

Appendix 6B – Landscape Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments

Contents

1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	Local Landscape Character Areas Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments	3
1.3	LANDMAP VSAA Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments	15

	Table 6B-1 – Local Landscape Character Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments	3
	Table 6B-3 – LANDMAP VSAA Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments	15

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This appendix sets out the baseline descriptions and landscape sensitivity assessments for the Local Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas (VSAA) which have been scoped into the LVIA as described in **Chapter 6: LVIA** of the ES.

1.1.2 The appendix is structured as follows:

- Section 1.2: Local Landscape Character Areas Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments; and
- Section 1.3: LANDMAP VSAA Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments.

1.1.3 The Appendices are to be read in conjunction with the following Figures:

- **Figure 6.3:** Landscape Character Areas; and
- **Figure 6.4:** LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas.

1.2 Local Landscape Character Areas Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments

1.2.1 As the Proposed Development is covered within the boundaries of two County Borough Councils, the Local Landscape Character Areas are defined as Landscape Character Areas (LCA) for those within Bridgend County Borough, and as Character Areas (CA) for those located within the boundary of Neath Port Talbot County Borough.

1.2.2 The baseline descriptions and sensitivity assessments for the Local Landscape Character Areas are set out in **Table 6B-1** below.

Table 6B-1 – Local Landscape Character Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments

LCA 1: Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry	
Summary Description Viewpoints 1, 2, 3 & 4	<p>Location: This LCA is located along the north-western fringes of the County Borough, to the west of Maesteg. The extents of the LCA within the Study Area are shown on Figure 6.3. This LCA contains the Western OHL section of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Key Characteristics: <i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly undulating upland landscape with a series of north-east facing slopes and hill summits ranging from 120 to 365 metres AOD. • Distinctive topography influenced by the heavily dissected Upper Coal Measures plateau greatly modified by the effects of glaciation. • Landscape crossed by a number of fast-flowing springs and streams, flowing into the Llynfi Valley below.

LCA 1: Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry

Woodland cover

- Dense coniferous forestry plantations on some slopes and hill summits (e.g. Garn Wen and Waun Lluest-wen) with linear broadleaved woodlands found along valley sides.
- Dark, straight plantation edges providing a stark contrast to the adjacent muted grasslands on rounded slopes.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Pastoral landscape with significant tracts of rough sheep and pony grazing on higher ground (particularly in the north).
- A strong pattern of irregular fields enclosed by hedgerows, tree belts and stone walls.
- Elevated land around Mynydd Ty-talwyn including large, regular semi-improved pastures divided by fencing.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued habitats including heathland, blanket bog, acid grassland, fen and marsh (with significant areas defined as SINCs).
- Broadleaved semi-natural woodland on slopes and valleys, and nationally important marshy grassland (supporting marsh fritillaries) at Cwm Risca Meadow SSSI.
- Patches of bracken, gorse and rush pasture found throughout.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Land west of Llangynwyd within the Margam Mountain Landscape of Special Historic Interest, with scheduled archaeological features including Y Bwlwarcu hillfort and the medieval Llangynwyd Castle.
- Cluster of nationally important medieval house platforms and settlement remains around Mynydd Ty Talwyn.

Settlement and road pattern

- Nucleated hill-top village of Llangynwyd (a Conservation Area), with prominent 15th century square church tower forming a local landmark.
- Farmsteads and small groups of dwellings thinly dispersed elsewhere.
- A small number of minor roads, tracks and footpaths cross through the landscape. The Ogwr Ridgeway Walk passes through the southern part of the LCA, and areas of higher ground are open access land.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A strongly rural and tranquil landscape despite the close proximity of nearby development at Maesteg.
- Tranquil qualities eroded by the presence of pylon lines, telecommunications masts and urban fringe land uses close to Maesteg, including a golf course.
- Southern ridgelines affording panoramic views across the County Borough, including wind farm developments on distant skylines.

