

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Land at Church Farm, St Athan.

On behalf of Pobl Group Limited.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Pobl Group Limited to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany a candidate site promotion for residential development from here on referred to as the 'proposed development'.
- 1.2. The candidate site promotion is for two parcels of land and comprises an allocated site (reference MG2(3) in the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan, and an unallocated site referred to hereafter as the 'Sites' as shown on the Site Location Plan at Figure 1.
- 1.3. A desk study was carried out to review published information relevant to the Sites and their context, including planning policy and guidance, environmental designations, and landscape character assessment.
- 1.4. Field assessment was undertaken to review the findings of the desk study, to determine site visibility from its context, and to assess the potential effects of the proposed development on the existing landscape character and views to determine to what extent they are consistent with the findings of the desk-based assessment.
- 1.5. Field assessment was undertaken on 5th December 2022 on a dry day with good visibility. Vegetation was not in full leaf and the screening and filtering that vegetation provides at this time of year was considered during the field assessment.
- 1.6. The main objectives of LVIA are as follows:
 - To identify, evaluate and describe the current landscape character of the site and its surroundings, and any notable landscape elements and features within the site;
 - To determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed;
 - To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development) and evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed;
 - To identify and describe any effects of the development in so far as they affect the landscape and/or views of it;
 - To evaluate the magnitude of change due to these effects; and
 - To evaluate the overall effects on landscape and views.
- 1.7. The LVIA assesses the operational stage of the proposed development only, as the construction stages would be of short and temporary duration. Any potential effects brought about by the construction stages are likely to be lower or similar to those assessed post-construction. The effects are therefore assessed at Year 1, immediately post-completion, and at Year 15 to take into account proposed mitigation and enhancement measures. The assumed vegetative growth is taken as 0.5m per year.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The LVIA has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013);
 - GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, 2/13, 1/14, and 2/14 – Landscape Institute (2013 and 2014);
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England (2014);
 - An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management – Natural England (2019);
 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Landscape Institute (2019); and
 - Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Landscape Institute (2021).
- 2.2. In accordance with published guidance, landscape and visual effects are assessed separately.
- 2.3. The detailed LVIA method is provided in Appendix A.

Scope

- 2.4. The physical scope of this LVIA has been informed by desk study and field assessment and an understanding of the landscape and visual sensitivities at the Site and in the wider area.
- 2.5. As part of the desk study, the topography shown on Figure 3 and aerial photography were reviewed, and Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) mapping shown on Figure 5 was prepared for up to 5km from the Sites boundary.
- 2.6. A preliminary study area was defined as 3km radii from the Sites boundaries with consideration to zones of theoretical visibility shown on Figure 5 across part of the rising landscape to the northwest, north, northeast and east of the Site, (between areas of woodland screening), and with consideration to potential visibility of the proposed development from locations on the Wales Coast Path.
- 2.7. Consultation took place with Jonathan Green, Principal Landscape Architect at the Vale of Glamorgan Council between 14–24th November to agree on the locations which should be visited during the field assessment. Jonathan suggested an additional four locations, at the entrance to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath from castle road, at the B4265 at the junction to East Aberthaw, the road from Llancafán and any viewpoints along the coastal path. All of these locations were visited during the field assessment and some of the locations have been taken forwards and used as representative viewpoints.
- 2.8. The visual assessment considers a winter or worst-case scenario when the vegetation is not in leaf following best practice guidance.

- 2.9. Following field assessment, representative viewpoints were selected within the 2km study area to show typical views towards the Site experienced by people in the LVIA study area and to show baseline landscape character at the Site and in the surrounding area.
- 2.10. A description of site visibility and assessment viewpoints is provided in section 4 below, with reference to SZTV mapping and assessment viewpoints shown on Figure 5. Photography from each assessment viewpoint is shown on Figure 6 and is presented in accordance with LI technical guidance.

Nature of Effect

- 2.11. The degree of landscape or visual effect is identified by means of a descriptive scale as per the GLVIA 3rd Edition guidance. However, it is also necessary to consider the nature of the landscape and visual effects. GLVIA 3 assists on this point noting paragraph 5.37 concerning landscape effects which states that:

“One of the more challenging issues is deciding whether the landscape effects should be categorised as positive or negative. It is also possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape. An informed professional judgement should be made about this and the criteria used in reaching the judgement should be clearly stated. They might include, but should not be restricted to:

- *The degree to which the proposal fits with existing character.*
- *The contribution to the landscape that the development may make its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.*
- *The importance of perceptions of landscape is emphasised by the European Landscape Convention, and others may of course hold different opinions on whether the effects are positive or negative, but this is not a reason to avoid making this judgement, which will ultimately be weighed against the opinions of others in the decision making process.”*

- 2.12. A precautionary approach is applied to this LVIA that assumes all landscape and visual effects are considered to be negative or adverse unless otherwise stated.

3. PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 3.1. This section of the LVIA refers to national and local planning policy and guidance, relevant to landscape and views and the Sites being assessed.

National Planning Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (February 2021)

- 3.2. National planning policy is set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (PPW11), dated February 2021.
- 3.3. Paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 of PPW11 discuss 'Character' and identify that:

"The special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations. A clear rationale behind the design decisions made, based on site and context analysis, a strong vision, performance requirements and design principles, should be sought throughout the development process and expressed, when appropriate, in a design and access statement."

In areas recognised for their particular landscape, townscape, cultural or historic character and value it can be appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. In those areas, the impact of development on the existing character, the scale and siting of new development, and the use of appropriate building materials (including where possible sustainably produced materials from local sources) will be particularly important."

- 3.4. Paragraph 3.60 refers to 'Development in the Countryside'. It states that:

"Development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access, habitat and landscape conservation. Infilling or minor extensions to existing settlements may be acceptable, in particular where they meet a local need for affordable housing or it can be demonstrated that the proposal will increase local economic activity. However, new building in the open countryside away from existing settlements or areas allocated for development in development plans must continue to be strictly controlled. All new development should be of a scale and design that respects the character of the surrounding area."

- 3.5. Chapter 6, section 6.3 of PPW11 refers to 'Landscape' and its contribution to the 'Distinctive and Natural Places' theme of planning policy topics. Paragraph 6.3.3 of PPW11 states that:

"All the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places. Considering landscape at the outset of formulating strategies and policies in development plans and when proposing development is key to sustaining and enhancing their special qualities, and delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations as well as helping to

deliver an effective and integrated approach to natural resource management over the long term. Collaboration and engagement with adjacent planning authorities, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Cadw and the third sector will be necessary to draw on a wide range of expertise and evidence...."

- 3.6. Paragraph 6.3.4 states that ***"Where adverse effects on landscape character cannot be avoided, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission."***
- 3.7. Paragraphs 6.3.5 to 6.3.11 discuss the statutory landscape designations that apply in Wales, referring to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Sites are not in a National Park or AONB nor are they in the setting of any of these designated areas.
- 3.8. Paragraphs 6.3.12 and 6.3.13 refer to Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). Paragraph 6.3.13 states that SLAs are ***"non-statutory designations that define local areas of high landscape importance, which may be unique, exceptional or distinctive to the area. Planning authorities should apply these designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection."*** The Sites are not in an SLA but do adjoin an SLA to the north and east, discussed below under the heading 'Local Planning Policy and Guidance'.
- 3.9. LANDMAP, ***"an important information resource, methodology, and monitoring baseline for the landscapes of Wales"***, is discussed in paragraphs 6.3.20 to 6.3.21.

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

- 3.10. Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 provides advice on how 'Promoting sustainability through good design' and 'Planning for sustainable building' may be facilitated through the planning system.
- 3.11. Paragraph 4.8 identifies that:

"Appraising 'character' involves attention to topography; historic street patterns, archaeological features, waterways, hierarchy of development and spaces, prevalent materials in buildings or floorscape, architecture and historic quality, landscape character, field patterns and land use patterns, distinctive views (in and out of the site), skylines and vistas, prevailing uses and plan forms, boundary treatments, local biodiversity, natural and cultural resources and locally distinctive features and traditions (also known as vernacular elements)."
- 3.12. Paragraph 4.11 states that:

"Appraisal of the landscape should focus on its quality in terms of geology and geomorphology, vegetation and habitats, visual and sensory quality and historic and cultural quality. 'LANDMAP' is one method of assessment which has the potential to provide a framework and information base from which good design and management can be developed...Further detailed site appraisals may also provide information on local hydrology, microclimate, soils, plant communities and features, and all visual qualities including views and vistas."
- 3.13. Section 4 of TAN 12 also identifies the key objectives of good design and how to respond to these objectives following an appraisal of the context with reference to the five aspects of good design ***"Access; Character; Community Safety; Environmental Sustainability; and Movement."***

- 3.14. Design solutions relating to 'Character' objectives, (such as sustaining or enhancing local character), refer to landscape design, scale, amount, the layout of development and appearance.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

- 3.15. Planning applications in the St Athan area currently are considered against the local planning policy set out in the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan 2011–2026, adopted in June 2017.
- 3.16. The Vale of Glamorgan Council is preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) to replace the existing adopted LDP.
- 3.17. Current policy relevant to landscape and views and the Sites include:
- Policy MG17 Special Landscape Areas;
 - Policy MG27 Glamorgan Heritage Coast;
 - Policy MD2 Design of New Development; and
 - Policy MD3 Provision for Open Space.

Policy MG17 Special Landscape Areas

- 3.18. The adopted LDP Proposals Map shows that part of the southernmost extent of the Upper and Lower Thaw Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA) adjoins the northern and eastern boundaries of the unallocated Site. The Upper and Lower Thaw Valley SLA in relation to the Sites is shown on Figure 2.
- 3.19. Policy MG17 states that ***"The designation of SLAs is not intended to prevent development but to ensure that where development is acceptable careful consideration is given to the design elements of the proposal such as the siting, orientation, layout and landscaping, to ensure that the special qualities and characteristics for which the SLAs have been designated are protected."***
- 3.20. Detailed descriptions of the Vale of Glamorgan SLAs are provided in the 'Vale of Glamorgan Designation of Special Landscape Areas Background Paper', dated 2013.

Vale of Glamorgan Designation of Special Landscape Areas Background Paper (2013)

- 3.21. The Designation of Special Landscape Areas Background Paper (2013) identifies that the 2011 'Designation of Special Landscape Areas Review Against Historic Landscape Evaluations Update Report' remains relevant, up-to-date, and based on current best practices.
- 3.22. The 2011 report includes a Statement of Value for each SLA in the Vale of Glamorgan, including SLA 2 Upper and Lower Thaw Valley. The 'need' description for SLA2 states that ***"The Thaw Valley is of high value visually and culturally, has outstanding geological features and includes some areas of high habitat value."*** Suburban development is identified as ***"eroding the character, along with intensive agricultural practices and substitution of fences for hedgerows."***
- 3.23. The 'Primary Landscape Qualities and Features' of the Upper and Lower Thaw Valley SLA (SLA 2), of most relevance to the SLA landscape in the Sites' context, are quoted below:

“The SLA is dissected by the Thaw River valley...The valley to the south is a confined, sinuous lowland valley with steep wooded sides and hedgerowed field valley floor with streams and wet ditches contributing to biodiversity. The strong valley, semi-natural and planted broadleaf woodland, and juxtaposition with valley settlements is very attractive and one of the best examples of this landscape in the Vale. Woodland is fragmented in places and linkages should be created by pursuing the Forestry Commission’s Woodland Grant Scheme and Native Woodland Plans. Elsewhere the landscape is rolling lowland with some views out to the coast.”

3.24. The key policy and management issues relating to SLA 2 refer to:

- ***“Maintain hedgerow and tree cover.***
- ***Incorporate agri-environment schemes.***
- ***Improve development to ensure rural detailing and character.***
- ***Restrict development in widely visible areas and introduce blocks of broadleaf woodland to integrate settlement/Ford related development.***
- ***Encourage woodland management for continuous cover and pursue Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Schemes and Native Woodland Plans.”***

Policy MG27 Glamorgan Heritage Coast

3.25. The adopted LDP Proposals Map shows that land opposite the southwestern corner of the allocated part of the Site is included in the eastern part of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. This designation extends westwards along the B4265 south of St Athan and extends southwards towards Gileston and beyond. The Glamorgan Heritage Coast in relation to the Sites is shown on Figure 2.

Policy MD2 Design of New Development

3.26. Policy MD2 states that:

“In order to create high quality, healthy, sustainable and locally distinct places development proposals should:

- 1. Be of a high standard of design that positively contributes to the context and character of the surrounding natural and built environment and protects existing features of townscape or landscape interest;***
- 2. Respond appropriately to the local context and character of neighbouring buildings and uses in terms of use, type, form, scale, mix, and density;***
- 3. Where appropriate, provide new or enhanced areas of public realm particularly in key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions;***
- 4. Promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour. In the case of retail centres, developments should provide active street frontages to create attractive and safe urban environments;***

- 5. Provide a safe and accessible environment for all users, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;**
- 6. Have no unacceptable impact on highway safety nor cause or exacerbate existing traffic congestion to an unacceptable degree;**
- 7. Where appropriate, conserve and enhance the quality of, and access to, existing open spaces and community facilities;**
- 8. Safeguard existing public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance;**
- 9. Provide public open space, private amenity space and car parking in accordance with the council's standards;**
- 10. Incorporate sensitive landscaping, including the retention and enhancement where appropriate of existing landscape features and biodiversity interests;**
- 11. Provide adequate facilities and space for the collection, composting and recycling of waste materials and explore opportunities to incorporate re-used or recyclable materials or products into new buildings or structures; and**
- 12. Mitigate the causes of climate change by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with their design, construction, use and eventual demolition, and include features that provide effective adaptation to, and resilience against, the current and predicted future effects of climate change."**

- 3.27. Policy MD2 states that ***"All development proposals will be required to fully consider the context and character within which the development proposal is located so as to ensure that it contributes positively to the local setting including important views and vistas."***

Policy MD3 Provision for Open Space

- 3.28. Policy MD3 states that:

"Where there is an identified need for public open space, new residential development with a net gain of 5 or more dwellings will be required to provide public open space in accordance with the following standards:

- 1. Outdoor sports provision 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population***
- 2. Children's equipped play space 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population***
- 3. Informal play space 0.55 hectares per 1,000 population.***

...In order to create sustainable places areas of open space will usually be required to be provided on-site as part of new development proposals. Where it is not practical or desirable to make provision on-site, appropriate off-site provision or financial contributions for improvements to existing facilities will be required in lieu of on-site public open space."

Supplementary Planning Guidance

3.29. The Vale of Glamorgan Council has prepared and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents on various topics. These SPG documents provide additional policy advice for the LDP and are used as material considerations in the determination of planning applications. SPG of relevance to landscape and views and the Sites include:

- Design in the Landscape SPG;
- Design Guide Wales SPG; and
- Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Development SPG.

4. BASELINE LANDSCAPE

- 4.1. This section considers the relevant environmental designations in the Site and surrounding area, summarises characteristics of the landscape described in published character assessments and provides a description of the Site and its context. This section also considers and concludes with a judgement on landscape value.

Environmental Designations

- 4.2. Environmental designations in the Sites and the surrounding area are shown on Figure 2.
- 4.3. The Sites are not in a national or local landscape designation. As discussed in section 3 above, part of the southernmost extent of the Upper and Lower Thaw Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA) adjoins the northern and eastern boundaries of the unallocated Site.
- 4.4. Cultural and natural heritage assets in the Sites' context include:
- Glamorgan Heritage Coast, opposite the south-western corner of the Sites;
 - St Athan War Memorial, Grade II Listed, adjacent to the south-western corner of the allocated site;
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument – Deserted Medieval Village North East of Rock Farm, north of the Sites;
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument – East Orchard Manor House and Listed Buildings (East Orchard Manor House and Dovecote at East Orchard), east and northeast of the Sites;
 - Listed Buildings within St Athan, to the northwest of the Sites;
 - Listed Buildings at Castleton, to the northeast of the Sites;
 - Gileston Conservation Area, south and southwest of the Sites;
 - Fonmon Castle Registered Park and Garden, east of the Sites;
 - East Aberthaw Coast SSSI on the south coast, southeast of the Sites; and
 - Ancient Woodland to the north and east of the Sites including Castleton Wood and East Orchard Wood.
- 4.5. There is intervisibility between St Athan War Memorial and the Sites due to the close proximity of the memorial to the Sites, and the low hedgerow which forms part of the Sites boundary.
- 4.6. Due to distance and intervening topography, vegetation and/or built development, other assets listed above make no material contribution to the landscape character and visual amenity of the Sites or are located in areas that are potentially influenced visually by the proposals.
- 4.7. Ancient woodland in the Sites' context does not appear materially different to other deciduous woodlands in the surrounding landscape.

Published Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.8. The following paragraphs identify the key characteristics of the landscape described in published landscape character assessments. Relevant parts of published landscape character assessment are included at Appendix C of this LVIA and LANDMAP Aspect Areas are shown on Figures 4.1 to 4.5.

National Landscape Character Areas

- 4.9. National Landscape Character Areas (NLCAs) prepared by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), form the broadest scale of landscape character assessment in Wales.
- 4.10. The Site is in the southern part of NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan. The published description of this NLCA is included at Appendix C.
- 4.11. The key characteristics of NLCA 36 refer to the:
- *“Lowland, rolling limestone plateau with glacial till.*
 - *Coastal cliffs – mark a sudden edge to the landscape. Species-rich calcareous, neutral and maritime grasslands are found on their tops. Layers of geology characterise their sides and inter-tidal platforms. Wide views over the Bristol Channel. Much is Heritage Coast.*
 - *Mixed agricultural land uses – with predominantly rural character.*
 - *Small woodlands – mainly to the east. Few large woods.*
 - *Mixed field patterns and sizes – with hedgerows and hedgebanks, frequent hedgerow trees. Limestone walls define land above the cliffs in the west.*
 - *Norman castles and medieval villages centred on churches.*
 - *Predominantly still rural – with strong senses of enclosure by historic field boundaries.*
 - *A number of large built developments – including Cardiff International Airport and Aberthaw Power Station. Some areas with traffic noise, e.g. in the M4 corridor.*
 - *Commuter settlement – modern suburban housing extending but contrasting with historic settlement character.”*
- 4.12. The Visual and Sensory profile description for NLCA 36 states that ***“the area forms a distinctive plateau landscape, dissected by a number of rivers including the Ely, Thaw and Waycock. It still evokes a strong rural sense of place with a patchwork of fields, hedgerows and woodlands and trees and extensive open, lowland, farmland.”*** The Glamorgan Heritage Coast, where the gentle landscape comes to a very abrupt and dramatic edge, is noted as the ***“most iconic image”*** of this NLCA.
- 4.13. The Profile description refers to background traffic noise intruding parts of the northern and south-eastern edges of the Vale and identifies a number of visually prominent built features that contrast with the predominantly rural character of the area, including ***“the power station and adjacent cement works at Aberthaw; Cardiff International Airport to the west of Barry***

where the frequent movement of aircraft impacts upon the tranquillity of the area; the nearby Royal Air Force station at St Athan which is used for operational training purposes..." These existing developments are visible and/or audible from the Sites and the area surrounding the Sites.

