulations of minor ridges and valleys, offers visual cohesion and movement. Despite limited views to upland areas, it remains tranquil, with occasional visual detractors like car/refuse dumping. Recent large-scale felling on the western edge is noted. Valley sides, ranging from 200m to 300m AOD, exhibit grazing, bracken, and scattered woodland, tempered by an urban edge presence at the base, polarizing views into upland and urban vistas.
LCA 09 - Hillside & Scarp Slopes south of Pontypridd	CYNONVS142 - M CYNONVS738 - M	CYNONLH096 - H CYNONLH095 - M CYNONLH089 - H CYNONLH094 - M CYNONLH089 - H CYNONLH088 - H	CYNONGL032 - M CYNONGL015 - H CYNONGL031 - H CYNONGL029 - M	CYNONHL648 - M CYNONHL999 - H CYNONHL649 - H	CYNONCLS014 CYNONCLS092 CYNONCLS041	The rural landscape, descending from dominating hills like Mynydd y Glyn, Pen y Craig, and Maendy, offers panoramic views towards the west, south, and east, with elevated viewpoints enhancing the scenic experience. Minor valleys interspersed within add diversity, from small to large scales. Woodland blocks in river valleys and coniferous slopes enhance visual complexity. However, the northern urban edge slightly detracts from its upland essence. Upland ridge areas boast rough sheep-grazed grassland, evoking remoteness. Meanwhile, a peculiar mix of upland and urban influences is evident, with scattered farmsteads dotting the hillsides and housing expansions altering boundaries. Recent windfarm



Landscape Character Area	Visual and Sensory Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Geological Landscape	Historical Landscape	Cultural Services	Description
						installations and a closed rubbish tip have minor impacts.