LCA 1: Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervisibility with Maesteg a strong feature of the northern half of the LCA.
Sensitivity Assessment	<p>A section in the north of this LCA falls entirely within SLA 1 Foel y Dyffryn. There is high scenic quality and character within the LCA due to its strongly undulating topography and hill summits comprised of significant tracts of open grazing land. These pastoral landscapes offer panoramic views across the County Borough, which lend to high levels of tranquillity. On slopes and valleys, there are areas of broadleaved semi-natural woodland. The overall value is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>However, the presence of the urban fringe of Maesteg towards the northern part of the LCA along with views towards built development such as windfarms, pylon lines and telecommunications masts decrease the overall susceptibility. There is also dispersed development in the form of farmstead and small groups of dwellings on lower slopes. The susceptibility is therefore judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of High Sensitivity.</p>

LCA 3: Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry	
<p>Summary Description</p> <p>Viewpoints 8, 12, 13 & 14</p>	<p>Location: This LCA comprises an exposed upland landscape in the north of the County Borough, sitting to the east of Maesteg. The extents of the LCA within the Study area are shown on Figure 6.3. The LCA covers sections of the Eastern OHL of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Key Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Topography, geology and drainage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly rolling upland landscape with steep slopes and rounded hill summits, reaching a maximum of 556 metres AOD at Mynydd Caerau. • High land underlain by Upper Coal Measures with complex dip characteristics, forming distinctive rounded hill summits. Upper slopes draining into the Llynfi Valley comprise frequently bedded Middle Coal Measures, with some deposits of glacial boulder clay. • Functions as a water catchment for the adjacent Llynfi and Garw valleys, with many fast-flowing tributaries and waterfalls carving through the landscape to meet the rivers below. <p><i>Woodland cover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive tracts of mature larch and Norway spruce forestry on hill summits and slopes (including Garw Forest), forming prominent geometric blocks.

LCA 3: Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry

- Bands of semi-natural broadleaved woodland along streams (oak, ash and birch dominated) and field boundaries, with windsculpted, stunted oaks featuring on lower slopes.
- Agricultural land use and field patterns*
- Apart from forestry, the main land use is rough moorland sheep grazing, with enclosed semi-improved pastures on lower slopes with areas of purple moor grass/ rush pasture.
 - Large enclosures marked by fencing or lines of wind-sculpted trees.
- Semi-natural habitats*
- Valued habitats include patches of broadleaved semi-natural woodland, marshy grassland, bog, scrub, bracken, acid grassland and heathland, with a number of locally designated SINC's.
- Archaeology and cultural heritage*
- Disused spoil tips, mines and quarries on hillsides are evidence of the area's industrial past.
 - Prehistoric round cairns crown hill summits, including a nationally important cluster on Mynydd Caerau and further examples within Garw Forest. The remains of a medieval platform house are also found on Garth Hill.
- Settlement and road pattern*
- Very sparse settlement limited to a handful of scattered farmsteads on lower slopes.
 - The town of Maesteg lies to the west of the LCA within the Llynfi Valley, with the only road access into the landscape from the town terminating at the entrance to a former coal mining area below the Garw Forest.
 - A large proportion of the forest is open access land, accessible by forestry access tracks and public footpaths/bridleways. There is also a significant area of open access land at Mynydd Bach.
- Views and perceptual qualities*
- A strong sense of remoteness and bleakness, particularly in adverse weather conditions.
 - Expansive, panoramic views across the county borough and beyond (Brecon Beacons to the north, Bristol Channel and Somerset to the south).
 - Lower slopes have strong visual connections with the adjacent Llynfi and Garw valleys and their associated settlements.

Sensitivity Assessment

There are no SLA's located within this LCA. The landscape and scenic quality is considered to be moderate; the overall value is therefore judged to be *Medium*.

This LCA's remote upland character of traditionally grazed moorlands with its expansive panoramic views and sparse settlement are indicators of a landscape of high susceptibility. The LCA bounds the settlement of Maesteg to the west

LCA 3: Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry

which decreases the tranquillity along this urban fringe. The overall susceptibility is judged to be *Medium*.

In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of **Medium Sensitivity**.

LCA 6: Mynydd Llangeinwyr Upland

Summary

Description

Viewpoints 10 & 11

Location: This remote, upland LCA area is found in the north-eastern part of the County Borough, located between the Garw and Ogmore valleys. The sections of the route contained within this LCA are comprised entirely of underground cable connections, belonging to the Eastern UGC section of the Proposed Development. The extents of the LCA within the Study area are shown on **Figure 6.3**.