- 4.14. The description of landscape habitats in NCLA 36 describes the Vale of Glamorgan as being **"dominated by generally low-lying, undulating farmland (both arable and pastoral) on generally well draining brown-soils. The arable element is noticeably more prevalent towards the south nearer to the coast. Hedgerows which in many cases are well treed together with in-field trees and smallish deciduous woodland areas provide more ecological interest to the agricultural landscape."**

Vale of Glamorgan Council Designation of Landscape Character Areas (2008)

- 4.15. The 2008 'Designation of Landscape Character Areas' report identifies the Sites in the south-eastern extent of LCA 7: Heritage Coast Hinterland.
- 4.16. LCA 7 comprises the **"Heritage Coast Hinterland Extending from Ogmore by Sea to Llantwit Major"** and is **"an area of low, dissected coastal plateau, agricultural in character and exhibiting coastal character in terms of exposure, glimpses of the sea and windblown vegetation."**
- 4.17. The Sites in LCA 7 adjoin the south-eastern boundary of LCA 27: St Athan to the north and west.
- 4.18. LCA 27 St Athan comprises **"An operational military airbase, part of the wider coastal plateau. It is characterised by the open, exposed airfield, surrounded on the western and eastern flanks by associated building complexes and the village of St Athan on the south east."**
- 4.19. The landscape in the SLA to the east and north of the Sites is in LCA 19 Lower Thaw Valley, extending from Cowbridge to Aberthaw, comprising **"a sinuous, steep sided and enclosed lowland valley. A mosaic of fields, with gappy hedges, fences and a network of drainage ditches."**
- 4.20. Relevant parts of this report are included at Appendix D of this LVIA.

LANDMAP

- 4.21. LANDMAP is landscape guidance for Wales developed by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) now part of NRW. Landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into nationally consistent data and retained as a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) based landscape resource. LANDMAP comprises five spatially related datasets referring to:
- Visual and Sensory;
 - Geological Landscape;
 - Landscape Habitats;
 - Historic Landscape; and
 - Cultural Landscape.

4.22. Within each of the five layers, there are 'aspect areas'. Each 'aspect area' is evaluated from a local to a national scale of landscape importance. The evaluation terms used include:

- Outstanding – nationally important;
- High – regional or county importance;
- Moderate – local importance; and
- Low – little or no importance.

4.23. The Sites are in the following LANDMAP aspect areas, identified below by Unique ID:

- VLFGVLS890 (visual and sensory aspect area, see Figure 4.1);
- VLFGVLS058 (cultural landscape aspect area, see Figure 4.2).
- VLFGVLS863 (geological landscape aspect area, see Figure 4.3);
- VLFGVLS839 (landscape habitat aspect area, see Figure 4.4); and
- VLFGVLS052 (historic landscape aspect area, see Figure 4.5).

4.24. The above LANDMAP aspect areas are considered below. Evaluation results are identified where relevant.

VLFGVLS890 (visual and sensory aspect area)

4.25. The Sites are in the eastern part of the Heritage Coast Hinterland visual and sensory aspect area. The summary description describes this aspect area as a **"rolling coastal lowland plateau sloping towards the coast with a sense of openness. It has with long views out to sea, and occasionally to Somerset...The landcover is a medium sized rectilinear pastoral and arable fields set within managed hedgerows and stone walls. Trees display coastal windblown characteristics. There are several small woodlands. Deciduous woodlands tend to be concentrated within small steep sided coastal valleys which are a distinctive feature of the landscape. Isolated coniferous woodlands/shelterbelts occur. There are several nucleated settlements scattered throughout the area and some isolated farms with distinctive grey limestone or whitewash. Many settlements have historical cores, but have recently developed additions to the edges, sometimes using inappropriate materials. Several minor roads cross the area and the B4265 forms much of the northern boundary, however, tranquillity is not affected as these roads carry only local traffic."**

4.26. The Site is in an aspect area evaluated as having:

- Outstanding scenic quality and character; and
- High integrity and rarity.

4.27. The overall evaluation for this area is outstanding. It is noted that **"The combination of vernacular buildings and settlements, well maintained walls and hedgerows, wind sculpted trees and woodland in secluded incised valleys result in pleasing patterns often against a backcloth of the Bristol Channel. Overall this gives the area an outstanding scenic quality. The area is in good condition and is of consistent character throughout. The area has a strong sense of place through its coastal location, wind sculpted trees and use of stone in walls and vernacular buildings. Overall it is unspoilt apart from small scale**

development in places. The coastal characteristics and prevalence of stone walls makes the area rare."

- 4.28. The Sites are however closely associated with and adjoining the RAF St Athan and Lias Plateau visual and sensory aspect areas immediately to the north.

VLFGGL863 (geological landscape aspect area)

- 4.29. The Sites are in the southeastern part of the Llanwit-St. Athan geological landscape aspect area. The geographical and topographical character of this area refers to a **"Broad, low, dissected coastal plateau underlain by Lias (Lower Jurassic) with steep sided valleys and short steep cwms cut into cliffs adjacent to the coast... Level plateau includes two airfields... Some periglacial deposits (head) in some valleys and cwms."**

- 4.30. The area is evaluated as having outstanding value, and is in good condition, noted as being a **"dominantly rural area including Heritage Coast."**

- 4.31. The principal management recommendation for the area refers to ensuring **"that no significant features or materials of geological or geomorphological significance are lost or damaged by implementing RIGS survey and site selection and temporary section recording."**

VLFGLLH839 (landscape habitat aspect area)

- 4.32. The Sites are in the Aberthaw landscape habitat aspect area, which comprises the **"Improved agricultural landscape of the southern Vale. Improved agricultural grasslands dominate but arable crops are also frequent and the underlying influences of limestone and proximity to the coast provide the conditions for fragments of notable grassland in relatively undisturbed areas such as road verges. Quarries are a feature of the area and the airport provides an unbroken expanse of semi-improved neutral grassland."**

- 4.33. The value of this landscape habitat is moderate. The area *"encompasses a largely improved agricultural landscape. However, biodiversity interest benefits from the variety of habitats present including quarries, small coastal grasslands and the large semi-improved neutral grassland associated with the airport."*

VLFGHLH052 (historic landscape aspect area)

- 4.34. The Sites are in the southern part of the Llysworney and Llandough historic landscape aspect area, adjoining VLFGHLH002 to the immediate south and VLFGHLH036 to the south of the railway line.

- 4.35. This area is described as:

"A large rural landscape of relict medieval fields, many small regular fields (strip) shown on Ordnance Survey first edition map (1878) but now with many boundaries removed creating larger fields but generally keeping historic character...A rare example of a middle to late Bronze Age flat cemetery has been discovered in modern times near St. Athan's during development work. During the Iron Age and into the Roman period a small rural settlement (SAMGm076) of three phases was identified (50 BC to AD 120 and later during the 11th century) on Mynydd Bychan...West Orchard Castle (SAMGm083), St Athan, was held by the Nerbers family in the 14th century, and consisted of a manor house arranged around a rectangular courtyard. To the east is a deserted medieval settlement (DMS) on the outskirts of St Athan village, to the northeast of Rock Farm. It consists of a damaged trackway and the remains of several house platforms and small enclosures. Further to the north is another DMS at Flemingston; the site is defined by the earthwork remains of house

platforms situated on a slope above the Thaw Valley. At least five building platform or hut remains, and a possible enclosure or large building have been identified, as well as a hollow way (RCAHMW 1982)."

- 4.36. The overall evaluation for this area is high due to it being ***"A rich multi-period landscape with evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The dominant landscape pattern, represented by small nucleated settlements set within a largely regular fieldscape of medieval origin, is well defined. A large aspect area and the barrow cemetery just a very small part of that, so the rarity of the aspect area as a whole doesn't change, just that it has a nationally significant element in it. The site is Rare but not the landscape."***

Landscape Character of the Site and the Surrounding Area

Topography

- 4.37. The topography of the Sites and the surrounding area is shown on **Figure 3**. The land within the Sites exhibits a gentle fall, from a high point of approximately 35m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the northern extent of the unallocated Site to a low point of approximately 20m AOD in the far southern extent of the unallocated Site. Within the allocated Site the higher land is situated alongside the western boundary with Gileston Road, and the land falls gradually away to 30m AOD mid-way down the eastern boundary of the allocated Site.
- 4.38. As illustrated on Figure 3, the Site is located in a landscape where the overall fall of the topography in the area is sloping southerly direction towards the coast. Beyond the Sites, to the north, the land rises to around 50m AOD in the area of MOD St Athan which is situated across the plateau. Beyond the MOD site and approximately 31m beyond the Sites to the northeast the landform rises to around 90m AOD.
- 4.39. As noted above the land to the south of the Site is falling gradually towards the coast. In the area around Gileston, the topography is around 30m AOD, with the height of the land to the south of the Aberthaw Power Station eventually falling to 0m AOD. The landscape to the southeast of the Sites to the east of the Aberthaw Cement Works shows clear signs of a manmade intervention with soil heaps and deeper excavations witnessed during the field assessment.

Landscape Features

- 4.40. The Sites occupy approximately 24.2 hectares of pastoral farmland to the east of Gileston Road. Internally within the Sites, there are a number of field boundaries of varying quality, some of which contain hedgerow trees which partition the Sites into a series of smaller irregular fields. The field boundary alongside Gileston Road is well-established with the only notable gaps allowing for field gate access. The internal hedgerow within the allocated Sites is gappy and formed from a series of small scattered trees, the eastern extent of the boundary is slightly more intact than the central and western sections. The northern boundary of the allocated land runs along the boundary of Brodawel which is formed of a low brick wall, along the boundary of the farm buildings and farm yard that are accessed off Rock Road, and the edge of the playing field of the St Athan primary school which is formed of a mix of fencing and scattered vegetation including trees. The southern boundary of the allocated Site is formed of a continuous length of well-established hedgerow alongside the B4265.
- 4.41. This hedgerow alongside the B4265 continues along the southern boundary of the unallocated Site. The unallocated Site contains more field boundaries than the allocated Site. Field boundaries are generally in a good to fair condition, although gaps are present in those located towards the

southern extent of the Site. The northern and eastern boundaries of the unallocated Site are defined by well-established managed hedgerows, the only notable gaps existing to allow for field gate accesses. The field boundary between the allocated and unallocated Sites is formed of hedgerow vegetation, with trees also present towards the northern extent.

- 4.42. Pastoral farmland is typical of the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the Sites. The woodland within Rills Valley to the north and east beyond the Sites, named on the Ordnance Survey mapping as Castleton Wood and East Orchard Wood are mature areas of deciduous woodland. Woodlands are a characteristic of the landscape to the north and east of the Sites within the SLA and are often found within valleys, although mature hedgerow trees are also present within field boundaries.
- 4.43. To the southwest of the Sites beyond the railway large areas of woodland are less common with hedgerows a more common boundary type. Hedgerows trees are also not as common. The area between Aberthaw Cement Works and the Power Station is also heavily wooded and contains a Nature Reserve as well as several Listed Buildings.
- 4.44. To the east of the Sites eastern boundary, there is a sloping grassy field, which includes a PRoW diagonally across it which runs towards East Orchard Wood and joins with footpath S2/9/2 which runs along the edge of the woodland. A footpath (S2/7/1) is also present to the north of the Sites and travels northwest, back towards the settlement edge.

Existing Development

- 4.45. Whilst there is no development within the Sites themselves they are located directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge of St Athan. The main area of settlement is of similar scale and form to others in the locality. However, the MOD site to the north of the settlement contains areas of housing, runways, commercial buildings and large hangers, all of which notably increase the overall areas of built form in the vicinity.
- 4.46. To the south of the Sites is the B4265 which carries a large quantity of traffic providing a route from Cardiff along the coast to the west beyond St Athan. A double-tracked railway line is also present to the south of the B4265 in close proximity to the Site. Further to the south are located the Aberthaw Cement Works and Aberthaw Power Station the building and structures, including chimneys associated with both of these developments, are clearly visible as one travels around the area, as their tall and pale form contrasts with the surrounding darker vegetation and generally muted greens, greys and browns of the surrounding landscape. Pylons are present to the east of the Sites within the valley and run in a broadly north-south orientation from the power station northwards following the valley of the River Thaw.

Landscape Value

- 4.47. Section 2 of the LVIA Method at Appendix A explains the factors used to inform judgements about landscape value.
- 4.48. Table 1 below provides a summary of pertinent information for each factor used to inform judgements about landscape value and concludes with an overall judgement on the value of the landscape of the Site and its surroundings potentially affected by the Proposed Development.

Table 1: Landscape Value

Factor	Summary Information
Natural Heritage	The Sites comprise grassland grazed by sheep. There is mature hedgerow and woodland along the Sites boundaries. There are no ecological designations across the Site.
Cultural Heritage	There are no Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings in the Site or its surroundings that contribute to the landscape character of the Site or its surroundings that could be potentially affected by the proposed development.
Landscape Condition	<p>Field boundaries across the Sites are of varying quality, some are well-established and intact whilst others internally within the Sites contain gaps.</p> <p>The boundaries within the allocated Site are more fragmented and a study of historic maps shows that hedgerow removal has also taken place.</p> <p>The landscape surrounding the Site varies in character, condition and quality as discussed below.</p>
Associations	The landscape of the Sites and their surroundings potentially affected by the proposed development has no known associations with renowned artists or writers.
Distinctiveness	<p>The Sites and their surroundings include a number of the general characteristics described in the relevant National Landscape Character Area (NLCA) and LANDMAP aspect area descriptions.</p> <p>There are no significant character-defining elements on the Sites such as areas of woodland.</p> <p>There is no indication from published information that the Sites and their surroundings are of a specific character and/or contain features or elements which are considered particularly rare or unusual features.</p> <p>Unlike other areas in the surrounding landscape, such as to the southwest of the Sites beyond the railway line. The Sites do not have a strong sense of place as whilst they are pastoral farmland they are multiple external influences, such as the traffic noise and views of the cement works and power station which affect their sense of place.</p>
Recreational Value	<p>No PRoW run through the Sites, there is currently no public access.</p> <p>There is a PRoW alongside the northern boundary of the unallocated Site and a PRoW runs westwards towards the eastern boundary of the unallocated Site.</p> <p>Beyond the Sites, there is numerous PRoW (with varying degrees of visibility towards the proposed development) on the rising slopes across the surrounding landscape.</p>

Perceptual (Scenic) Quality	<p>The landform of the Sites slopes gently, it is not as dramatic or varied as other areas of the landscape which are incised by the watercourse to create wooded valleys or the flatter 'coastal plain' landscape to the south of the railway line.</p> <p>The green grassland fields are typical of the land use in the locality and are therefore not considered to be any more visually appealing than any other of the agricultural fields in the landscape. There are no river corridors or woodlands present on the Sites.</p> <p>There are no landmarks on the Site and due to there being no public access there are also no publically accessible distinctive views out of the Sites. Any important or distinctive views towards the Site from areas such as Conservation Areas are also heavily restricted or prevented entirely by the intervening vegetation, topography and in some instances built form. As established during the field assessment views from within the Sites towards the coastline can currently be experienced, however, similar views can also be experienced from multiple other locations in and around St Athan including the elevated locations to the north and northeast.</p>
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity) Value	<p>Due to the Sites location on the edge of a settlement and adjacent to the B4265 and in close proximity to the railway it is not considered to be as tranquil as other areas in the vicinity as all of these factors have an influence on the levels of tranquillity as well as the streetlights on the adjacent roads (Gileston Road and the junction of Gileston Road with the B4265) creating light spill across parts of the Sites and impacting the 'dark night skys' which are often associated with more rural and remote landscapes.</p> <p>When walking across the Sites and the adjacent landscape there is a notable noise intrusion from traffic on the B4265 which includes a number of larger vehicles such as large lorries visiting the cement works and the frequent passing of the train.</p>
Function	The Sites currently contain grassland which is grazed by sheep.
Conclusion	<p>With consideration to the above table; the LANDMAP evaluations; and the LVIA Method at Appendix A, the landscape in the Sites and in their immediate context, excluding the adjacent landscape designated as part of a Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the landscape to the southwest which is designated as heritage Coast, is of medium value.</p> <p>The landscape designated as part of the Upper and Lower Thaw Valley SLA and the Heritage Coast is of high value.</p>

5. BASELINE VIEWS

- 5.1. This section describes site visibility in the 3km study area and identifies visual receptors (i.e. people that experience views of the Site and who are likely to experience views of the development proposed). Assessment viewpoints also are identified below and a summary of existing receptor views is provided.

Site Visibility

- 5.2. The SZTV mapping shown on **Figure 5** indicates areas of land from which the proposals theoretically would be visible. The SZTV is based on a worst case 12.5m ridge height of a house type which could be proposed within the Sites.
- 5.3. The terrain model used to produce this SZTV includes areas of woodland and existing buildings, thereby indicating the degree to which these features would aid in screening the proposals. The SZTV does not account for the localised screening effects of vegetation such as hedgerows, individual trees, small tree groups or shrubs.
- 5.4. SZTV mapping and field assessment has informed the scope of the LVIA by identifying which visual receptors the LVIA should focus on and identifying viewpoints that would be best situated to inform the baseline description and assessment of effects.
- 5.5. Noting that some of these opportunities are glimpsed or heavily filtered; views of the Site and potential views, of the proposals are limited to:
- The immediate surroundings of the Site including roads, and the local PRow network within 1km of the Site;
 - Higher ground to the southeast near Castle Road, within 1.5km of the Site;
 - On the rising ground to the north of Llancadle from limited sections of the PRow network within 1.6km from the site;
 - Limited sections of the B4265 on the approach to St Athan within 1km of the Site
 - The rising ground to the northeast and east around 1km from the Site above the Rills Valley; and
 - On the lower-lying land to the south on the edge of Gilestone around 500m from the Site.
- 5.6. Mature trees including tree belts (along the railway line) and areas of woodland located beyond the Site to the south and east when combined with topography provide a level of screening from longer distance views. The existing built form within St Athan also prevents views of the Site from the west.
- 5.7. From the lower-lying landscape to the south of the railway, views into the Sites are prevented by roadside hedgerows and mature woodland located to the south of the Sites combined with existing built form and topography.

- 5.8. Mature hedgerows along the Sites western and southern boundaries provide a level of screening for low-level receptors such as pedestrians and other road users. However, residents of the properties, notably those along Gileston Road, the far eastern end of Glyndwr Avenue, around the junction of Gileston Road and the B4265 and, Brodawel (adjacent to the northwest corner of the allocated Site) have the opportunity to experience views into or across parts of the Sites principally from their upper floor windows, although lower floor windows directly facing the Sites may also afford views.
- 5.9. From a very limited number of elevated locations to the east and southeast of the Sites (around 1.5km from the Sites), there are occasional opportunities for receptors to experience views towards the Site through the intervening areas of woodland and other intervening vegetation. On the rising ground to the north of the Rills Valley views into the Sites are restricted, and the vegetation which defines the northern boundary of the Sites on some of the highest parts of the Sites is partially visible.
- 5.10. With the exception of a limited number of locations (in close proximity where longer-range views are restricted by residential properties and/or vegetation on their curtilage) any views of the Sites also feature the large-scale industrial buildings, notably their tall chimneys within the Aberthaw Cement Works and the Aberthaw Power Station. Their light-coloured buildings and chimneys contrast with the darker hues of vegetation and fields in the surrounding landscape. Pylons and overhead lines also feature in views towards the Sites.

Visual Receptors

- 5.11. Visual receptors i.e. those individuals who would see the Site and may experience a change in their view as a result of the proposals have been identified as follows:
- 5.12. This LVIA considers the visual receptors listed below and referred to in Table 2 below:

Receptors on PRoW and Published Walking Routes

- Receptors on PRoW footpath (P4/5/1) on the higher ground near Castle Road;
- Receptors on PRoW footpath (L5/14/1) on the rising ground to the north of Llancadle which forms part of the Valley of the Stags which is a promoted circular walk which covers 10km;
- Receptors on PRoW footpath (S2/6/4) on the rising ground above the Rills Valley;
- Receptors on PRoW footpath (S2/10/1) to the east;
- Receptors on PRoW footpath (S2/5/1) to the west;
- Receptors on PRoW footpath (S2/7/1) to the north;
- Receptors on the lower-lying landscape to the south and southwest along PRoW footpaths G1/3/1 and S2/19/1; and
- Receptors along the Welsh Coast Path Long Distance Footpath.

Train Passengers and Road Users

- Passengers on the railway to the south of the Sites;
- Road users along Gileston Road, Glyndwr Avenue and the B4265;
- Road users on Castle Road to the southeast of the Sites; and
- Road users on the road between Llancafán and the B4265 that passes through Pancross and Llancadle to the northeast.

Shoppers and Persons in an Education setting

- Persons at the Coop Food on Gileston Road; and
- Persons within St Athan Primary School

Residents

- Residents along Gileston Road, Glyndwr Avenue and the B4265;
- Residents at Brodawel, located adjacent to the northwest corner of the allocated Site);
- Residents at Baronswell to the southwest of the Sites;
- Residents along Castleton Road to the north of the Sites; and
- Residents in Gileston, and Gileston Farm to the south and southwest.

Assessment Viewpoints

- 5.13. This visual assessment is informed by twelve viewpoints discussed in the table overleaf and shown on **Figure 6**. The viewpoints are fixed points in the LVIA study area and provide information that informs the description of the visual (and landscape) baseline and the assessment of effects.
- 5.14. **Figure 7** provides photography that shows the existing view towards the Sites from each viewpoint. Viewpoint photography also assists in understanding the baseline landscape and visual environment at the Site and in its context.
- 5.15. As noted above following liaison with Jonathan Green, Principal Landscape Architect at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Jonathan suggested an additional four locations, at the entrance to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath from castle road, at the B4265 at the junction to East Aberthaw, the road from Llancafán and any viewpoints along the coastal path. Whilst all of these locations were visited during the field assessment where the SZTV showed potential visibility, only two of the locations, on the PRoW footpath from Castle Road (Viewpoint 1) and the road junction to East Aberthaw (Viewpoint 2) have been taken for further assessment due to views of the Sites not being able to be experienced from other two locations due to variety of factors including distance, the orientation of travel, intervening topography and vegetation or routes being at a lower height to the surrounding ground level.

Table 2: Assessment Viewpoints

Viewpoint Reference	Viewpoint Location	Approximate Distance from the Site and the Direction of the View towards the Site	Visual Receptors
1	PRoW footpath P4/5/1 running northwest from Castle Road	1.5km Looking northwest	PRoW receptors on PRoW P4/5/1
2	Road junction on the B4265	1.06km Looking west	Road receptors on the B4265 and the unnamed road to East Aberthaw
3	PRoW footpath L5/14/1	1.62km Looking southwest	PRoW receptors on L5/14/1, Valley of the Stags promoted circular walk
4	PRoW footpath S2/6/4	924m Looking southwest	PRoW receptors on S2/6/4
5	PRoW footpath S2/10/1	267m Looking west	PRoW receptors on S2/10/1
6	On the B4265 near Baronswell (residential property)	19m Looking northwest	Road receptors on the B4265 and the unnamed road to West Aberthaw Residential receptors in Baronswell
7	PRoW footpath S2/7/1	9m Looking south	PRoW receptors on S2/7/1
8	Road junction of Glyndwr Avenue and Gileston Road	14m Looking east	Road and residential receptors on Glyndwr Avenue and Gileston Road
9	Road junction of B4265 and Gileston Road	38m Looking northeast	Road and residential receptors Gileston Road and the B4265
10	PRoW footpath G1/3/1	517m Looking north	PRoW receptors on G1/3/1
11	PRoW footpath S2/5/1	1.08km	PRoW receptors on S2/5/1

Viewpoint Reference	Viewpoint Location	Approximate Distance from the Site and the Direction of the View towards the Site	Visual Receptors
		Looking east	
12	PRoW footpath S2/19/1	1.54km Looking northeast	PRoW receptors on S2/19/1

- 5.16. The following paragraphs summarise existing views towards the Site, experienced by the visual receptors listed above, and with reference to relevant representative viewpoints. Viewpoint photography is shown at **Figure 7**.

Baseline Public Views

Persons on PRoW and Published Walking Routes

- 5.17. Views towards the Sites can be experienced by receptors using PRoW footpath P4/5/1 which crosses a sloping field to the north of Castle Road, see Viewpoint 1. From this location, the chimney and tall structures associated with Aberthaw Cement Works are clearly visible in the view, as are the pylons that cross the landscape and punctuate the skyline. Existing residential properties on the eastern edge of St Athan are also partially visible.
- 5.18. Receptors on the Valley of the Stags which is a promoted circular walk which includes part of PRoW footpath L5/14/1 have the opportunity to experience views towards the Site, see Viewpoint 3. The large tall buildings and structures associated with the Aberthaw Cement works and power station are both clearly visible from this location. The existing residential properties within St Athan are partially visible through the intervening vegetation which includes woodland within the Rills Valley including Castleton Wood, Oxmoor Wood and East Orchard Wood. Pylons are also visible in the view and at intervals across the width of the view.
- 5.19. Views from the gently sloping landscape to the north of the Sites are illustrated by Viewpoint 4. The fields which comprise the Sites are located over the ridge and screened from view; the northern boundary of the Sites is theoretically visible, although it is difficult to decipher in the view. Existing built form within St Athan is visible as are the chimneys at the Aberthaw Cement works and power station.
- 5.20. Views from PRoW routes in close proximity to the Sites are represented by Viewpoints 5 and 7 which are recorded to the east and north of the Site respectively. It should be noted that although there is no official route between the two footpaths upon which the viewpoints are recorded, it is assumed that PRoW users could use the farm track to continue their journey between the two routes. Whilst views towards and in places into the Sites can be experienced, receptors can already experience views of the existing residential properties, notably those along Gileston Road within their views.
- 5.21. Views from the lower-lying landscape to the south and southwest of the Sites are represented by Viewpoints 10 and 12. In both instances, receptors have the opportunity to experience views across the gently sloping landscape to the south of the railway line. Clear views of the Sites are prevented by a combination of vegetation, which frequently includes woodland and also built form. In locations to the southwest of the Sites, views which include the locations along S2/19/1

(Viewpoint 12) and the Welsh Coast Path Long Distance Footpath views across the adjacent landscape are frequently prevented by field boundary vegetation, which is generally well-kept and intact, and for the Welsh Coast Path Long Distance Footpath, the route is regularly in a slight cutting (such as between Gileston and past Gileston Farm), where the height of the field is higher than that of the path, which when combined with adjacent field boundary vegetation restricts views towards the Sites.

- 5.22. For PRoW users to the west of the Sites, the intervening built form within St Athan and topography restrict views of the Site. Views of the chimneys of the Aberthaw Power Station and the cement works are visible, punctuating the skyline.

Train Passengers and Road Users

- 5.23. Passengers on the mainline railway which passes to the south of the Sites are not currently able to experience views towards the Site due to the line being in a cutting and lined with a tree belt at the location that it passes St Athan.
- 5.24. For road users approaching St Athan from the east along the B4365 (Viewpoint 6), glimpsed and transient views of the southern parts of the Sites, however in reality due to the speed of travel and intervening vegetation, at the more distant locations the Site would be difficult to determine in the views. Close to the Sites (Viewpoint 6) views into the Sites are more easily obtained, partially due to the gently sloping nature of the topography which rises gradually from the southeastern boundary of the Sites.
- 5.25. Viewpoint 9 illustrates the current view which can be experienced by road users around the junction of the B4265 and Gileston Road. The low hedgerow in the foreground allows views across parts of the Sites. Residential properties alongside the B4265 and Gileston Road are also clearly visible at this location.
- 5.26. Alongside Gileston Road is located a well-established hedgerow which forms the western boundary of the allocated Site. For low-level users, such as those travelling in cars, views across the Sites are prevented by this hedgerow, which even though it is devoid of leaves, is dense enough to curtail views. This roadside hedgerow and the additional hedgerows across the Sites are also anticipated to limit clear views from Glyndwr Avenue across the Site.
- 5.27. For road users on Castle Road to the southeast of the Sites, apart from a gap in the roadside hedgerow to allow for PRoW access (Viewpoint 1), views towards the Site are restricted by roadside hedgerows.
- 5.28. For road users on the road between Llancarfan and the B4265 that passes through Pancross and Llancadle to the northeast of the Sites. Whilst this is a slightly elevated route, views towards the Sites are theoretically possible, however, as experienced during the field assessment the multiple layers of intervening vegetation which includes woodland heavily filter and in places entirely restrict views of the Sites.

Shoppers and Persons in an Education setting

- 5.29. Views east towards the Sites are possible for shoppers visiting the Coop store on Gileston Road, similarly views south from within St Athan Primary School towards the Sites can currently be experienced.

Residential Properties

- 5.30. There are a number of residential properties along Gileston Road, Glyndwr Avenue and the B4265 that can currently experience views towards the Sites. Whilst the Sites boundary vegetation currently partially restricts views from lower levels, for a number of properties, views from upper-floor windows across the Sites are currently possible. Similarly, whilst the residents at Brodawel do not have an upper storey, due to their current boundary treatment they have the opportunity to experience views across parts of the Sites.
- 5.31. Viewpoint 4 is taken to the north of the residential properties along Castleton Road and illustrates that these properties are located below the ridgeline resulting in it being unlikely that even from their upper-floor windows views across the Sites could not be possible. For the residents in Gileston, and Gileston Farm to the south and southwest due to intervening vegetation, including the tree belt along the railway line and intervening built form views of the Sites are restricted. Similarly, for residents within the properties along Gileston Road to the south of the railway line views towards the Sites are restricted by vegetation alongside the railway.
- 5.32. For the residential receptors in Baronswell, near Viewpoint 6, due to their slightly elevated position, it is anticipated that residents currently can experience views towards the Sites through and over the intervening vegetation.

6. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1. The proposals are shown on the Illustrative Masterplan (Appendix E) submitted with the candidate site promotion. As part of the proposals, there is the opportunity to provide a landscape buffer along the eastern boundary of the unallocated site and the boundary of the Special Landscape Area to create a species-diverse yet robust edge to the proposals which could include additional planting to aid in filtering views of the proposals and provide an attractive landscape setting. The landscape buffer would retain and incorporate the existing hedgerow vegetation, and further enhance the hedgerow and tree resource with additional native shrub and tree planting. The landscape buffer would provide a robust green framework to encompass the proposed built form and aid in filtering views of the proposals from locations on the surrounding PRoW network and publically accessible locations in the vicinity. As the planting matures it would also help to integrate the scheme into its setting.
- 6.2. As part of the proposals, there would be the opportunity to incorporate many of the existing landscape features on the Sites, some of which is historic in origin and accommodate them within generous buffers to ensure their longevity as both landscape resource to maintain a sense of place, aid in softening the appearance of the proposed built form and to ensure habit connectivity.
- 6.3. Hedgerow vegetation along the western and southern boundary of the Sites adjacent to Gileston Road and the B4265 would be retained, and suitably managed to aid in softening the appearance of the proposed built form, and also increase the degree of visual screening that is currently provided. There is the opportunity to include an area of public open space in locations across the Sites. Any proposed attenuation features such as the balancing ponds also present the opportunity to include marginal planting which would increase biodiversity across the Sites.
- 6.4. Specimen and native trees could be proposed at intervals along the main access road and the curtilages of the residential dwellings that front the roads could be defined by a variety of treatments, including grass lawns and a combination of both shrubs and trees to provide a pleasant environment for residents and visitors. The gardens of the properties would be laid to lawn, with the opportunity to include a wide variety of both native and ornamental shrubs, and in some locations trees, which would add to the green infrastructure across the Sites. Trees could also be scattered around the periphery of the proposed development and in small clusters within the areas of POS to ensure that views out towards the coastline can continue to be experienced.
- 6.5. The green infrastructure would ensure that the developments are attractive, accessible and provide a connected place where people want to live whilst biodiversity thrives. The development would deliver a cohesive and high-quality green infrastructure network that would:
 - Encourage and promote healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of high-quality, safe and accessible open spaces for informal recreation and play.
 - Support local landscape character to provide an attractive sense of place whilst considering visual amenity.
 - Create and support inclusive, safe, and cohesive communities.
 - Protect and enhance existing green infrastructure assets namely the trees and hedgerows around the perimeter of the Site so that they can be enjoyed and valued by everyone for future generations.

- Protect, create, and support habitats to enable biodiversity habitats and species to thrive.
- Enhance connectivity to promote and facilitate sustainable travel movements.
- Provide a resilient and adaptive environment in the face of climate change

7. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

- 7.1. Landscape elements in the Sites potentially affected by the proposals include grassland, topography and hedgerows. Potential effects on these landscape elements are assessed below.

Grassland

- 7.2. The Sites are comprised of grassland that at the time of the field assessment were grazed by sheep and cattle.
- 7.3. Beyond the settlement limits pastoral grassland is common and along with areas of arable farmland is considered to be a characteristic of the landscape. Whilst the proposals would result in the loss of agricultural land to accommodate the development areas, the proposed scheme could bring about areas of naturalistic grassland including species-rich grassland, tussocky grassland, wetland wet meadow, native shade tolerant meadow and species-rich grassland.
- 7.4. As far as the current grassland is concerned, it is of limited value in landscape terms, albeit recognising that it is common in the locality. With a medium susceptibility, value and sensitivity combined with a high magnitude of change, this would result in a major degree of effect (adverse). This would be an inevitable consequence of accommodating new housing in a greenfield location. It should be recognised that there could be some considerable offset against these adverse effects with the creation of a range of grasslands across the Sites which would form a notable part of the overall area of the Sites.

Topography

- 7.5. The topography of the Sites exhibits a gradual and gentle gradient which broadly falls from north to southeast. The Sites are located in an area where the topographic profile of the surrounding landscape is more varied and dramatic; with undulating valleys to the north and east and lower-lying coastal areas to the south.
- 7.6. As such it is anticipated that the legibility of the topographic profile of the Sites would continue to remain to some degree with proposals in place. With a medium susceptibility, value and sensitivity combined with a low magnitude of change there would be an overall minor adverse degree of effect with regard to the topography within the Sites.

Hedgerows and Tress

- 7.7. To accommodate the proposals it is anticipated that a section of hedgerow would need to be removed alongside Gileston Road to allow for a vehicle access point. Internally within the Sites wherever possible internal hedgerows some of which contain trees would be retained and incorporated into the layout. Although limited sections could have to be removed to accommodate vehicle and pedestrian access and built form.
- 7.8. As part of the proposals, there are opportunities to incorporate substantial amounts of tree cover across the whole Sites significantly more than is presently the case; new trees could be planted within the developable areas and further trees within the landscaped areas of the Sites.
- 7.9. Any proposed tree planting could create a strong physical and visual framework in the short, medium and longer term. Any proposed trees planted throughout the development area would provide visual interest within the areas of public open space and frame the main spine roads. The

principle would be to introduce native tree species, some with an ornamental character such that tree cover would enhance the general visual amenity of the new neighbourhood.

- 7.10. The creation of areas of public open space and buffers around the edges of the Sites would also allow for the inclusion of additional shrubs and trees. Overall, it is anticipated that the proposals would in overall terms introduce a greater tree and shrub resource across the Site than that which currently exists.
- 7.11. With regard to the trees, these are considered to be high value, and of medium susceptibility which results in a high sensitivity which when combined with a medium magnitude of change would lead to an overall major degree of effect which would be beneficial in nature rather than adverse.
- 7.12. Hedgerows are considered to be of medium value, susceptibility and overall sensitivity, which when combined with a low magnitude of change would result in minor beneficial effects upon this landscape element.

Public Rights of Way

- 7.13. The Sites are currently private land and there are no official PRoW routes or means of access to the general public.
- 7.14. As part of the proposals, there is the opportunity to include a series of footpaths which will significantly increase the recreational opportunities across the Sites and as a result, there would be a beneficial effect with regard to this element.
- 7.15. In recreational resource terms, the green infrastructure could be managed via a Landscape Ecological Management Plan to ensure that appropriate, informal recreational opportunities would be maintained across the site through the use of the open various spaces.
- 7.16. With regard to public access, there would be far greater opportunity to access the land through the new neighbourhood and open spaces than is currently the case. PRoW routes as a landscape element are considered to be of high susceptibility, value and sensitivity, which when combined with a high magnitude of change there would be an overall major degree of effect which would be beneficial in nature rather than adverse.

Attenuation Features

- 7.17. The landscape proposals would include a series of surface water attenuation areas. Given that there is a lack of existing water features across the Sites, the proposals would have the potential to result in a net gain in water features with the balancing ponds across the proposals resulting in an overall beneficial effect. Water bodies or features are considered to be medium value and susceptibility and character-defining elements of medium sensitivity within the local landscape.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Elements

- 7.18. The effects on landscape elements in the Site resulting from the proposals are summarised in the table below.

Table 3: Summary of Effects on Landscape Elements

Landscape Elements	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
Grassland	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Major adverse
Topography	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor adverse
Hedgerows	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor beneficial
Trees	High	Medium	High	Medium	Major beneficial
Public Rights of Way	High	High	High	High	Major beneficial
Attenuation features	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor beneficial

8. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 8.1. The assessment of landscape effects considers the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of change to come to an overall judgement in accordance with the LVIA Method at **Appendix A**.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.2. Landscape sensitivity combines judgements of the landscape's susceptibility to change to the type of development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as defined in the landscape baseline.