Key characteristics:

Topography, geology and drainage

- Exposed, elevated plateau landscape sitting dramatically above the Garw and Ogmore valleys, rising to 568 metres on the hill summit of Werfa.
- Upper Coal Measures geology greatly influenced by the effects of glaciation, with truncated streams and waterfalls plunging down hillsides to meet the larger valleys below.
- Prominent Craig Ogwr tors and ridgeline in the north-east of the LCA, displaying outcrops of the Coal Measures geology in cliffs and scree slopes (designated as RIGS).

Woodland cover

- An open landscape with little tree cover – the coniferous plantations at the head of the Ogmore Valley standing out prominently against the muted moorland backdrop.
- Lower-lying farmland in the south including linear belts of woodland along field boundaries and mixed plantation at Parc Cefnmachen.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Largely unenclosed uplands with rough sheep grazing.
- Small, irregular fields at lower elevations (particularly in the south), comprising semi-improved pastures enclosed by hedgerows, grown-out hedge banks and stone walls.

Semi-natural habitats

- Upland habitats including locally important tracts of acid grassland with patches of heathland, scrub, marshy grassland and flushes.

LCA 6: Mynydd Llangeinwyr Upland

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cwm Cyffog SSSI valued for its blanket bog, heathland and rare populations of White Beak-sedge. <p><i>Archaeology and cultural heritage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally important archaeological features on hill summits including a prehistoric round barrow, cairns and the defensive dyke of Bwlch yr Afan <p><i>Settlement and road pattern</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sparsely settled, with occasional hamlets, a few farms and the small village of Llangeinor (a Conservation Area) nestled on the lower southern slopes and linked by minor roads. • Road access limited to the southern part of the LCA, with the A4093 linking Ogmored and Bettws. • Uplands traversed by footpaths and bridleways, including the Ogwr Ridgeway Trail which passes through the southern part of the landscape. Most of the LCA is designated as statutory open access land. <p><i>Views and perceptual qualities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectacular panoramas across the Vale of Glamorgan and Bristol Channel to the south and the Brecon Beacons to the north. • Intervisibility with the adjacent valley settlements is a feature of the lower fringes of this LCA. • Telecommunications masts on the high summit of Werfa and above Blackmill, with long views westwards towards Ffynnon Oer windfarm in Neath Port Talbot. • An overall remote and wild landscape, with a great degree of exposure.
<p>Sensitivity Assessment</p>	<p>SLA 2 Northern Uplands applies to the whole of this LCA. The LCA has open landscapes, and a wild and remote character due to the area being mainly devoid of built development. From its upland areas, long-uninterrupted views that reach as far as the Bristol Channel and the Brecon Beacons can be experienced. The overall value is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>This LCA is characterised by exposed, elevated plateau landscapes rising above settlements in the Garw and Ogmored Valleys. The distinct outline of the plateau with its flat terrain and open landscape with minimal tree cover and absence of built development add to the susceptibility of this landscape as a receptor. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of High Sensitivity.</p>

CA 11: Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna

Summary

Location, Context and Physical Characteristics

Description

This character area follows the upland valleys of the Afan, Pelenna and minor tributaries. These deeply incised U-shaped valleys of sinuous alignment rise from approx 50m AOD at Port Talbot to approx 300m AOD at Abergwynfi. The Pelenna valley meanders southwards to its confluence with the westward flowing Afan. The valleys dissect the north/northeast dipping sandstone and coals of the South Wales pennant formation. The southern portion of this character area contains the start of the Eastern OHL section of the Proposed Development. The extents of the CA within the Study area are shown on **Figure 6.3**.