Landscape Value

- 8.3. As identified in section 4 above, the landscape and higher ground in the surrounding valley landscape largely designated as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are of **high value** overall.
- 8.4. The Sites are considered to be of **medium value** as it sits outside of the SLA designation, that whilst it is relatively rural it is influenced by the adjacent residential edge and large-scale industrial buildings and structures to the south, near the coast as well as the noise of passing traffic on the B4256, the trains on the railway and aeroplanes flying into Cardiff International Airport which all impact the levels of tranquillity. The immediate landscape around the periphery of St Athan is also considered to be medium
- 8.5. The landscape to the south and southwest of the Sites that are located within the Heritage Coast designation is also considered to be high value because whilst views of the cement works and power station are possible from within the area, the boundary treatments in the area such as stone walls are rare, the levels of tranquillity are also higher as there are fewer intrusions of road noise due to the lack of public vehicular access.
- 8.6. The overall value of the NLCA 36 Vale of Glamorgan is considered to be medium, because whilst there are undeveloped areas, larger built-up areas are also located within the NLCA.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

- 8.7. The susceptibility of a landscape to change is dependent on the characteristics of the receiving landscape and the nature of the development proposed.
- 8.8. The Proposed Development would alter ground levels and introduce new built form and associated infrastructure and planting into a greenfield site. Overall, the Sites have a medium susceptibility to change to the Proposed Development because of the multiple lines of pylons that cross the landscape to the east; the context of the Sites which includes the adjacent residential areas and further to the south the Aberthaw Cement Works and Aberthaw Power Station which are clearly visible from within the Sites and the vast majority of the views from publically accessible locations in the surrounding landscape. The immediate landscape around the periphery of St Athan is also considered to be medium
- 8.9. The landscape to the northeast, east and south of the Sites is also considered to be of high susceptibility as there is little existing reference to residential development and the landscape contains multiple landscape elements such as mature trees and woodlands that cannot be easily replaced or substituted.

- 8.10. The susceptibility of NLCA 36 Vale of Glamorgan to the Proposed Development is medium. There are a variety of landscapes within the area including undeveloped areas and areas where significant areas of built development are present such as at Bridgend.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 8.11. The sensitivity of each landscape receptor identified is provided in the table below.

Table 4: Landscape Sensitivity

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity
The Site	Medium	Medium	Medium
The SLA and the Heritage Coast	High	High	High
St Athan and its immediate vicinity	Medium	Medium	Medium
NLCA 36 Vale of Glamorgan	Medium	Medium	Medium

Effect on the Landscape Character of the Site

- 8.12. The proposal would not require offsite works and as such the only physical change to the fabric of the rural character would lie within the Sites. Beyond the Sites, the distinctive rural settled character of the area would remain unchanged with the proposals in place. With regard to the Sites themselves, they are characterised as a pastoral landscape on the edge of a settlement which is subject to urbanising influences which are slightly at odds with other more rural areas in the locality such as locations within the SLA and Heritage Coast. Whilst this pastoral farmland would be lost with the introduction of the proposals no harm would come about to the distinctive rural character-defining elements of the area as a consequence of the scheme being implemented. Whilst change to the character of the Sites would occur as an inevitable consequence of development on a greenfield site, it would change to development which would be in keeping with the settlement and general character of the settled valley landscape.
- 8.13. Any potential hedgerow management and new hedgerow planting along with landscape buffer planting would enhance and reinforce the green edges of the Proposed Development and would over time soften the appearance of the new development.
- 8.14. Mitigation measures include offsetting the development limits from sensitive edges such as adjacent to Gileston Road and the boundary with the SLA; the potential to retain many of the existing landscape features and the management of mature hedgerows and trees on the boundaries of the Proposed Development supplemented with new planting within the landscape buffers.
- 8.15. Overall, the Proposed Development would result in a notable change in landscape character within the Sites. The magnitude of change would be medium. The overall effect would be **moderate**. With the potential for landscape effects to reduce following successful management of the

existing hedgerows and new mitigation planting however the overall effect would remain **moderate** for the medium term.

Effect on Special Landscape Areas (SLA)

- 8.16. As stated in section 3 above, SLAs have been designated to protect areas of 'fine landscape quality'.
- 8.17. The Proposed Development would be introduced an agricultural field located adjacent to the SLA. The key character-defining elements and qualities of the SLA would be largely unaffected by the proposals.
- 8.18. As discussed in section 6 above, potential effects have been reviewed throughout the assessment process and measures have been identified to avoid or reduce landscape and visual effects. The layout of the proposals have been carefully considered and hedgerow management and new hedgerow and tree planting are proposed to minimise landscape and visual effects.
- 8.19. The Proposed Development would result in a low magnitude of change to the areas of the SLA within close proximity to the Sites, however, this is due to intervisibility rather than an alteration to the character-defining elements. The wider SLA would remain unaffected, resulting in an overall **negligible** magnitude of change and subsequent effect.

Effect on the Landscape Surrounding the Site – Vale of Glamorgan Landscape Character Areas and LANDMAP Aspect Areas

- 8.20. Beyond the Sites, the proposals would not result in the physical alteration or removal of landscape features and elements important to the baseline. Effects would be on aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character.
- 8.21. The proposals would result in a permanent change in landcover across the Sites from pasture to residential development in the settlement fringe landscape. This would result in a localised medium magnitude of change, and a **moderate** overall effect on the landscape in close proximity to the Sites not located within the SLA or Heritage Coast designation. The perception of this change would be limited to a very small part of the landscape within close proximity to the proposals. Hedgerow management and new shrub and tree planting across the Sites could contribute to local landscape character and could also be sufficient to reduce the magnitude of change slightly by year 15.
- 8.22. In the wider landscape surrounding the Sites, the proposals would be seen, to varying degrees depending on screening by vegetation, landform and built-form, elevation and distance from the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would always be seen in conjunction with the existing settlement edge of St Athan and never in isolation, with the exception of a short section of the B4256 where road users are used to seeing a variety of landscapes as they travel along this well-used main route.
- 8.23. The character of part of the Site would change as a result of the Proposed Development; however, the Proposed Development is not uncharacteristic in the landscape and would retain and include key landscape elements characteristic of the wider landscape including much of the pattern of the existing landscape such as hedgerows.
- 8.24. The Proposed Development would be appropriate in terms of its type, scale and massing with consideration to existing residential areas in its immediate surroundings.

- 8.25. The Proposed Development would have a low magnitude of change and a **moderate** overall effect on the scenic quality, integrity, character and sense of place of the host LANDMAP aspect areas and Landscape Character Areas in close proximity to the proposals; with the magnitude of change on the landscape character of the surrounding landscape beyond 0.5km including the host LANDMAP aspect areas and Landscape Character Areas would be negligible and the overall effect would be **negligible**.

Effect on NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan

- 8.26. The Proposed Development would be introduced into the far southern extent of the NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan. It would occupy the sloping ground and agricultural land that occurs throughout the NLCA and contributes to the character of the NLCA as a whole. The Proposed Development would not result in the significant alteration or removal of landscape elements or features of particular importance to landscape character. Residential development is also already a characteristic of the NLCA.
- 8.27. The Proposed Development would be seen from localised parts of the surrounding valley slopes and the transport routes within close proximity of the Sites. The Proposed Development would be seen in the context of the existing residential edge of St Athan and would be a minor element or barely distinguishable in distant views from elevated locations due to a combination of distance topography and intervening vegetation and/or built form.
- 8.28. Changes at a Site level resulting from the Proposed Development would be small-scale and not likely to affect landscape character as defined by the NLCA. The magnitude of change and overall effect on the landscape character of the NLCA as a whole would be **negligible**.

Summary of Effects on Landscape

- 8.29. The table below summarises the magnitude of change and overall effect on the landscape character assessed above.

Table 5: Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
The Site	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse
The Special Landscape Area (within close proximity to the Sites)	High	Low	Moderate adverse

The Special Landscape Area and Heritage Coast (overall, beyond the immediate vicinity of the Sites)	High	Negligible	Negligible
Immediate vicinity: of St Athan/ Vale of Glamorgan Landscape Character Area/ LANDMAP aspect areas	Medium	Low	Minor adverse
The wider landscape within the Vale of Glamorgan Landscape Character Areas/ LANDMAP aspect areas	Medium to High	Negligible	Negligible
NLCA 37: South Wales Valleys	Medium	Negligible	Negligible

9. EFFECTS ON GENERAL VISUAL AMENITY

- 9.1. This section assesses the sensitivity of the views potentially affected by the Proposed Development, the magnitude of the predicted change, and the overall effect on each view assessed.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 9.2. The sensitivity of visual receptors depends on the susceptibility of the visual receptor to changes in views as a result of the development and the value of the view (as set out in the LVIA Methodology in **Appendix A**). This LVIA assesses the potential effect on both public and private views, however, in planning terms there is no private right to a view.

Susceptibility to Change

- 9.3. The criteria for assessing the susceptibility to change of views is shown in Table 7 of the LVIA Methodology at **Appendix A**.

Value of View

- 9.4. Views towards the Sites from the surrounding area are generally of medium value, or for PRow users from locations within the Special Landscape Areas (a local landscape designation that protects areas of 'fine landscape quality'), they are generally considered to be high.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 9.5. In accordance with the LVIA Method at **Appendix A**, the sensitivity of each identified visual receptor is set out in the table below.

Table 6: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Viewpoints	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity
Walkers on PRow	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 112 and 12	Medium or High	High	High
Train passengers	–	Low	Medium	Medium
Persons on rural roads	2, 6, 9 and 9	Medium	Medium	Medium
Shoppers	–	Low	Low	Low
Residents	6, 8 and 9	Medium	High	High

Effects on Views during Operation

- 9.6. Following the completion of the proposals, the greatest levels of effects would be experienced by those receptors closest to the Sites.
- 9.7. The assessment of effects on views at Year 1 and at Year 15 post-completion from each of the 12 assessment viewpoints are provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Operational Effects on Views from Assessment Viewpoints

Assessment Viewpoint	Receptor Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
1) View from PRoW footpath P4/5/1, looking northwest	High	Year 1	The proposals would introduce residential development into the view towards the horizon of the view. The existing built form on the edge of St Athan is difficult to identify within the view due to distance and the layers of intervening vegetation. Whilst the SZTV identifies that the proposals could theoretically be visible, the portion of the view that they would occupy would be minimal, resulting in no notable change to the composition of the view and negligible effects.	Negligible
		Year 15	No change from the year 1 assessment	Negligible
2) View from a junction on the B4265, looking west	Medium	Year 1	This glimpsed view is representative of road users turning out of the unnamed road to East Aberthaw onto the B4265. Four Cross Service Station is partially visible in the view. The far southeastern extent of the Sites is theoretically visible from this location, however, the transient and glimpsed nature of the view would result in no more than negligible effects on road users at this location. Furthermore, the Illustrative Masterplan for the unallocated Site shows an area of public open space in the far southeastern corner that would be free from built form. The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible	Negligible
		Year 15	No change from the year 1 assessment	Negligible
	High	Year 1	From this location, the existing residential properties within St Athan are partially visible towards the horizon	Moderate

Assessment Viewpoint	Receptor Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
3) View from PRow footpath L5/14/1, looking southwest			of the view beyond the woodland and pylons. The proposal would introduce additional built form into a view which already contains views of residential development. As a precautionary approach, noting that some of the residential properties could be 2.5 storeys, the magnitude of change is low	
		Year 15	The proposals include the opportunity to include additional planting, partially along the eastern edge. Following its successful implementation and management, the magnitude of change has the opportunity to reduce to negligible.	negligible
4) View from PRow footpath S2/6/4, looking southwest	High	Year 1	Intervening vegetation and landform restricts views into the Sites which are located just beyond the ridge which forms the horizon of the view. At year 1, there may be the opportunity to experience partial views of the very upper parts of the proposed residential dwellings located in the northern extent of the Site. However, they would not change to the composition of the view and are anticipated to be barely discernible resulting in negligible effects	Negligible
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would remain as negligible.	Negligible
	High	Year 1	The Proposed Development, in particular, the development in the unallocated Site would be visible from this location. The magnitude of change is assessed	Major

Assessment Viewpoint	Receptor Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
5) View from PRow footpath S2/10/1, looking west			as high due to the relatively close proximity of the views and the open views towards the Sites.	
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would reduce slightly to medium, because whilst the proposed mitigation planting will have matured, partial views of the proposed built form are expected to be visible, albeit they would be set within a robust landscape framework.	Major
6) View from the B4265, looking northwest	Road: Medium Residential: High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would be partly visible within the view beyond the hedgerow. Views are already contained to the fore and middle distance at this location due to the roadside hedgerow and introducing built form into the Sites would not change this element of the receptor's experience. However, the magnitude of change is assessed as medium as result of the introduction of built form into a part of the view that currently doesn't have any.	Road: Moderate Residential: Major
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would remain as medium because the built form is anticipated to remain visible although residential development located adjacent to this route is not uncommon.	Road: Moderate Residential: Major

Assessment Viewpoint	Receptor Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
7) View from PRow footpath S2/7/1, looking south	High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would be visible from this location. The magnitude of change is assessed as high due to the relatively close proximity of the views.	Major
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would reduce slightly to medium, because whilst the proposed mitigation planting will have matured, partial views of the proposed built form are expected to be visible, albeit they would be set within a robust landscape framework.	Major
8) View from the junction of Glyndwr Avenue and Gileston Road, looking east	Road: Medium Residential: High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would be located beyond the hedgerow visible in the foreground of the view. Whilst the development would be set back from the edge alongside Gileston Road the magnitude of change is assessed as high.	Road: Major Residential: Major
		Year 15	Whilst the mitigating planting will have matured, views of the proposed built form would be possible, resulting in a high magnitude of change.	Road: Major Residential: Major
9) View from the junction of B4265 and Gileston Road, looking northeast	Road: Medium Residential: High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would be located beyond the hedgerow visible in the foreground of the view. Whilst the development would be set back from the edge alongside Gileston Road and the B4265 the magnitude of change is assessed as high.	Road: Major Residential: Major
		Year 15	Whilst the mitigating planting will have matured, views of the proposed built form would be possible, resulting in a high magnitude of change.	Road: Major Residential: Major

Assessment Viewpoint	Receptor Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Change	Overall Effect
10) View from PRow footpath G1/3/1, looking north	High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would be introduced into the view beyond the properties located towards the horizon of the view. it is worth noting that the existing properties within St Athan and alongside the B4265 are not visible in this view, which translates into the proposals barely being perceptible from this location and a negligible magnitude of change.	Negligible
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would remain as negligible.	Negligible
11) View from PRow footpath S2/5/1, looking east	High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would not be distinguishable and located beyond the landform which occupies the fore and middle distance views. It is worth noting that the existing properties within St Athan along Gileston Road are not visible in this view, which translates into the proposals barely being perceptible from this location and a negligible magnitude of change.	Negligible
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would remain as negligible	Negligible
12) View from PRow footpath S2/19/1, looking northeast	High	Year 1	The Proposed Development would not be distinguishable in the view due to intervening topography and vegetation	Negligible
		Year 15	The magnitude of change would be negligible.	Negligible

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Pegasus Group in relation to a planning application for the provision of a synchronous condenser with associated ancillary infrastructure, access and landscaping.
- 10.2. The effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual amenity have been assessed in accordance with the Guidelines for Visual and Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3). Effects have been assessed during the post-construction phase of the Proposed Development and have taken account of the establishment of proposed mitigation planting and of mitigation planting in the long-term (year 15). The assessment of effects is based on the suite of drawings that accompany the candidate site promotion, mindful of the fact that the design is illustrative only at this stage.
- 10.3. Consultation took place with Jonathan Green, Principal Landscape Architect at the Vale of Glamorgan Council between 14–24th November to agree on the locations which should be visited during the field assessment. Jonathan suggested an additional four locations, at the entrance to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath from castle road, at the B4265 at the junction to East Aberthaw, the road from Llancafán and any viewpoints along the coastal path. All of these locations were visited during the field assessment and some of the locations were taken forwards and used as representative viewpoints.
- 10.4. The visual assessment considers a winter or worst-case scenario when the vegetation is not in leaf following best practice guidelines.

Effects on Landscape Elements

- 10.5. Landscape elements in the Site potentially affected by the Proposed Development include grassland, topography, hedgerows and trees.
- 10.6. There would be a permanent loss of grassland within the Sites of the Proposed Development resulting in adverse effects on this landscape element. The proposals present the opportunity to include areas of species and botanically diverse grassland within the areas of public open space which could be considered to offset these adverse effects.
- 10.7. With regards to the topography of the Sites is anticipated that the legibility of the topographic profile of the Sites would continue to remain to some degree with the proposals in place, however, it is recognised that groundworks and earth movement may need to occur to build development platforms and for foundations resulting in overall minor adverse effects.
- 10.8. As part of the proposals, there are opportunities to incorporate substantial amounts of tree cover across the whole Sites, significantly more than is presently the case to create a strong physical and visual framework in the short, medium and longer term. Any proposed trees planted throughout the development area would provide visual interest within the areas of public open space and frame the main spine roads. The creation of areas of public open space and buffers around the edges of the Sites would also allow for the inclusion of additional shrubs and trees resulting in overall major beneficial effects on trees and minor beneficial effects on hedgerows.

Effect on the Landscape Character of the Site

- 10.9. The proposal would not require offsite works and as such the only physical change to the fabric of the rural character would lie within the Sites. Beyond the Sites, the distinctive rural settled character of the area would remain unchanged with the proposals in place. Whilst this pastoral farmland would be lost with the introduction of the proposals no harm would come about to the distinctive rural character-defining elements of the area as a consequence of the scheme being implemented. Whilst change to the character of the Sites would occur as an inevitable consequence of development on a greenfield site, it would change to development which would be in keeping with the settlement and general character of the settled valley landscape.
- 10.10. Any potential hedgerow management and new hedgerow planting along with landscape buffer planting would enhance and reinforce the green edges of the Proposed Development and would over time soften the appearance of the new development.
- 10.11. Mitigation measures include offsetting the development limits from sensitive edges such as adjacent to Gileston Road and the boundary with the SLA; the potential to retain many of the existing landscape features and the management of mature hedgerows and trees on the boundaries of the Proposed Development supplemented with new planting within the landscape buffers.
- 10.12. Overall, the Proposed Developments would result in a moderate effect to the character of the Sites themselves. With the potential for landscape effects to reduce following successful management of the existing hedgerows and new mitigation planting.

Effect on Special Landscape Areas (SLA)

- 10.13. The Proposed Development would be introduced an agricultural field located adjacent to the SLA. The key character-defining elements and qualities of the SLA would be largely unaffected by the proposals.
- 10.14. The Proposed Development would result in a low magnitude of change to the areas of the SLA within close proximity to the Sites, however, this is due to intervisibility rather than an alteration to the character-defining elements. The wider SLA would remain unaffected, resulting in an overall negligible magnitude of change and subsequent effect.
- 10.15. Effect on the Landscape Surrounding the Site – Vale of Glamorgan Landscape Character Areas and LANDMAP Aspect Areas
- 10.16. Beyond the Sites, the proposals would not result in the physical alteration or removal of landscape features and elements important to the baseline. Effects would be on aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character.
- 10.17. The proposals would result in a permanent change in landcover across the Sites from pasture to residential development in the settlement fringe landscape. This would result in a localised medium magnitude of change, and a moderate overall effect on the landscape in close proximity to the Sites not located within the SLA or Heritage Coast designation. The perception of this change would be limited to a very small part of the landscape within close proximity to the proposals. Hedgerow management and new shrub and tree planting across the Sites could contribute to local landscape character and could also be sufficient to reduce the magnitude of change slightly by year 15.

- 10.18. In the wider landscape surrounding the Sites, the proposals would be seen, to varying degrees depending on screening by vegetation, landform and built-form, elevation and distance from the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would always be seen in conjunction with the existing settlement edge of St Athan and never in isolation, with the exception of a short section of the B4256 where road users are used to seeing a variety of landscapes as they travel along this well-used main route.
- 10.19. The character of part of the Site would change as a result of the proposals; however, the proposals are not uncharacteristic in the landscape. The Proposed Development would have a moderate adverse overall effect on the host LANDMAP aspect areas and Landscape Character Areas in close proximity to the proposals; with the effect on the landscape character of the surrounding landscape beyond 0.5km including the host LANDMAP aspect areas and Landscape Character Areas assessed as negligible.

Effect on NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan

- 10.20. The Proposed Development would be introduced into the far southern extent of the NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan. It would occupy the sloping ground and agricultural land that occurs throughout the NLCA and contributes to the character of the NLCA as a whole. The Proposed Development would not result in the significant alteration or removal of landscape elements or features of particular importance to landscape character. Residential development is also already a characteristic of the NLCA.
- 10.21. The Proposed Development would be seen from localised parts of the surrounding valley slopes and the transport routes within close proximity of the Sites. The proposals would be seen in the context of the existing residential edge of St Athan and would be a minor element or barely distinguishable in distant views from elevated locations due to a combination of distance topography and intervening vegetation and/or built form resulting in overall negligible effects.

Effect on General Visual Amenity

- 10.22. Of the twelve representative viewpoints, selected receptors at six of the viewpoints are anticipated to experience negligible effects at years 1 and 15 and receptors at one further viewpoint are also assessed as experiencing negligible effects by year 15.
- 10.23. Adverse effects were assessed for receptors at the following viewpoint locations in years 1 and 5:
- 5 – View from PRow footpath S2/10/1
 - 7 – View from PRow footpath S2/7/1
 - 8 – View from the junction of Glyndwr Avenue and Gileston Road
 - 9 – View from the junction of B4265 and Gileston Road,
- 10.24. All four of these locations are located in close proximity to the Sites, with viewpoint 5 being located 267m from the eastern boundary of the unallocated Site.
- 10.25. Adverse effects were also identified for receptors at viewpoint 3 (View from PRow footpath L5/14/1) during year 1, with effects reducing to negligible by year 15 once the proposed planting matures.

- 10.26. Mature trees including tree belts (along the railway line) and areas of woodland located beyond the Site to the south and east when combined with topography provide a level of screening from longer distance views. The existing built form within St Athan also prevents views of the proposals from the west.
- 10.27. From the lower-lying landscape to the south of the railway, views into the proposals are prevented by roadside hedgerows and mature woodland located to the south of the Sites combined with existing built form and topography.
- 10.28. Mature hedgerows along the Sites western and southern boundaries provide a level of screening for low-level receptors such as pedestrians and other road users. However, residents of the properties, notably those along Gileston Road, the far eastern end of Glyndwr Avenue, around the junction of Gileston Road and the B4265 and, Brodawel (adjacent to the northwest corner of the allocated Site) have the opportunity to experience views of the proposals.
- 10.29. From a very limited number of elevated locations to the east and southeast of the Sites (around 1.5km from the Sites), there are occasional opportunities for receptors to experience views towards the proposals through the intervening areas of woodland and other intervening vegetation. On the rising ground to the north of the Rills Valley views of the proposals are anticipated to be restricted, or where visible the small parts of the rooves that could be visible are not likely to change the overall composition of the view resulting in negligible effects.
- 10.30. With the exception of a limited number of locations (in close proximity where longer-range views are restricted by residential properties and/or vegetation on their curtilage), any views of the proposals would also feature the large-scale industrial buildings, notably their tall chimneys within the Aberthaw Cement Works and the Aberthaw Power Station. Their light-coloured buildings and chimneys contrast with the darker hues of vegetation and fields in the surrounding landscape. Pylons and overhead lines also feature in views towards the Sites.
- 10.31. In summary, the proposals would always be seen in conjunction with the existing settlement edge of St Athan and never in isolation, with the exception of a short section of the B4256 where road users are used to seeing a variety of landscapes including settlements as they travel along this well-used main route.

REFERENCES

Best Practice Guidance

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition 2013) (GLVIA3);
- GVLIA3 Statements of Clarification, Landscape Institute, 2013 and 2014;
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England 2014;
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management – Natural England, 2019;
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Landscape Institute, 2019; and
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations. Technical Guidance Note 02/21. Landscape Institute, 2021.

Data Sources

- Ordnance Survey maps (1:25,000 Explorer Series);
- Aerial images; and
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC Map) (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>).

Policy and Guidance

- Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11, 2021;
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12;
- Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan 2011-2026; and
- Vale of Glamorgan Designation of Special Landscape Areas Background Paper (2013).

Landscape Character Sources

- National Landscape Character Area (NLCA) 36: Vale of Glamorgan, Natural Resources Wales;
- Vale of Glamorgan Council Designation of Landscape Character Areas (2008); and
- LANDMAP Aspect Areas, Natural Resources Wales.

APPENDIX A: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken with regards to best practice, as outlined within the following publications:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013);
- GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, 2/13, 1/14, and 2/14 – Landscape Institute (2013 and 2014);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England (2014);
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management – Natural England (2019);
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Landscape Institute (2019); and
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Landscape Institute (2021).

1.2 GLVIA3 states within paragraph 1.1 that *“Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.”¹*

1.3 GLVIA3 also states within paragraph 1.17 that when identifying landscape and visual effects there is a *“need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.”²*

1.4 GLVIA3 recognises within paragraph 2.23 that *“professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements”³* undertaken by a landscape consultant or a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

1.5 GLVIA3 notes in paragraph 1.3 that *“LVIA may be carried out either formally, as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), or informally, as a contribution to the ‘appraisal’*

¹ Para 1.1, Page 4, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

² Para 1.17, Page 9, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

³ Para 2.23, Page 21, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

of development proposals and planning applications.”⁴ Although the Proposed Development is not subject to an EIA requiring an assessment of the likely significance of effects, this assessment is titled as a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) rather than an ‘appraisal’ in the interests of common understanding.

- 1.6 The effects on cultural heritage and ecology are not considered within this LVA.

Study Area

- 1.7 The study area for this LVA considers a 3km radius from the Site. Most of the viewpoints selected to assist the assessment of effects on landscape and views are however within approximately 2km of the Site.

Effects Assessed

- 1.8 Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposals. The landscape and visual effects have been assessed in the following sections:
- Effects on landscape elements;
 - Effects on landscape character; and
 - Effects on visual amenity.
- 1.9 Sensitivity is defined in GLVIA3 as *“a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of susceptibility of the receptor to a specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.”⁵* Various factors in relation to the value and susceptibility of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors or representative viewpoints are considered below and cross referenced to determine the overall sensitivity as shown in Table 1:

⁴ Para 1.3, Page 4, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

⁵ Glossary, Page 158, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

Table 1, Overall sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors				
	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Medium
	LOW	Medium	Medium	Low

- 1.10 Magnitude of change is defined in GLVIA3 as *“a term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.”*⁶
- 1.11 Various factors contribute to the magnitude of change on landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints.
- 1.12 The sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude of change arising from the proposals are cross referenced in Table 9 below to determine the overall effect on landscape and views.

⁶ Glossary, Page 158, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

2. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

- 2.1 The effects on landscape elements are limited to within the site and includes the direct physical change to the fabric of the land, such as the removal of woodland, hedgerows or grassland to allow for the proposals.

Sensitivity of Landscape Elements

- 2.2 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape element and the susceptibility of the landscape element to changes that would arise as a result of the proposals – see pages 88–90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed on a scale of high, medium or low.
- 2.3 The criteria for assessing the value of landscape elements and landscape character is shown in Table 2:

Table 2, Criteria for assessing the value of landscape elements and landscape character	
HIGH	<p>Designated landscape including but not limited to World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty considered to be an important component of the country's character experienced by a high number of people.</p> <p>Landscape condition is good and components are generally maintained to a high standard.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has an elevated level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive landscape elements and features are key components that contribute to the landscape character of the area.</p>
MEDIUM	<p>Undesignated landscape including urban fringe and rural countryside considered to be a distinctive component of the national or local landscape character.</p> <p>Landscape condition is fair and components are generally well maintained.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has a moderate level of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive landscape elements and features are notable components that contribute to the character of the area.</p>

LOW	<p>Undesignated landscape including urban fringe and rural countryside considered to be of unremarkable character.</p> <p>Landscape condition may be poor and components poorly maintained or damaged.</p> <p>In terms of seclusion, enclosure by land use, traffic and movement, light pollution and presence/absence of major infrastructure, the landscape has limited levels of tranquillity.</p> <p>Rare or distinctive elements and features are not notable components that contribute to the landscape character of the area.</p>
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2.4 The criteria for assessing the susceptibility of landscape elements and landscape character is shown in Table 3:

Table 3, Criteria for assessing landscape susceptibility	
HIGH	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a low capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with no or little existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are not easily replaced or substituted (e.g. ancient woodland, mature trees, historic parkland, etc).</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features, major infrastructure or industry is not present or where present has a limited influence on landscape character.</p>
MEDIUM	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with some existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing elements – landscapes with components that are easily replaced or substituted.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features, major infrastructure or industry is present and has a noticeable influence on landscape character.</p>

LOW	<p>Scale of enclosure – landscapes with a high capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed owing to the interactions of topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc.</p> <p>Nature of land use – landscapes with extensive existing reference or context to the type of development being proposed.</p> <p>Nature of existing features – landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and has a dominating influence on the landscape.</p>
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- 2.5 Various factors in relation to the value and susceptibility of landscape elements are assessed and cross referenced to determine the overall sensitivity as shown in Table 1 above.

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements

- 2.6 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of change on individual landscape elements within the site as shown in Table 4:

Table 4, Criteria for assessing magnitude of change for landscape elements	
HIGH	Total loss/gain of a landscape element.
MEDIUM	Partial loss/gain or alteration to part of a landscape element.
LOW	Minor loss/gain or alteration to part of a landscape element.
NEGLIGIBLE	No loss/gain or very limited alteration to part of a landscape element.

3. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 3.1 Landscape character is defined as the *“distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.”*⁷

⁷ Glossary, Page 157, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

- 3.2 The assessment of effects on landscape character considers how the introduction of new landscape elements physically alters the landform, landcover, landscape pattern and perceptual attributes of the site or how visibility of the proposals changes the way in which the landscape character is perceived.

Sensitivity of Landscape Character

- 3.3 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to changes that would arise as a result of the proposals – see pages 88–90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed on a scale of high, medium or low.
- 3.4 The value of the landscape potentially affected by a proposed development is evaluated as part of establishing the landscape baseline.
- 3.5 Highly valued landscapes typically are identified by international level designations such as World Heritage Sites, and are landscapes closely associated with an artist or writer of international renown; and include national level designations such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Landscapes of local value may be identified by designations in the local planning process such as Areas of Great Landscape Value and Special Landscape Areas, although planning authorities may adopt a ‘criteria-based’ approach to landscape protection and enhancement. Undesignated landscapes and features are also valued.
- 3.6 Paragraph 5.19 of GLVIA3 identifies that following a review of existing landscape designations *“the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape – such as trees, buildings or hedgerows – may also have value.”*
- 3.7 GLVIA3, Box 5.1 under paragraph 5.28, describes a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. Table 1 of the LI’s Technical Guidance Note O2–21 (LI-TGN O2/21): ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’, also identifies a range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value.
- 3.8 Guidance contained within LI-TGN O2/21 is stated as being the LI’s current reflection on the subject of landscape value and is intended to be complementary to GLVIA3.

- 3.9 Factors set out in GLVIA3 and LI-TGN 02/21 are considered when determining landscape value. The review of published landscape character assessments also informs judgements on landscape value.
- 3.10 The criteria for assessing the value of landscape character is shown in Table 2 above.
- 3.11 The criteria for assessing the susceptibility of landscape character is shown in Table 3 above.
- 3.12 Not all criterion need apply when giving a specific evaluation rating.
- 3.13 The overall sensitivity is determined through cross referencing the value and susceptibility of landscape character as shown in Table 1 above.

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

- 3.14 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of change on landscape character with consideration to the typical criteria shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5, Criteria for assessing magnitude of change on landscape character	
HIGH	Introduction of major new elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.
MEDIUM	Introduction of some notable new elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.
LOW	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.
NEGLIGIBLE	No notable or appreciable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.

4. EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

4.1 Visual amenity is defined within GLVIA3 as the *“overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.”*⁸

4.2 The effects on visual amenity considers the changes in views arising from the proposals in relation to visual receptors including settlements, residential properties, transport routes, recreational facilities and attractions; and representative viewpoints or specific locations within the study area as agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

4.3 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the proposals – see pages 113–114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed on a scale of high, medium or low.

4.4 The criteria for assessing the value of views is shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6, Criteria for assessing the value of views	
HIGH	Views with high scenic value within designated landscapes including but not limited to World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc. Likely to include key viewpoints on OS maps or reference within guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation boards, etc.
MEDIUM	Views with moderate scenic value within undesignated landscape including urban fringe and rural countryside.
LOW	Views with unremarkable scenic value within undesignated landscape with partly degraded visual quality and detractors.

⁸ Page 158, Glossary, GLVIA3

- 4.5 The criteria for assessing the susceptibility of views is shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7, Criteria for assessing visual susceptibility	
HIGH	Includes occupiers of residential properties and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside using public rights of way (PROW).
MEDIUM	Includes people engaged in outdoor sporting activities and people travelling through the landscape on minor roads and trains.
LOW	Includes people at places of work e.g. industrial and commercial premises and people travelling through the landscape on major roads and motorways.

Magnitude of Change on Visual Receptors

- 4.6 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on visual receptor views with consideration to the typical criteria shown in Table 8 below:

Table 8, Criteria for assessing magnitude of change for visual receptors	
HIGH	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view with many visual receptors affected.
MEDIUM	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view.
LOW	Some change in the view that is appreciable with few visual receptors affected.
NEGLIGIBLE	No notable change in the view.

5. OVERALL EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS

- 5.1 The cross referencing of landscape and visual sensitivity and the magnitude of change, as shown in Table 9 below, assists in determining the overall effect on landscape and views:

Table 9, Overall effect on landscape and views				
		Sensitivity		
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Magnitude of Change	HIGH	Major	Major	Moderate
	MEDIUM	Major	Moderate	Minor
	LOW	Moderate	Minor	Minor
	NEGLIGIBLE	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

The degree of an overall effect is a professional judgement based upon all the factors in terms of landscape and visual sensitivity and the magnitude of change arising from the proposals. The typical descriptors of the landscape and visual effects are detailed in Tables 10 and 11 above.

6. TYPICAL DESCRIPTORS OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 6.1 The typical descriptors of the landscape effects are detailed in Table 10 below:

Table 10, Typical Descriptors of Landscape Significance of Effects	
MAJOR BENEFICIAL	<p>The landscape resource has a high sensitivity with the proposals representing a high beneficial magnitude of change and/or the proposed changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhance the character (including value) of the landscape; - enhance the restoration of characteristic features and elements lost as a result of changes from inappropriate management or development; - enable a sense of place to be enhanced.
MODERATE BENEFICIAL	<p>The landscape resource has a medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a medium beneficial magnitude of change and/or the proposed changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhance the character (including value) of the landscape;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enable the restoration of characteristic features and elements partially lost or diminished as a result of changes from inappropriate management or development; - enable a sense of place to be restored.
MINOR BENEFICIAL	<p>The landscape resource has a low sensitivity with the proposals representing a low beneficial magnitude of change and/or the proposed changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complement the character (including value) of the landscape; - maintain or enhance characteristic features or elements; - enable some sense of place to be restored.
NEGLIGIBLE	<p>The proposed changes would (on balance) maintain the character (including value) of the landscape and would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be in keeping with landscape character and blend in with characteristic features and elements; - Enable a sense of place to be maintained.
NO CHANGE / NEUTRAL	<p>The proposed changes would not be visible and there would be no discernible change to landscape character.</p>
MINOR ADVERSE	<p>The landscape resource has a low sensitivity with the proposal representing a low adverse magnitude of change and/or the proposed changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not quite fit the character (including value) of the landscape; - be a variance with characteristic features and elements; - detract from sense of place.
MODERATE ADVERSE	<p>The landscape resource has a medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a medium adverse magnitude of change and/or the proposed changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conflict with the character (including value) of the landscape; - have an adverse effect on characteristic features or elements; - diminish a sense of place.
MAJOR ADVERSE	<p>The landscape resource has a high sensitivity with the proposals representing a high adverse magnitude of change and/or the proposed changes would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be at variance with the character (including value) of the landscape; - degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements or cause them to be lost; - change a sense of place.

7. TYPICAL DESCRIPTORS OF VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 The typical descriptors of the visual effects are detailed within Table 11 below:

Table 11, Typical Descriptors of Visual Significance of Effects	
MAJOR BENEFICIAL	The visual receptor is of high sensitivity with the proposals representing a high magnitude of change and/or the proposals would result in a major improvement in the view.
MODERATE BENEFICIAL	The visual receptor is of medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a medium magnitude of change and/or the proposals would result in a clear improvement in the view.
MINOR BENEFICIAL	The visual receptor is of low sensitivity with the proposals representing a low magnitude of change and/or the proposals would result in a slight improvement in the view.
NEGLIGIBLE	The proposed changes would be in keeping with, and would maintain, the existing view or where (on balance) the proposed changes would maintain the quality of the view (which may include adverse effects which are offset by beneficial effects for the same receptor) or due to distance from the receptor, the proposed change would be barely perceptible to the naked eye.
NO CHANGE/ NEUTRAL	The proposed changes would not be visible and there would be no change to the view.
MINOR ADVERSE	The visual receptor is of low sensitivity with the proposals representing a low magnitude of change and/or the proposals would result in a slight deterioration in the view.
MODERATE ADVERSE	The visual receptor is of medium sensitivity with the proposals representing a medium magnitude of change and/or the proposals would result in a clear deterioration in the view.
MAJOR ADVERSE	The visual receptor is of high sensitivity with the proposals representing a high magnitude of change and/or the proposals would result in a major deterioration in the view.

8. NATURE OF EFFECTS

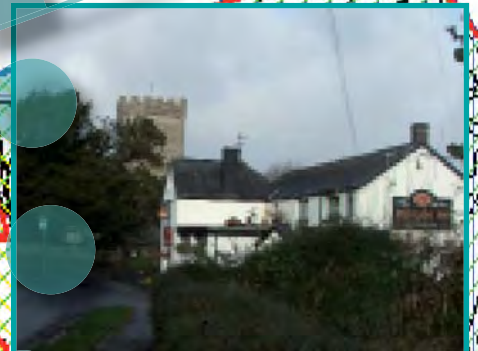
- 8.1 GLVIA3 includes an entry that states *"effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity."*⁹ GLVIA3 does not, however, state how negative or positive effects should be assessed, and this therefore becomes a matter of professional judgement supported by site specific justification within the LVA.