Viewpoint 7

Visual and Sensory Characteristics

- The valley floor is a mosaic of open grassland, very small pastures, rough bracken and scrub and substantial deciduous tree cover. Much of the deciduous cover is focused around the strong riparian vegetation of the river courses. The river is rocky in parts with a character that reflects high seasonal flow. The open valley sides are covered by grazed pasture, which is suffering from significant encroachment of bracken and scrub, and the development of coarse grasses. Most of the boundaries in the area are fenced, or with outgrown hedges and trees marking diminished enclosures.
- The enclosed valley squeezes in settlement, which relates to past industrial uses and features such as the dismantled railway with embankments, aqueducts and viaducts. This adds to the drama and interest of the valley. The A4107 runs the length of the Afan valley connecting the settlements and has dwellings along its length.
- There is substantial recreation use of surrounding woodland (Afan Country Park) and also along the valley floor following the course of the river and disused railway line. Access to the valley sides are limited to minimal footpath and bridleway access plus a single-track road. The coniferous plantation of the valley sides in places form abrupt edges.
- The valley has a dramatic and at times remote feeling away from the roads and settlement. Yet as views are generally contained within the valley by both vegetation and the topography, an intimate and sheltered nature is created.

Key Characteristics:

- Deeply incised valleys with sinuous alignment.
- Valley bottom has been significantly modified by past mining activities
- Mosaic landscape throughout, the valley bottom contains substantial deciduous tree cover.
- Settlements and features, such as viaduct and aqueduct, relating to past industrial influences.

CA 11: Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial recreational use within the valley, especially Afan Forest Park. • Mosaic of habitats, river valley systems dominating valley floor, higher ground significant ffridd habitat.
Sensitivity Assessment	<p>Although there are no SLAs located directly within this LCA area, it lies within the boundary of SLA 5 Mynydd y Gelli. The area is noted for its moderate scenic quality and occasionally remote atmosphere, particularly in locations away from roads and settlements. This is notable in the valley sides where the landscape transitions into the upland areas and access becomes limited to only a few footpaths and bridleways. This enhances the character area's value which is therefore judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>The enclosed valley landscape contributes to an intimate and sheltered nature, where views are contained by both the topography and vegetation. However, the landscape quality is also diminished by significant encroachment of bracken and scrub into grazed pasture. The Coniferous plantations in the valley sides are a lower value landcover that can be easily replaced.</p> <p>Within this LCA, features of built development such as the settlements that take up the valley floor and traces of past industrial uses such aqueducts and viaducts decrease the susceptibility of the landscape. The A4107 is a prominent feature in the Afan Valley, connecting various settlements. The presence of dwellings along this route reinforces the developed character of the valley floor. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Low</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of Medium Sensitivity.</p>

CA 13: Foel Trawsnant	
Summary Description	<p><i>Location, Context and Physical Characteristics</i></p> <p>This area of upland grazing ranges from approx 220m AOD to 371m AOD at the summit. It is bounded to the east by the County Borough boundary, to the south by the woodland of Mynydd Penhrydd and to the north by the Afan Valley. The geology of the area is dominated by the striking north and northeast dipping sandstones and coals of the South Wales pennant formation Llynfi-Brithdir Beds. On the gentler slopes of the Afon Afan the underlying geology is boulder clay. The extents of the CA within the Study Area are shown on Figure 6.3.</p> <p><i>Visual and Sensory Characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This upland grazed landscape has simple cover of unenclosed sheep grazed coarse grass and continues beyond the assessment area to the east. It is

CA 13: Foel Trawsnant

	<p>bounded by woodland creating a strong edge and preventing views into this area from the surrounding valleys. Minor valleys holding minor watercourses, as well as house platforms on higher ground add visual interest to an area, which generally feels bleak and exposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no dwellings or structural development present and the only public access is via a footpath and bridleway. Significant tracts of land surrounding access routes have been provisionally designated open county. <p><i>Key Characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An area of unenclosed upland grazing ranges from approx 220m AOD to 371m AOD. • Simple grass cover which extends beyond the county boundary. • Upland habitats including upland heath and acid flushes. • Bleak and exposed character..
<p>Sensitivity Assessment</p>	<p>This CA is located entirely within the Foel Trawsnant SLA. There is moderate scenic quality within the LCA the overall value is therefore judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>The rural upland character containing no dwellings and access limited to PRowS are indicators of a landscape of high susceptibility. The landcover comprising rough grass are indicators of a landscape of lower susceptibility. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be Medium Sensitivity</p>