⁹ Para 6.29, Page 113, GLVIA 3rd Edition

**APPENDIX B: VALE OF GLAMORGAN – SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS –
RELEVANT EXTRACT**

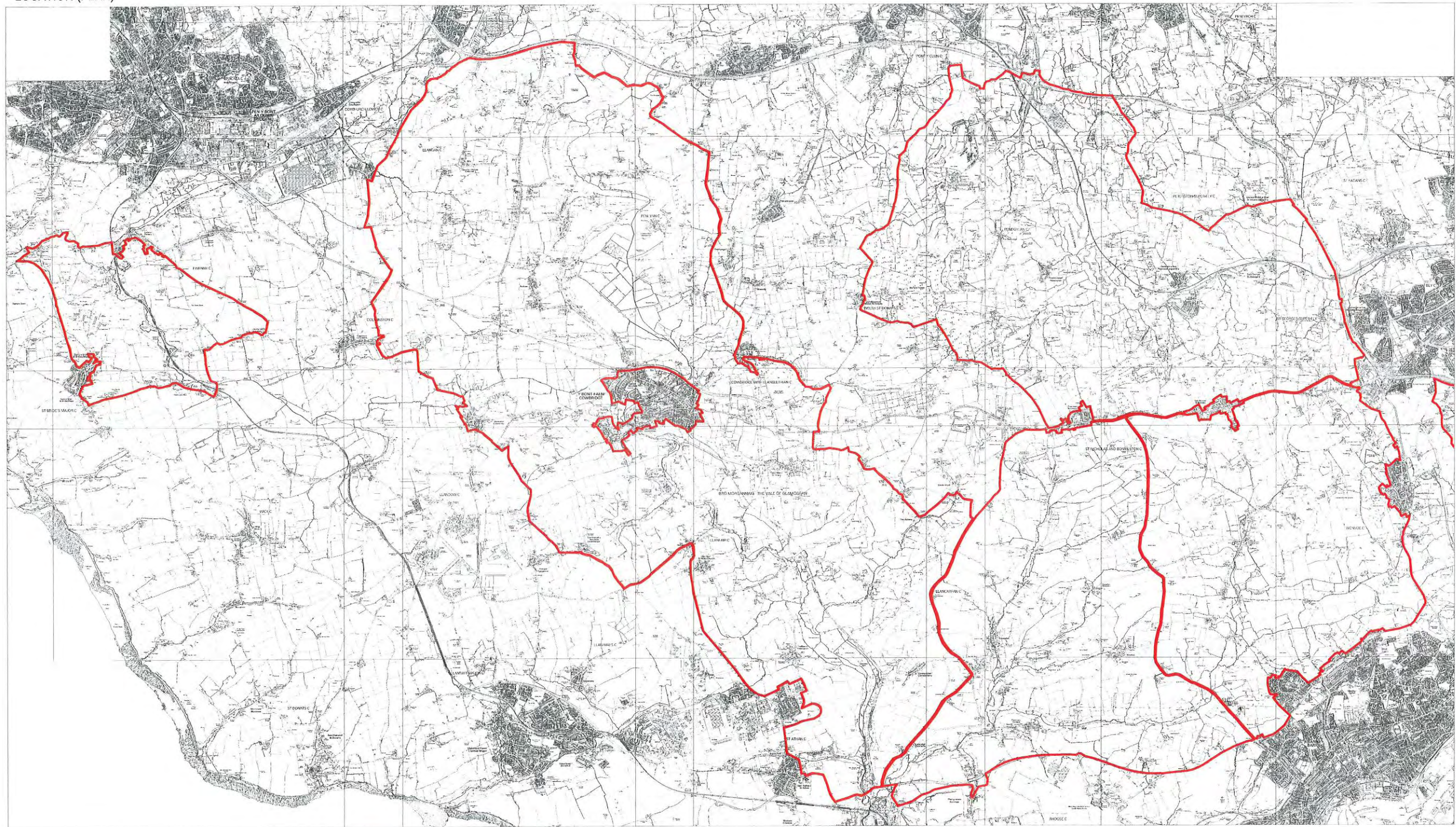
Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
DESIGNATION OF SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS
Review Against Historic Landscapes Evaluations Update

February 2011



TACP

LOCATION (PLAN)



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NOTES

**VALE OF GLAMORGAN
SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 2
UPPER & LOWER THAW VALLEY**

○ DRAWN CD ○ CHECKED LJ ○ OFFICE : CARDIFF

○ NOT TO SCALE ○ DATE DECEMBER 2007

**FIGURE / DRAWING NO.
8243/02**

REV

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 2 – UPPER & LOWER THAW VALLEY

Photograph(s)



View from A48 approaching Cowbridge



View from City to south, Thaw Valley

Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

- **Need**

The Thaw Valley is of high value visually and culturally, has outstanding geological features and includes some areas of high habitat value. Suburban development is eroding the character, along with intensive agricultural practices and substitution of fences for hedgerows.

- **Coherence**

The Broad Search Area boundary identified aspects of value further west of the existing boundary, but excluded the lower Thaw valley. The refined boundary however includes the original designation to the south. This includes high visual and sensory, cultural and habitat evaluations, and outstanding geological aspect evaluations. These evaluations are generally associated with the narrow valleys but the need for defensible boundaries has increased the whole area designated and resulted in almost completely replicating the existing boundary. Cowbridge is excluded (valuable areas are covered by Conservation Area status and much of the outskirts are of ordinary, suburban character). The northern boundary follows the Unitary Authority Boundary.

- **Consensus**

The boundary closely follows the existing SLA boundary and extension to the north-west relates primarily to the Outstanding geological evaluation and High Cultural evaluation.

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

The SLA is dissected by the Thaw River valley. To the north, the area is sparsely settled with small villages and several farms. The generally open landscape has high intervisibility and overlooks Bridgend, bordering the M4, and colouring the perception of the area. Mynydd Maendy wind farm to the north also has a visual impact on the sense of place. There are a number of pleasant views to well-managed fields and wooded areas, but these are affected in places by gappy hedgerows and housing development. Trees and hedgerows are declining in the area but introducing blocks of broadleaf woodland would help to integrate settlement, whilst future development should be restricted in widely visible areas.

The dramatic valley form has distinctive steep wooded slopes and a strong sense of place and is relatively uncommon. It is enclosed by a plateau landscape and has a strong relationship with Cowbridge. The SLA boundary excludes Cowbridge, the suburbs of which are eroding the rural character. The town centre areas of historic and aesthetic value are protected by Conservation Area status.

The valley to the south is a confined, sinuous lowland valley with steep wooded sides and hedgerowed field valley floor with streams and wet ditches contributing to biodiversity. The strong valley, semi-natural and planted broadleaf woodland, and juxtaposition with valley settlements is very attractive and one of the best examples of this landscape in the Vale. Woodland is fragmented in places and linkages should be created by pursuing the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and Native Woodland Plans. Elsewhere the landscape is rolling lowland with some views out to the coast.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Maintain hedgerow and tree cover.
- Incorporate agri-environment schemes.
- Improve development to ensure rural detailing and character.
- Restrict development in widely visible areas and introduce blocks of broadleaf woodland to integrate settlement/Ford related development.
- Encourage woodland management for continuous cover and pursue Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Schemes and Native Woodland Plans.

Boundary Justification

To be completed by the Local Authority.

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

Geological Landscapes 1 – Research/Educational Value
 2 – Historic Value
 3 – Rarity/Uniqueness
 4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats 1 – Priority Habitats
 2 – Significance
 3 – Opportunity
 4 – Decline Rates
 5 – Threat
 6 – Fragmentation
 7 – Habitat Evaluation
 8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory 1 – Scenic Quality
 2 – Integrity
 3 – Character
 4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes 1 – Rarity
 2 – Survival/Preservation
 3 – Coherence
 4 – Potential
 5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes 1 – Recognition/Transparency
 2 – Period
 3 – Rarity
 4 – Documentation
 5 – Group Value
 6 – Survival
 7 – Vulnerability
 8 – Diversity
 9 – Potential

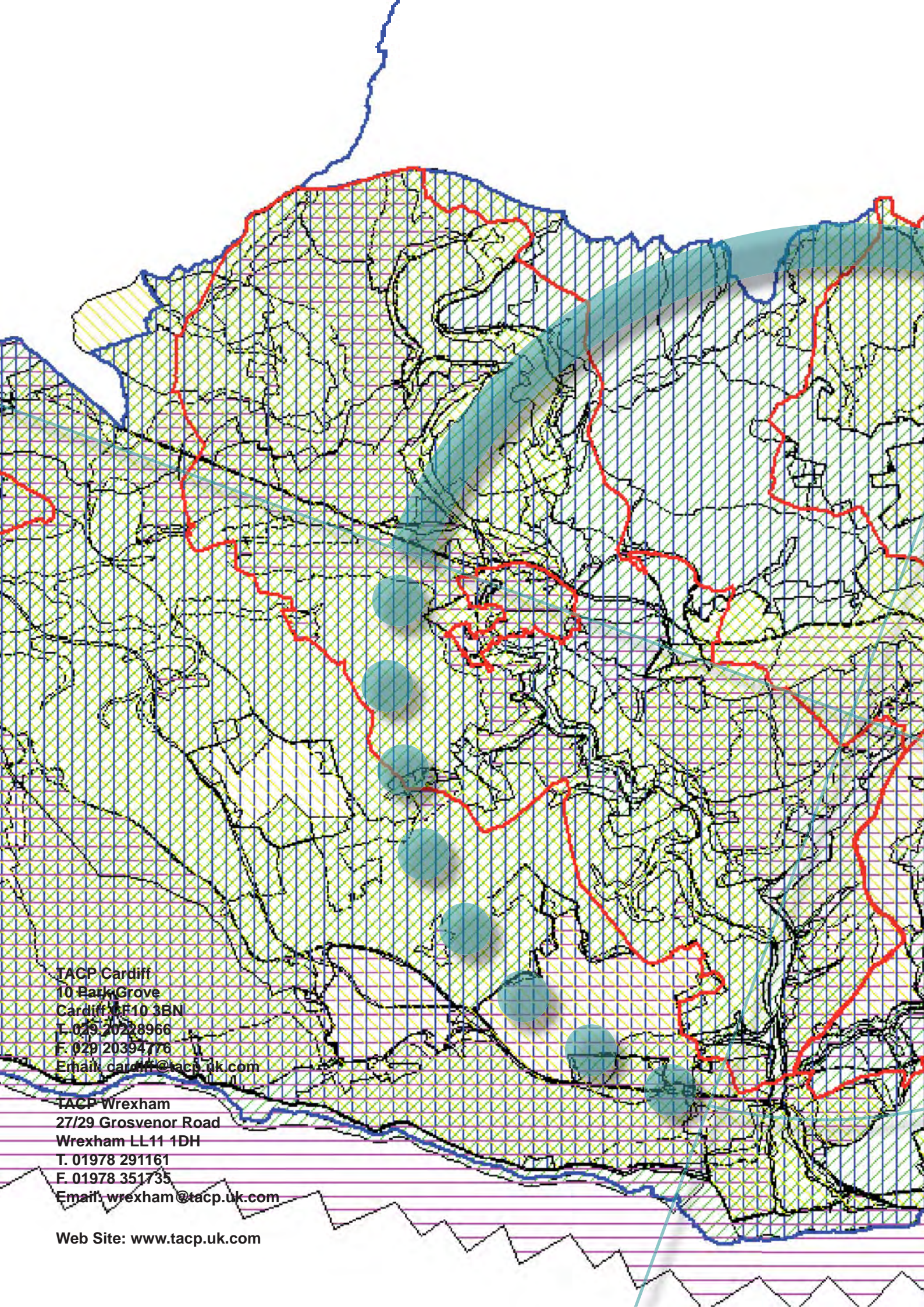
Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/>

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Evaluation Matrix SLA 2

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation	Criteria								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Geological	GL 282	High	M	M	M	L					
	GL 298	Moderate	H	M	H	M					
	GL 492	Outstanding	O	O	O	O					
	GL 514	Moderate	M	L	L	L					
	GL 532	High	H	M	M	M					
	GL 630	Moderate	L	L	L	L					
	GL 658	High	H	M	M	M					
	GL 709	Moderate	L	L	L	L					
	GL 863	Moderate	M	M	H	M					
Landscape Habitats	LH 103	Low	U	U	U	U	U	U	L	M	
	LH 118	Moderate	L	L	H	U	L	M	M	H	
	LH 394	High	H	M	U	U	U	M	H	U	
	LH 435	Moderate	M	L	H	U	L	L	M	U	
	LH 436	High	H	M	U	U	U	M	H	H	
	LH 782	High	H	H	U	U	U	H	H	U	
	LH 808	Moderate	H	H	U	U	H	M	M	H	
Visual and Sensory	VS 139	High	H	H	H	H					
	VS 146	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
	VS 161	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
	VS 805	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
	VS 864	Moderate	M	M	H	M					
	VS 933	High	H	M	H	H					
	VS 943	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
	VS 962	Moderate	H	M	M	M					
Historical Landscapes	HL 022	Outstanding	O	O	H	H	H				
	HL 032	Outstanding	O	O	H	M	O				
	HL 039	Outstanding	O	O	M	O	O				
	HL 040	Outstanding	O	O	H	O	O				
	HL 041	Outstanding	O	O	O	O	O				
	HL 042	High	H	H	H	L	H				
	HL 046	High	H	H	H	H	M				
	HL 047	High	H	H	M	M	H				
	HL 048	High	H	H	H	M	M				
	HL 049	High	H	H	M	L	O				
	HL 052	High	H	H	M	M	H				
	HL 053	Moderate	M	M	M	L	M				
	HL 054	High	H	H	M	M	H				
	CL 008	Outstanding	H	M	O	U	H	H	L	H	U
Cultural	CL 020	Outstanding	H	H	L	O	H	U	M	U	U
	CL 028	Outstanding	M	H	L	M	O	H	L	L	U
	CL 037	Outstanding	M	H	L	M	O	H	L	L	U
	CL 039	High	H	O	L	U	O	H	L	H	L



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Web Site: www.tacr.uk.com

APPENDIX C: RELEVANT NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

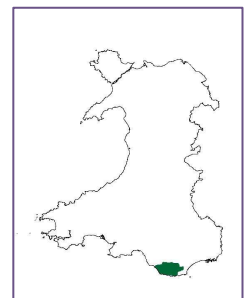


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Bro Morgannwg - Disgrifiad Cryno

Llwyfan carreg galch yw sylfaen y rhan fwyaf o dirwedd llawr gwlad nodweddiadol y Fro. Mae gwaddodion rhewlifol yn cyfrannu at natur donnog y tir. Defnyddir y tir mewn sawl ffordd nodweddiadol o gefn gwlad, gyda gwrychoedd trwchus, a gwigoedd a choed niferus, yn creu ymdeimlad o amgaeidigrwydd ac agosatrwydd. Hyn er gwaethaf agosrwydd trefi mawrion megis Caerdydd, Y Barri a Phen-y-bont ar Ogwr, a sawl nodwedd adeiledig fawr yn y Fro ei hun.

Ffin bendant y dirwedd hon yw clogwyni serth glannau'r môr. Mae ychydig draethau tywodlyd, a rhai graeanog hefyd: ond mae llawer o ddelweddau'n dangos daeareg amlwg y parth rhynglanwol, gan gynnwys haenau a phalmentydd. O bennau'r clogwyni gellir gweld ymhell tua Gwlad yr Haf. Un nodwedd amlwg sy'n effeithio ar ran o'r glannau yw gorsaf bŵer fawr, gyfoes, swmlyd Aberddawan.



Yng nghanol y Fro, mae pentrefi cryno, hanesyddol yn adlewyrchu ymdeimlad o hunaniaeth nodweddiadol y Fro, gyda datblygu cyfoes cyfyngedig. Eto, mae'r ardal wedi denu llawer o weithwyr proffesiynol sy'n cymudo i Gaerdydd neu Ben-y-bont, gan ychwanegu ar gymeriad mwy llewyrchus manau fel y Bont-faen a Llanfleiddan.

Lluniwyd cymeriad hanesyddol yr ardal gan ddylanwadau Eingl-normanaidd. Mae Cestyll Normanaidd, a phentrefi canoloesol wedi'u crynhoi o gwmpas eglwysi, yn nodweddion allweddol. Mae tirwedd gofrestredig Llancarfan yn brydferth i'w ryfeddu, yn ogystal â bod yn enghraifft wych, gymharol ddigyffwrdd o esblygiad hanesyddol. Hyn oll, er gwaethaf bod yn gymharol agos at drefi mawrion.

Summary description

The Vale is a distinctive, gentle lowland landscape, largely comprising a rolling limestone plateau. Glacial till contributes to its undulating topography. A variety of rural land uses characterise the area, reinforced by thick hedgerows, frequent small woodlands and trees, which create a sense of enclosure and intimacy. This is despite the proximity to large towns such as greater Cardiff, Barry and Bridgend, and a number of large built features within the Vale.

The landscape terminates abruptly at the heritage coast with vertical cliffs. There are a few sandy beaches, as well as shingle, but many images depict the exposed geology of the inter-tidal area, including bedding and pavements. There are long distance cliff top views towards Somerset. A notable feature affecting part of the coast is the large, modern, noisy, Aberthaw Power Station.

In the centre of the Vale, compact and historic settlements reinforce the area's distinctive sense of place, but with limited modern development. Yet the area has attracted many professionals, who commute to Cardiff and Bridgend, adding to the more prosperous character of places like Cowbridge and Llanblethian.

The area's historic character was shaped by Anglo-Norman influences. Norman castles and medieval villages centred on churches are key features. The registered landscape of Llancarfan is astoundingly beautiful as well as being a relatively unspoiled gem of historical evolution. All this is despite the relatively close proximity to nearby large towns.

Key Characteristics
Lowland, rolling limestone plateau with glacial till.
Coastal cliffs – mark a sudden edge to the landscape. Species-rich calcareous, neutral and maritime grasslands are found on their tops. Layers of geology characterise their sides and inter-tidal platforms. Wide views over the Bristol Channel. Much is Heritage Coast.
Mixed agricultural land uses - with predominantly rural character
Small woodlands – mainly to the east. Few large woods.
Mixed field patterns and sizes - with hedgerows and hedgebanks, frequent hedgerow trees. Limestone walls define land above the cliffs in the west.
Norman castles and medieval villages centred on churches.
Predominantly still rural - with strong senses of enclosure by historic field boundaries.
A number of large built developments – including Cardiff International Airport and Aberthaw Power Station. Some areas with traffic noise, e.g. in the M4 corridor.
Commuter settlement - modern suburban housing extending but contrasting with historic settlement character.

Visual and Sensory profile

The area forms a distinctive plateau landscape, dissected by a number of rivers including the Ely, Thaw and Waycock. It still evokes a strong rural sense of place with a patchwork of fields, hedgerows and woodlands and trees and extensive open, lowland, farmland.

The most iconic image is that of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, where the otherwise gentle landscape comes to a very abrupt and dramatic edge, with near vertical cliffs in places, shingle or rock pavement beaches, and the occasional sandy bay to the west. From here there are long views across the Bristol Channel to Somerset and Exmoor. The coastal hinterland is typified by windblown vegetation that has resulted from the prevailing south-westerly wind exposure.

Further inland, the Bonvilston ridge forms a strong landscape element running across the centre of the Vale, reflected in views southwards across the Vale and northwards and into the South Wales Valleys.

The Vale contains a number of historic thatched cottages, typically in rural village settings, historic farm houses, distinctive field patterns (for example around Llancafán, whose landscape setting is also picturesque). Hensol Forest is distinctive, with a strong sense of enclosure and solitude, despite the close location of the M4 motorway to the north.

Indeed background traffic noise intrudes into parts of the northern and south eastern edges of the Vale, as well as that from the general urban area of Bridgend. Whilst the character is predominantly rural, there are a number of visually prominent built features that contrast this. These include: the power station and adjacent cement works at Aberthaw; Cardiff International Airport to the west of Barry where the frequent movement of aircraft impacts upon the tranquillity of the area; the nearby Royal Air Force station at St Athan which is used for operational training purposes; and the trading estate at Llandow which occupies the site of a former Second World War airfield, including a racing track.



Glamorgan Heritage Coast. © TACP



Pendoylan Moors from Pendoylan. © TACP



Idealised rural scene in the Vale: the village pond at St. Brides Major. © LUC



Lower Thaw Valley (the power station chimney is on the horizon, left). © TACP



Lias slopes in the northern Vale, looking towards Bridgend. ©TACP



View north from near Gwarne-y-Steeple ©LUC

Geological Landscape influences

This broad tract of rolling lowland terrain is flanked to the north by the deeply dissected upland plateaux of the South Wales Valleys and to the south by the Bristol Channel. Higher ground, all under 140m altitude, includes the linear ridge of Cefn Hirgoed, north of the M4, Pantylladron near Cowbridge and St Hilary Down. The area is dissected by several rivers, including the Ely that drains south-eastwards into Cardiff Bay, and the Ogmore and Ewenny which drain south-west and are confluent at the coast near Ogmores-by-Sea. The central part of the area is drained by a network of water courses including the Kenson and Thaw which are confluent near the coast between East Aberthaw and West Aberthaw.

Bedrock geology is dominated by rocks that range from Lower Devonian to Lower Jurassic and record sedimentation in both terrestrial and marine environments. The oldest rocks comprise Devonian conglomerates, sandstones and siltstones which form part of the Old Red Sandstone and record deposition in alluvial fan and river environments. These rocks crop out in the core and northern limb of the Cardiff-Cowbridge Anticline where they are exposed at surface around Stalling Down and Maendy. The Upper Devonian rocks are conformably overlain by a thick sequence of Lower Carboniferous strata that comprise a range of limestone-dominated formations. These rocks form escarpments on both the northern and southern limbs of the Cardiff-Cowbridge Anticline and crop out westwards

along a broad ridge of high ground as far as Porthcawl in the adjacent Swansea Bay, and eastwards to the inliers east and west of Wenvoe in by Cardiff. Triassic rocks crop out extensively to the north-east of Bridgend and around Llanharry, as well as farther south in the vicinity of Pendoylan, Cowbridge and Bonvilston. These rocks include mudstones and sandstones. The overlying marine sequence of Lower Jurassic shales and limestones crops out over a large area around Bridgend and forms a broad, dissected table-land over much of the area to the south and west of Cowbridge. These rocks also form the spectacular coastal cliffs along the southern margin of the area, and one section between Pant y Slade and Trwyn y Witch is a geological SSSI.

Glacial landforms and deposits are mostly attributed to the last glaciation with the principal glacial deposit comprising a variable thickness of till (boulder clay) which commonly forms a characteristic hummocky topography of irregular mounds and ridges, frequently with intervening kettlehole depressions formed by the melting of buried ice masses. The till forms extensive spreads in the northern part of the area where it is generally regarded as forming part of a terminal moraine at the southern limit of a Glamorgan piedmont glacier. Sands and gravels outwashed from the melting ice front are preserved locally as terrace-like features in the main river valleys, for example in the Ogmere Valley between Bridgend and Ewenny, and in the Thaw Valley between Howe Mill Farm and Gigan Mill.

In post-glacial times, rising sea-levels have caused progressive erosion of the coastal cliffs. Evidence of relatively rapid cliff-line retreat is provided by the impressive hanging valleys of Cwm Mawr and Cwm Bach, as well as by partly eroded historical fortifications and the fallen blocks of Jurassic rock that litter the wave-cut platform and foreshore. The cliffs often contain a rich fossil assemblage, and display one of the classic British examples of lateral changes in ancient sediments.

Soils are mainly well drained silts or loams, with some deep clays fringing watercourses.

Landscape Habitats influences

The Vale of Glamorgan is dominated by generally low-lying, undulating farmland (both arable and pastoral) on generally well draining brown-soils. The arable element is noticeably more prevalent towards the south nearer to the coast. Hedgerows which in many cases are well treed together with in-field trees and smallish deciduous woodland areas provide more ecological interest to the agricultural landscape.

Marshy Grassland is notably absent from this landscape due to the well draining soils. There is, however, one concentration of this habitat in a linear feature north of the M4 towards the north-west at Cefn Cribwr, Cefn Hirgoed and Brynnau-Gwynion, the former of these areas being designated as a SSSI and SAC and the latter as a SSSI together with other valuable grassland areas.

There are very few large areas of woodland though smaller linear deciduous woodland areas follow watercourses, this being a particular feature towards the east, with Nant Whitton woods being particularly noteworthy due to SSSI designation. Some small blocks of coniferous plantation are also present on valley slopes but nowhere is coniferous plantation particularly dominant except in Hensol Forest.

A number of watercourses cross the area, the most significant being the River Ely towards the east. The settlement of Bridgend is a noteworthy feature, together with a number of smaller settlements scattered throughout the Vale.

Much of the west coast is designated as a Site of Special Scientific (SSSI), reflecting the coastal biodiversity. Habitats include species rich neutral, calcareous and maritime grassland, with a number of nationally rare species. The area at Dunraven Bay is additionally designated as a SAC due to the presence of the rare plant, Shore Dock. Further inland, the Carboniferous Limestone outcrop near St Bride's Major supports limestone heath and calcareous grasslands, containing considerable invertebrate interest. The East Aberthaw Coast SSSI on the south coast is also nationally valued for its range of coastal habitats including limestone cliffs, shingle spits, saltmarsh and relict sand dunes.

The land use is mixed – with dairy and sheep pasture, pony paddocks, arable and some pig rearing and rough grazing on the cliff tops in the west. The landscape in the south west is defined by large arable fields with little tree cover apart from occasional conifer shelterbelts around buildings. In contrast, the eastern half of the Vale contains frequent woodland clumps and in-field trees, along with riparian woodlands and small plantations on valley slopes. Added to the often thick hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees, this creates the impression of a well-wooded landscape.

Historic Landscape influences

The rural landscape of nucleated villages surrounded by rich agricultural land has a distinctive historic character. Notably, in the centre of the coastal plateau, the Llanccarfan Valley is recognised as a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest, as one of the best surviving and complete examples of the defining historic character of the wider Vale.

The earliest archaeological features are prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments with round barrows, burial chambers and stone cairns. Iron Age hillforts, such as Castle Ditches east of Llanccarfan, also provide evidence for early settlement throughout the area.

Today's historic landscape was greatly influenced by strong monastic and Anglo-Norman influences. The foundation stone for a 6th century monastery at Llanccarfan survives, despite the monastery being destroyed by the Danes in AD 988 and possessed by the Normans in the 11th century. Llantwit Major was another Early Christian foundation of considerable note. Other Norman remains include prominent castles and moated sites, such as at Penmark and Bridgend.

Many of the settlements in the Vale are centred on large medieval churches, around which villages developed. The value of the land has long been exploited for agriculture, with whitewashed medieval farm buildings with pitched roofs and small windows being particularly distinctive. The area's small woodlands, hedgerows and trees are also of considerable age.

Today's settlement remains largely true to the area's historic pattern of development; with many villages focused on a church or village green. However, many of the Vale villages are remarkable for their expansion, marred by alien architectural styles of the 'executive housing' of the 1970s and 1980s. The settlements are linked by a network of rural lanes, which are often sunken at entry points to settlements. In addition to whitewash, traditional buildings are constructed of distinctive grey limestone or white/cream/coloured render.

Irregular and regular medium to large fields are bounded by a strong network of hedgerows, hedgebanks and frequent hedgerow trees. Cliff-top land in the west is enclosed by dry stone walls.

Cultural Landscape influences

The two largest towns, Cowbridge and Bridgend, differ greatly in cultural character. Astride the former Roman road, the historic core and architecture of the ancient borough and market town of Cowbridge survives largely intact but is becoming increasingly hemmed in by modern development. It has coalesced with Llanblethian, and together they have become an affluent settlement as if Wales' very own Home Counties, with semi-suburban residential areas, 4x4 vehicles, boutiques, upmarket restaurants and jewellers, being noticeably contemporary cultural phenomena. Vale villages and settlements are popular living places for those who commute to nearby Cardiff and other larger towns for work.

The historic origins of Bridgend are all but subsumed by late C20th growth, with large housing estates and industrial and business parks, a function of the town's proximity to the M4. A notable cultural development is the Macarthur Glen outlet park across the motorway from the Sarn Park services. To the north of the motorway, there is similar, though as yet smaller scale, development around Pencoed, Pontyclun and Llanharan. A wind farm forms a prominent skyline landmark along this stretch of the road.

In the north, Peterston-super-Ely is a commuter dormitory, whose modern character of extensive housing estates is contrasted by the planned but uncompleted Wyndham Park (aka Glyn Cory Garden Village). The once small historic village of Wenvoe is now a prosperous commuter settlement whose past embraces the Neolithic chambered cairn of St Lythans, late mediaeval field patterns and church, small farming village, farmsteads, limestone and haematite quarries, grand but uninspired castellated mansion now a golf club, disused civil airfield and the 750 ft. high Wenvoe TV and radio transmitter mast.

Llantwit Major was one of the first Christian settlements in Wales and a centre of theological learning. Today it's industrial estate, at its eastern edge, provides a very different centre of activity. However it remains a popular visitor destination for its historic character, its maze of little lanes and old-world shops, narrow streets, picturesque stone cottages and ancient inns. The mediaeval St Illtud's Church dominates its immediate surroundings. The presence of Iron Age hill forts, a Roman villa, mediaeval grange and fine Tudor buildings combine to reinforce the richness of the large village's attributes.

In the south, there are a number of large scale contemporary features. They include Cardiff International Airport, the new railway station both serving it and reflecting the local authority's efforts to encourage alternative transport systems, and the development of the RAF St Athan base as a defence training academy and technical research establishment. Llandow Industrial Estate and Car Racing Circuit contrast with the prevailing cultural character, whilst the Vale Hotel, Golf and Spa Resort are expanding into the parkland of Hensol Castle, that itself is being converted into conference centre and hotel. Developments and associated roads and traffic act erode the rural landscape.

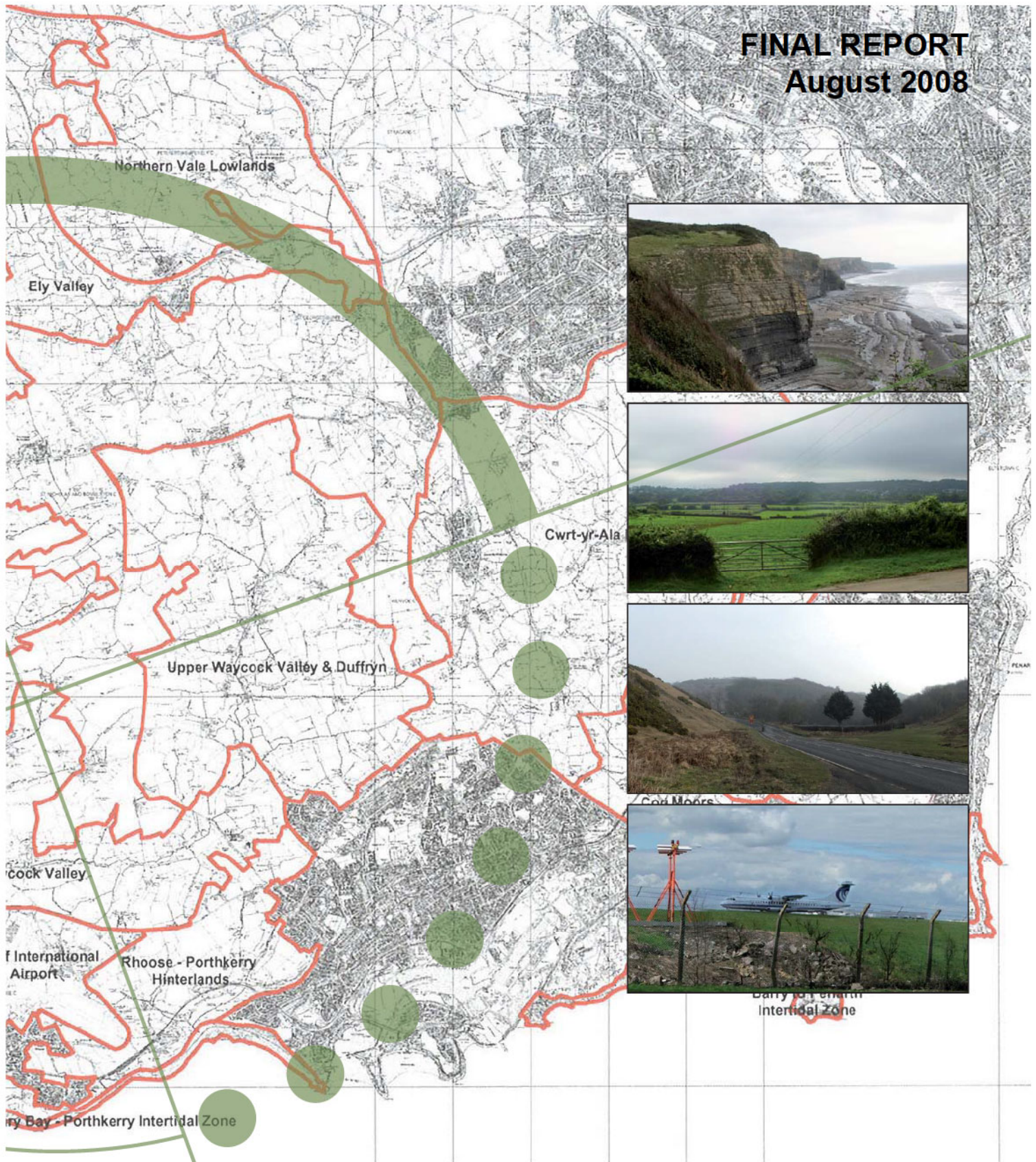
Dyffryn Gardens and house is a popular visitor destination. The Gardens (designed by renowned landscape practitioner Thomas H. Mawson) are being restored. Less visited is the designed landscape around the mediaeval castle of Fonmon.

The coastal settlements and beaches of Southerndown, Ogmore and St Bride's Major have long been popular for day visits from the principal local towns.

APPENDIX D: RELEVANT LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

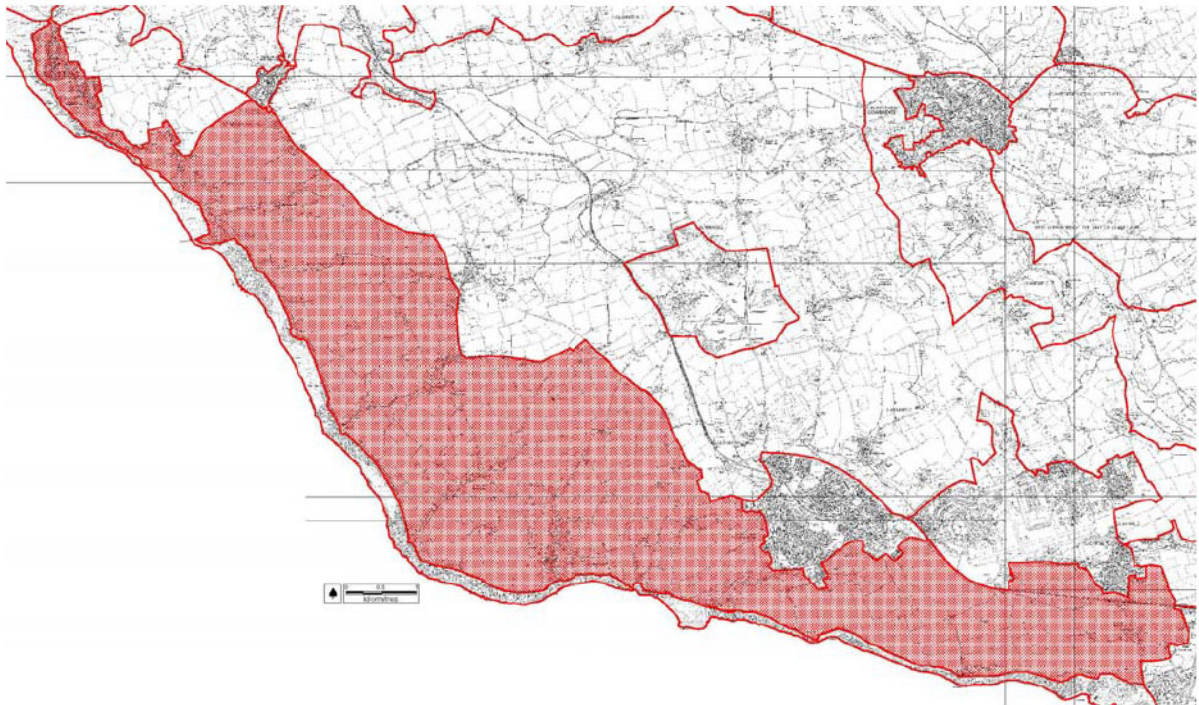
Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council DESIGNATION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

FINAL REPORT
August 2008



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 7 - HERITAGE COAST HINTERLAND

Plan



Photographs



Coastal hinterland near St Donats



Windblown vegetation near St Donats

Description

An area of broad, low dissected plateau between the cliff top (LCA 3) and running inland to a line approximately to the B4265 road. Essentially part of the western Vale plateau that exhibits a coastal influence in terms of windblown vegetation, sense of exposure and glimpses down into the Bristol Channel and beyond across to Exmoor and Somerset.

Geological Landscapes

An area of dissected plateau (aspect area GL863) with a series of small truncated valleys with associated small streams eg: Pant y Slade, Pant Llawn-dwr, Cwm Nash and Cwm Macroes.

Landscape Habitats

A mosaic of lowland landscape habitats, grassland, woodland, small streams, ditches and hedgerows (aspect area LH908). The main areas of woodland are associated with the series of small valleys that dissect the plateau eg: Cwm Mawr, St Donats.