CA 14: Foel Fawr

<p>Summary Description</p>	<p><i>Location, Context and Physical Characteristics</i></p> <p>This area is comprised of coniferous woodland on the valley side in the upper reaches of the Afan, adjacent to the County Borough Boundary to the south and abutting Croeserw to the east. The area ranges from approx 200m AOD to 350m AOD at its peak. The geology of the area is dominated by the north and north east dipping sandstones and coals of the South Wales pennant formation Llynfi-Brithdir Beds. Giving way to boulder clay on the gentler slopes of the Afan. The extents of the CA within the Study area are shown on Figure 6.3.</p> <p><i>Visual and Sensory Characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landform of this hillside creates a sharp intervention into the Afan valley, reducing views and exaggerating the sense of enclosure within the valley. Cover is continuous mixed coniferous woodland, which forms harsh edges against open land and the adjacent lowland. This is especially
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CA 14: Foel Fawr	
	<p>apparent around the settlement of Croeserw, to which the character area provides a backdrop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is extensive public right of way across the area with numerous paths and tracks. <p><i>Key Characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tract of coniferous woodland on dominant topographical feature which develops enclosure in Afan Valley. • Woodland creates an abrupt edge against open ground. • Creates significant backdrop to the settlement of Croeserw..
Sensitivity Assessment	<p>This CA is not located within any SLAs. The area is characterised by a cover of mixed coniferous woodland, which forms abrupt edges with areas of open land and the adjacent lowlands (around the settlement of Croeserw), which leads to an overall value that is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>This LCA provides a backdrop to the settlement of Croeserw. Its hillside creates a sharp intervention into the Afan Valley, limiting views to those orientated inward and creating a sense of enclosure within the valley. There is an extensive network of PRoWs and tracks, which reduce the tranquillity within. The overall susceptibility is therefore judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of Medium Sensitivity.</p>

CA 15: Mynydd y Gelli	
Summary Description Viewpoint 10	<p><i>Location, Context and Physical Characteristics</i></p> <p>The exposed upland rolling hillsides and valleys, rise from approx 250m AOD in the upper reaches of the Afan valley, which forms the northern fringe of the area, to 555m AOD to the south. The area is defined to the south by the County Borough boundary, although the character of the landscape continues beyond the assessment area. This character area covers a portion of the Eastern OHL of the Proposed Development. The extents of the CA within the Study area are shown on Figure 6.3.</p> <p><i>Visual and Sensory Characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area contains a number of small valleys, tributaries to the Afan. The topography creates an imposing presence, which is enhanced by its simple cover of predominantly coarse grasses. The area provides a contrast to the more complex landscapes of surrounding areas creating a sense of exposure and wilderness after the enclosure of the valley.

CA 15: Mynydd y Gelli

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A4107 skirts the northern edge of the area, running along the contours of the slope, acts as a processional entrance into valley and providing the only significant access within the area. A number of footpaths provide additional access and significant areas around these have been provisionally designated open county. <p><i>Key Characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dramatic topography and simple landcover creates an imposing presence. Exposed and open landscape distinct from closed and complex adjacent areas. The A4107 skirts the area.
<p>Sensitivity Assessment</p>	<p>This LCA is located within SLA 5 Mynydd y Gelli. The area is characterised by its imposing topography, which is defined by rolling upland hillsides and valleys with bare landscapes that have a simple cover of predominantly coarse grasses. The openness of the landscape contributes to its distinctive character which contrasts it against the more complex landscapes of its surrounding areas. These features contributes to its high scenic quality, which leads to an overall value that is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>This LCA's rural upland character containing no dwellings with very limited options for access (limited to PRoWs and the A4017) are indicators of a landscape of high susceptibility. However, the presence of wind turbines on exposed areas at the Upper Ogmores Wind Farm lower this landscape's susceptibility. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of High Sensitivity.</p>

CA 18: Mynydd Resolfen, Craig-y-Llyn & Mynydd Ynyscorrwg

<p>Summary Description</p> <p>Viewpoint 9</p>	<p><i>Location, Context and Physical Characteristics</i></p> <p>This extensive plateau constitutes much of the high ground between the Neath and Afan valleys. Rising from approx 50m AOD in Neath valley to 600m AOD in the east. The extent of the area is defined by the open landscape of the adjacent valleys to the north and south and by the County Borough boundary to the east. The underlying geology is of the South Wales pennant formations. The steep upland slopes of north and northeast dipping sandstones and coals of the Llynfi-Brithdir Beds and the higher plateau of Hughes Beds sandstone. Steep, deep U-shaped tributaries of Afon Afan, with southwest and west facing cirques at their heads and the tributaries of the Nedd with north facing cirques, dissect the plateau. Across the area shafts, mines and quarries disrupt the</p>
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CA 18: Mynydd Resolfen, Craig-y-Llyn & Mynydd Ynyscorrwg

underlying geology, as do landslips on hill slopes of the plateau. Above Glyn-Neath; south and southwest dipping Productive Coal formation of Llynfi Beds, is dissected by a NNW – SSE fault, which controls the north draining tributaries of the Nedd. There is considerable disturbance from opencast. The extents of the CA within the Study area are shown on **Figure 6.3**.

Visual and Sensory Characteristics

- This undulating plateau is dominated by coniferous forest, but also contains significant areas of open grazed land and moorland including Carn Caca and tributary valleys of the Afan. Smaller areas of open ground and exposed rock, primarily at summits or on steeper ground further break up the woodland. The landform is riven with numerous small valleys and watercourses, creating fissures in the hillsides and adding topographical interest to this landscape.
- Plantations of spruce with areas of larch characterise the woodland cover and also create an abrupt, at times, angular edge to open landscape. To its northern and southern extremes the woodland runs downs into the Neath and Afan Valleys.
- The areas of open landscape contains numerous minor landscape features; numerous cairns, disused mine works and other historic elements which add to the natural features present. The woodland conveys a homogenised appearance, lacking significant character and cloaking any underlying landscape elements. Bracken encroaches especially on higher ground and along watercourses.
- The woodland cover is a significant feature from both the Neath and Afan Valleys, dominating the skyline and bolstering the upland nature. Conversely the open land has little visual impact on the surrounding landscape, being surrounded by woodland or located beyond the ridge line of the valleys.
- There are no roads, settlements or significant structures in this area although the Coed Morgannwg Way and St Illtyds Walk provide access, along long distance trails. There are no settlements or dwellings, adding to a sense of isolation and on the open ground exposed wilderness, within this vast area. Significant tracts of the open landscape within the area have been provisionally designated open access land.
- Excavations have produced a dramatic feature above the settlement of Ginneath.

Key Characteristics:

- Expansive upland plateau separating the Afan and Neath Valleys, rising to 600m AOD.

CA 18: Mynydd Resolfen, Craig-y-Llyn & Mynydd Ynyscorrwg	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive coniferous woodland cover, which acts as distinct element in the adjacent valleys. • Large areas of open moorland and grazed upland. • Evidence of human history from prehistory to the Industrial Revolution. • Extensive geological SSSI designations contained primarily to the north. • Sustrans National Cycle Network passes through this upland.
Sensitivity Assessment	<p>This CA is not located within any Special Landscape Areas. Although it contains large tracts of open landscape and woodland, they are not of a distinct character. However, the significant areas of woodland cover in its upland areas dominate the skyline and are considered a significant feature. These features contribute to its high scenic quality, which leads to an overall value that is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>Access within this CA is limited due to the absence of roads, but it contains several long-distance trails. The area is devoid of settlements and significant structures, and significant tracts of land within its boundaries are designated as Open Access Land. This places its susceptibility to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of High Sensitivity.</p>

1.3 LANDMAP VSAA Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments

1.3.1 The baseline descriptions and sensitivity assessments for the LANDMAP VSAA are set out in **Table 6B-2** below.

Table 6B-2 – LANDMAP VSAA Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments

Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: CYNONVS473 – Mynydd baedan (Ref 15 - Figure 6.4)	
Summary Description	Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No. 15 on Figure 6.4 . The western OHL section of the Proposed Development lies within this VSAA.
Viewpoints 1, 2 & 4	LANDMAP Summary Description: Northeastern facing slopes, ranging from 120m to 350mAOD, of rough grazing with woodland blocks/forestry providing both structure and dominant mosaic pattern. Strong upland character reinforced by northeasterly views of Brecon Beacons. Views out down to urban area and within to scattered farmsteads take edge off what is essentially a wild /upland feel with some views over ridge south to sea adding to sense of place and

	experience of altitude/elevation. Minor expansion of Maesteg has reduced aspect area at change detection monitoring.
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): High Scenic quality (Q46): High Character (Q48): Moderate Overall Evaluation (Q50): High</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – The VSAA is located within SLA 1 Foel y Dyffryn, which contains the western OHL of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>High</i></p> <p>This is a large-scale landscape situated in a valley with undulating topography indicating a landscape of Medium susceptibility. The landscape pattern comprises a mosaic field pattern with scattered rural farm which would result in its increased susceptibility. However, there is infrequent movement within the character area resulting in a remote character however views out towards the settlement of Maesteg reduces the visual tranquillity indicating a <i>Medium</i> susceptibility.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of High Sensitivity.</p>

Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: CYNONVS351 – Maesteg (Ref 13 - Figure 6)	
Summary Description Viewpoints 3, 5 & 6	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 13 on Figure 6.4 and covers the settlement of Maesteg. The western UGC section of the Proposed Development is found within this VSAA.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Small town with mix of modern and traditional buildings in an upper valley setting between approximately 100m and 200mAOD, the elevation and close proximity of upland imparting a slight upland sense of place to the northern area of the town. The town centre dominated by traffic. Variable housing quality on outskirts, and modern developments. Some good views to upper valley sides and beyond across urban area in valley floor, particularly from the higher ground in the south looking north. Piecemeal recent expansions on edges, including prominent school.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): Low Scenic quality (Q46): Moderate Character (Q48): Low Overall Evaluation (Q50): Low</p>

	<p>Relevant Landscape Designations – There are no SLAs within this VSAA, however it shares a boundary with SLA 1 Foel y Dyffryn.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Low</i>.</p> <p>The settlement is of medium scale located within a valley indicating a medium susceptibility. The movement is constant with low tranquillity and contains generally inappropriate development indicating a low susceptibility. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Low</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of Low Sensitivity.</p>
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Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: NPTVS215 – Upland Settlements (Ref 1 - Figure 6.4)

<p>Summary Description</p> <p>Viewpoint 7</p>	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 1 on Figure 6.4. A small section of the eastern OHL section of the Proposed Development, is passes through the southern portion of this VSAA.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Predominantly ex-mining settlements of Dyffryn, Dulais and Amman valleys. Settlements are essentially linear in character strung out along the main valley roads. The original buildings are a mix of stone, red and yellow brick and render with slate roofs. Newer buildings tend to be render and pebbledash. The cores are difficult to define and have a limited number of commercial enterprises. Newer residential areas extend around the core sometimes lying awkwardly on higher ground. The towns as a whole have the appearance of being somewhat run down with some dwellings boarded up and abandoned.</p>
<p>Sensitivity</p>	<p>Value (Q26): Low Scenic quality (Q46): Low Character (Q48): Low Overall Evaluation (Q50): Low</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – There are no SLAs located within this VSAA, however it shares a boundary with SLA 5 Mynydd y Gelli towards its east.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Low</i>.</p> <p>This VSAA is made up of small-scale settlements found in a linear pattern along valley roads indicating low susceptibility. The sense of order is eroded as newer residential areas are found as extensions of the core and a lack of coherence among building materials used weaken the area’s character.</p>