Visual and Sensory Landscapes

Part of a wider area of rolling, lowland plateau, exhibiting the visual and sensory characteristic of a coastal edge location. A mixture of medium to large fields, often bounded by well managed hedgerows. Some local variations such as at Southerndown, where stone walls are used to bound the fields. The sense of a coastal landscape with windblown vegetation, exposure and views of the sea.

Historic and Cultural Landscapes

Part of the larger southern Vale agricultural landscape (aspect area HL036) which includes a number of small nucleated villages eg: St Bridges Major, St Donats and Monknash. Includes Dunraven Park, which is included on the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, which itself includes the Dunraven Castle hill fort on Witches Point which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and is also the site of the Heritage Coast Visitor centre. It also includes the majority of the Heritage Coast designated area.

Key Policy and Management Issues

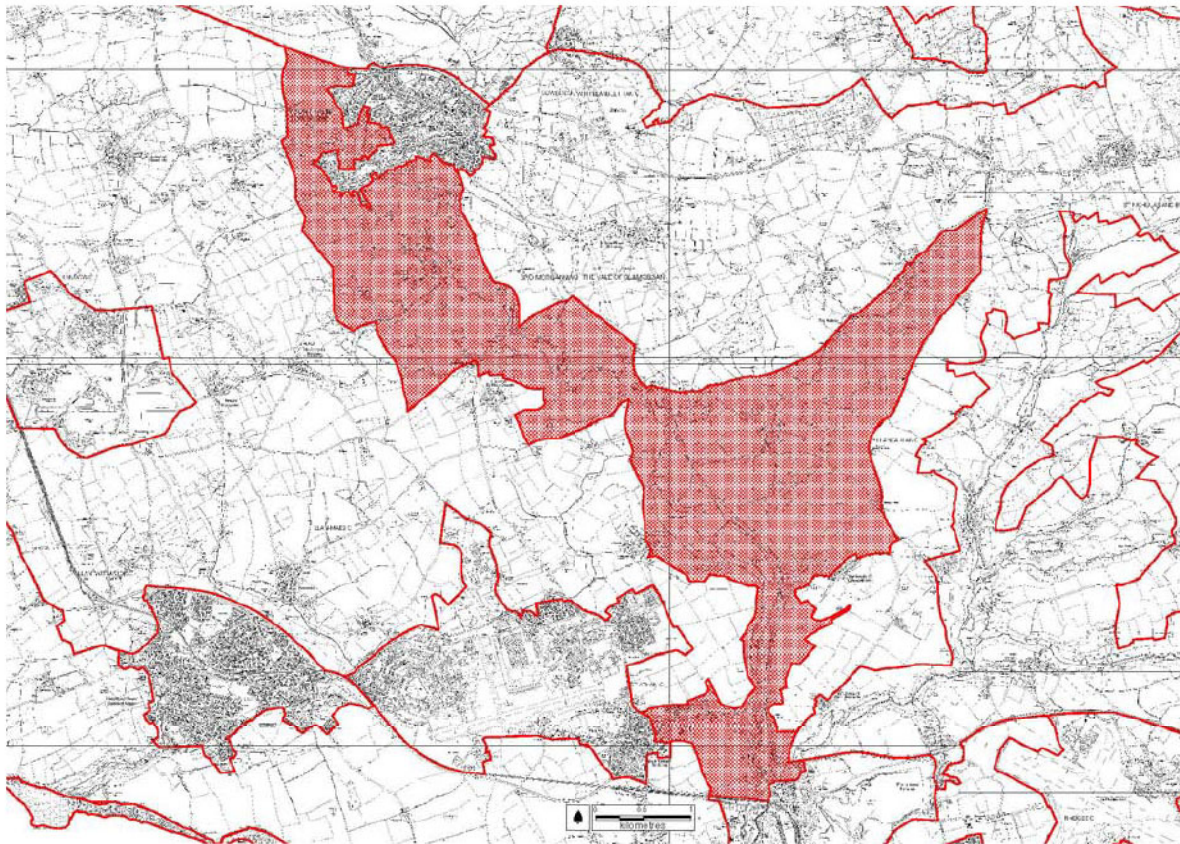
- Management of field boundaries to retain integrity of the agricultural landscape.
- Management of woodlands in the distinctive truncated valleys.
- Intensive farming reducing interest in the landscape.
- Management of parking and access to the coast.
- Protection of the designated Heritage Coast landscape.
- Erosion of character through development.

LCA 7 Heritage
Coast Hinterland

Aspect	Aspect Area	Area Name	Description	Overall Evaluation	Evaluation Criteria									Management Issues
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological	GL 514	Thaw-Waycock	Active lowland river-flood plain system	Moderate	M	L	L	L						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
	GL 747	Ogmore-St. Brides	Other	Outstanding	H	O	O	O						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
	GL 863	Llanwit-St. Athan	Lowland plateau	Moderate	M	M	M	M						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
Landscape Habitats	LH 523	Coastal grasslands & Cwms	Mosaic	Outstanding	O	O	U	U	U	H	O	O		Ensure coastal grasslands are managed appropriately.
	LH 582	Ogmore-Llantwit Arable Belt	Mosaic	Moderate	M	L	M	U	L	M	L	H		The provision of set aside buffer strips at the edges of the arable fields and sympathetic management of field boundaries would increase biodiversity interest.
	LH 839	Aberthaw	Mosaic	Moderate	M	M	U	U	U	U	M	M		Unassessed
	LH 897	Boverton	Arable	Outstanding	M	M	H	U	L	U	M	M		Sympathetic management to encourage biodiversity interest at the margins of cereal crops would be beneficial.
Visual and Sensory	VS 805	Lias Plateau	Open Rolling Lowland	Moderate	M	M	M	U						Intensive farming reducing interest in landscape. Introduce cover and interest into landscape.
	VS 890	Heritage Coast Hinterland	Open Rolling Lowland	Outstanding	O	H	O	H						Some erosion of character through development. Manage area as Heritage Coast strongly restricting development.
Historical Landscapes	HL 002	Southern Vale Communication Corridor	Communications	Unassessed										
	HL 034	Ogmore Down	Marginal Land	Unassessed										
	HL 035	Ogmore by Sea	Nucleated Settlement	Unassessed										
	HL 036	St Donat's, Monknash and St Brides Major	Regular Fields	Unassessed										
	HL 037	St Donat's Castle	Nucleated Settlement	Unassessed										
	HL 052	Llsworney and Llandough	Regular Fields	Unassessed										
	HL 058	Dunraven Park	Designed Parkland/Garden	Unassessed										
Cultural	CL 002	Heritage Coast	Institutions	High	L	H	M	U	H	H	L	H	U	Improve promotion as a leisure destination.
	CL 005	St Donat's and Atlantic College	Institutions	Outstanding	H	H	O	U	H	H	L	L	H	Both the College and the Arts Centre are well maintained.
	CL 006	Llantwit Major	Places	High	H	H	H	O	H	H	H	H	H	The essence of the place has already been compromised by inappropriate and unattractive development; care should be taken - if further development is to be allowed - to strive for appropriate aesthetic qualities compatible with the essence of the place in the form of mass, materials and siting
	CL 025	Ogmore-by-Sea	Customs	Moderate	M	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	M	Invest in physical fabric maintenance.
	CL 028	Rural Village Conservation Areas	Institutions	Outstanding	M	H	L	M	O	H	L	L	U	Ensure designation affords protection. Continue to police designated areas.
	CL 036	Dunraven Park & Bay	Customs	Low	L	M	L	U	L	U	U	L	L	Maintain a low-key management style.
	CL 039	Vale of Glamorgan Rural Landscape	Rural	High	H	O	L	U	O	H	L	H	L	Maintain consistent planning policies to preserve the landscape.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 19 - LOWER THAW VALLEY

Plan



Photographs



Lower Thaw Valley looking south towards St Athan

Description

A relatively broad, steep sided valley running southwards from Cowbridge to Aberthaw (see LCA 4). The valley sides are formed by the exposed deposits of the dissected plateau, and the steeper slopes are often covered in woodland. The valley suffers from the presence of overhead power lines running northwards from Aberthaw Power Station.

Geological Landscapes

Lower stretch of an active lowland river system (aspect area GL514) cut into the Lias plateau, with local alluvial fans where tributaries enter in the main river (eg: River Kenyon).

Landscape Habitats

The LCA has a range of lowland and riparian habitats associated with the valley floor. The northern section is wider, with more gentle, rounded valley sides and spurs. South of Llanbethery the valley narrows to where it adjoins LCA 4, here the valley sides are much steeper and cloaked in woodland.

Visual and Sensory Landscapes

A wide, sinuous floodplain, with a mosaic of pastoral fields, including areas of rougher vegetation, surrounded by a mixture of gappy hedgerows and fences following the pattern of drainage ditches on the valley floor. The steeper valley sides are visually covered in woodland (eg: Coed Llancadle, Oxmoor Wood, and East Orchard Wood). The eastern side of the valley is characterised by the distinct line of the disused railway that ran northwards from Aberthaw. There are a number of visual detractors, including overhead power lines and the quality of field boundaries. The developments at Aberthaw at the southern end of the valley visually dominant the LCA, and provide detractors to its overall quality.

Historic and Cultural Landscapes

The Thaw is the largest valley that crosses the Vale (aspect area HL049) and is reflected in its function as a routeway for railways and overhead power lines. It is associated with the wider agricultural development of the Vale landscape.

Key Policy and Management Decision

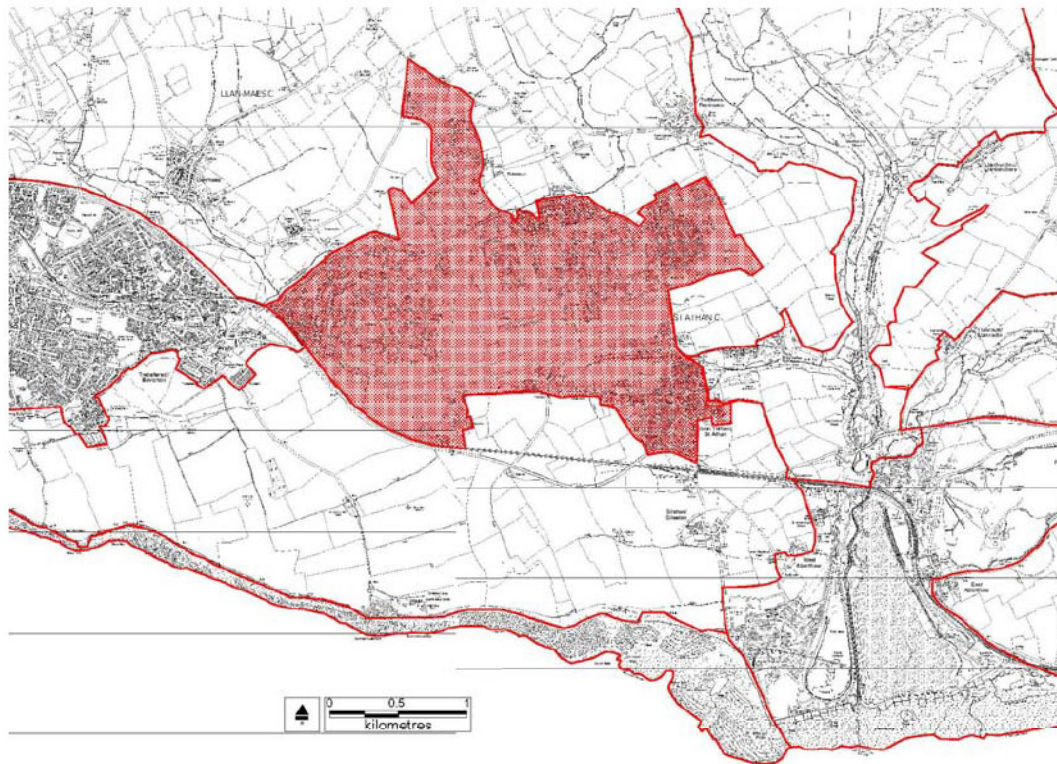
- Management of field boundaries and ditches to retain the integrity of the agricultural landscape.
- Longer term management of valley side woodlands.
- Implications of any future developments at Aberthaw on the valley landscape.
- Less intensive agricultural/grazing practices may be beneficial

LCA 19 Lower Thaw Valley

Aspect	Aspect Area	Area Name	Description	Overall Evaluation	Evaluation Criteria									Management Issues
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological	GL 282	St. Hilary	Other	High	M	M	M	L						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
	GL 492	Ewenry-Penilyn	Other	Outstanding	O	O	O	O						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
	GL 514	Thaw-Waycock	Active lowland river-flood plain system	Moderate	M	L	L	L						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
	GL 658	Penilyn Moor	Active lowland river-flood plain system	High	H	M	M	M						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
Landscape Habitats	LH 103	Cowbridge	Residential/Green Space	Low	U	U	U	U	U	U	L	M		Encourage 'wildlife-friendly' management practices.
	LH 118	Cowbridge East	Mosaic	Moderate	L	L	H	U	L	M	M	H		Less intensive agricultural management desirable.
	LH 350	Lower Thaw Valley	Mosaic	High	H	H	M	U	L	H	H	U		The aspect area appears to suffer from heavy grazing and a reduction in grazing intensity may be beneficial.
	LH 435	Cowbridge West	Improved Grassland	Moderate	M	L	H	U	L	L	M	U		Encourage less intensive land management practices, particularly field boundaries.
	LH 436	Cowbridge South - Thaw Valley	Mosaic	High	H	M	U	U	U	M	H	H		Unassessed
	LH 582	Ogmore-Llantwit Arable Belt	Mosaic	Moderate	M	L	M	U	L	M	L	H		The provision of set aside buffer strips at the edges of the arable fields and sympathetic management of field boundaries would increase biodiversity interest.
	LH 583	St Athan	Mosaic	Low	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	M		Unassessed
	LH 786	Aberthaw River Valleys	Mosaic	High	H	O	M	U	U	H	H	H		Existing management generally appropriate.
	LH 839	Aberthaw	Mosaic	Moderate	M	M	U	U	U	U	M	M		Unassessed
Visual and Sensory	VS 110	Lower Thaw valley sides	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	High	H	M	H	H						Woodland management needs improving. Retain and manage wooded slopes and improve boundaries.
	VS 139	Mid Thaw Valley	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	High	H	H	H	H						Retain and manage wooded slopes and protect and improve boundaries.
	VS 146	Central Vale Ridges and Slopes	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	High	M	M	M	M						Area in general well managed but need for enhancing woodland and hedgerow cover.
	VS 305	Lower Thaw valley floor	Open Lowland Valleys	Moderate	M	M	H	M						Hedgerows deteriorating and power lines unsightly. Improve hedgerows and access.
	VS 742	Aberthaw Quarry	Excavation	Low	L	L	M	M						Generally works and quarry screened as far as possible. Maintain and improve screening and ensure reclamation is appropriate.
	VS 805	Lias Plateau	Open Rolling Lowland	Moderate	M	M	M	M						Intensive farming reducing interest in landscape. Introduce cover and interest into landscape
	VS 890	Heritage Coast Hinterland	Open Rolling Lowland	Outstanding	O	H	O	H						Some erosion of character through development. Manage area as Heritage Coast strongly restricting development.
Historical Landscapes	HL 002	Southern Vale Communication Corridor	Communications	Unassessed										
	HL 022	A48 Lougher to Chepstow communication co	Communications	Unassessed										
	HL 032	Llancarfan	Irregular Fields	Unassessed										
	HL 040	Old Beaupre	Nucleated Settlement	Unassessed										
	HL 049	Thaw River Valley	Water & Wetland	Unassessed										
	HL 052	Llysowmey and Llandough	Regular Fields	Unassessed										
Cultural	CL 003	W Aberthaw Power Station, Cement Works	Industrial	Outstanding	H	H	U	U	H	U	U	U	O	Apparently well maintained as befits large industrial area.
	CL 008	Cowbridge and Llanblethian	Places	Outstanding	H	M	O	U	H	H	L	H	U	It appears that planning development is being restricted. Limit the development of light industry and housing.
	CL 028	Rural Village Conservation Areas	Institutions	Outstanding	M	H	L	M	O	H	L	L	U	Ensure designation affords protection. Continue to police designated areas
	CL 039	Vale of Glamorgan Rural Landscape	Rural	High	H	O	L	U	O	H	L	H	L	Maintain consistent planning policies to preserve the landscape.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 27 - ST ATHAN

Plan



Photographs



St Athan complex near Briarbank, St John's Valley

Description

Centred on the airfield and military base, the LCA is a mixture of RAF St Athan and the associated training and residential complexes associated with it. A generally flat area of landscape, the LCA relates to all of the area under military command.

Geological Landscape

Part of the wider, broad, open coastal plateau, the LCA is set around the 40 to 45m contour AOD. These are a number of small valleys cutting into this plateau eg: St John's Valley, Nant y Stepsau which run eastwards into the Thaw.

Landscape Habitats

Largely closely maintained improved grassland. Essentially a manmade landscape with a few examples of other lowland habitats.

Visual and Sensory Landscape

A flat, open, exposed area centred on the airfield railway complex and typical of its functional role. Major groups of buildings on the northern edge of the complex to the west and east of the runway.

Historic and Cultural Landscapes

Part of the network of airfields in this part of the Vale related to military developments within the area. Is to be the subject of extensive capital investment for military training, further extending this association.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Work closely with military organisations to ensure new developments are integrated into wider landscapes.
- Management of the interface between military zone and wider Vale landscape.

LCA 27 St Athan

Aspect	Aspect Area	Area Name	Description	Overall Evaluation	Evaluation Criteria									Management Issues
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological	GL 863	Llanwit-St. Athan	Lowland plateau	Moderate	M	M	M	M						Conserve existing geomorphological integrity
Landscape Habitats	LH 582	Ogmore-Llantwit Arable Belt	Mosaic	Moderate	M	L	M	U	L	M	L	H		The provision of set aside buffer strips at the edges of the arable fields and sympathetic management of field boundaries would increase biodiversity interest.
	LH 583	St Athan	Mosaic	Low	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	M		Unassessed
	LH 897	Boverton	Arable	Outstanding	M	M	H	U	L	U	M	M		The aspect area is intensively managed. Sympathetic management to encourage biodiversity.
Visual and Sensory	VS 456	RAF St Athan	Urban	Low	L	L	M	L						Sterile, suburban landscape treatment. Improve integration of development into landscape
Historical Landscapes	HIL 031	RAF St Athan	Military	Unassessed										
	HIL 052	Llyswoiney and Llandough	Regular Fieldscapes	Unassessed										
Cultural	CL 004	RAF Station, St Athan	Infrastructure	Outstanding	O	O	U	U	O	H	L	H	U	As a MoD establishment the station is well managed.
	CL 039	Vale of Glamorgan Rural Landscape	Rural	High	H	O	L	U	O	H	L	H	L	Maintain consistent planning policies to preserve the landscape

APPENDIX E: ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



Scale

Scale



Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Cirencester

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