	<p>The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Low</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of Low Sensitivity.</p>
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<p>Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: CYNONVS811 – Garth Hill (Ref 19 - Figure 6.4)</p>	
<p>Summary Description</p> <p>Viewpoint 14</p>	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 19 on Figure 6.4. A section of the eastern OHL section of the Proposed Development passes through the northern portion of this VSAA.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Westerly facing slopes (reaching from approximately 150m to 350mAOD) of relatively broad valley, - aspect brings views across urban area on valley floor- sharp boundary of urban/rural interface. Upland feel generated through elevation and rough grazing on softly rounded slopes with scattered farmsteads. conifer clad uplands of mynydd morgan dominates views. Change detection monitoring: Lower slopes are reclaimed/regenerated, allocated for development. Recent school conspicuous at edge of Maesteg has altered boundary.</p>
<p>Sensitivity</p>	<p>Value (Q26): Moderate Scenic quality (Q46): Moderate Character (Q48): Moderate Overall Evaluation (Q50): Moderate</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – There are no SLAs located within this VSAA.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>This is a large-scale upland landscape with an open land pattern indicating a low-medium susceptibility. There is infrequent movement within the character area resulting in a remote character however views out towards the settlement of Maesteg and the school at the edge of the settlement reduces the visual tranquillity indicating a medium susceptibility. There are also views out towards surrounding hillsides containing coniferous plantations. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be of Medium Sensitivity.</p>

Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: NPTVS547 – Mynydd y Gelli (Ref 6 - Figure 6.4)	
Summary Description	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 6 on Figure 6.4. Two sections of the eastern OHL section of the Proposed Development runs along the southern edges of this VSAA.</p> <p>Viewpoint 10</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Exposed upland rolling hillsides, rising from approx 250m AOD in upper reaches of Afan valley to 555m AOD, with small valleys running down its side - tributaries to the Afan. The land cover is predominantly coarse grasses. The A4107 skirts the northern edge of the area, running along the contours of the slope. The topography creates an imposing presence and with its simple land cover provides a contrast to the more complex landscapes of surrounding areas.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): High Scenic quality (Q46): Moderate Character (Q48): High Overall Evaluation (Q50): High</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – SLA 5 Mynydd y Gelli =is located within this VSAA.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>This is a large scale landscape in an upland setting with summits ranging in elevations and small valleys running down their sides, indicating a High susceptibility. The exposed rolling topography with its simple landcover contributes to this area’s imposing presence in contrast with the complex landscapes of surrounding areas which also lend to its High susceptibility. On the northern edge of the area, the A4107 runs along the contours of the slopes, bringing traffic movement to the area therefore reducing its susceptibility. Large wind turbines located on the exposed summits are prominent features of the skyline and contributes to visual clutter, reducing the area’s susceptibility as well. The overall susceptibility is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be High Sensitivity.</p>

Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: CYNONVS622 – Mynydd Llangeinwyr (Ref 17 - Figure 6.4)	
Summary Description	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 17 on Figure 6.4. The VSAA contains the eastern UGC section of the Proposed Development.</p>

Viewpoints 10 & 11	<p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Open upland ridge lying between approximately 250m and 550mAOD, land cover of rough grazing and bracken, with some old stone walls. Panoramic and sometimes dramatic views over upland and adjoining valleys. Some visual clutter of pylons slightly detracts from this otherwise wild/exposed typical upland area with a strong sense of place. Not remote as close to valleys and their associated urban areas.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): High Scenic quality (Q46): High Character (Q48): High Overall Evaluation (Q50): High</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – SLA 2 Northern Uplands is located within this VSAA.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>High</i></p> <p>The exposed upland area and strong ridgelines within this VSAA evoke a strong sense of place indicating a high susceptibility. The area also affords panoramic and dramatic views over uplands and adjoining valleys due to its high elevation. The character area generally has open landscapes that are generally devoid of development. Overall, susceptibility for this VSAA is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be High Sensitivity.</p>

<p>Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: CYNONVS813 – Garw and Caerau Forest (Ref 20 - Figure 6.4)</p>	
<p>Summary Description</p> <p>Viewpoints 8, 12 & 13</p>	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 20 on Figure 6.4. The eastern OHL section of the Proposed Development runs along the northern edge of this VSAA.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Upland landscape dominated by coniferous forest with small areas of rough grazing/open land interspersed. Strongly defined undulating topography with ridges and valleys. Limited views out to upland areas from edge of plantation across Garw Valley, down to Pontycymer, north to Mynydd Y Gelli and short views east to summit of Mynydd Bach.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): Moderate Scenic quality (Q46): Moderate Character (Q48): Moderate Overall Evaluation (Q50): Moderate</p>

	<p>Relevant Landscape Designations – There are no SLAs located within this VSAA, however it is located on the fringes of SLA 2 Northern Uplands.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>This is a large-scale upland landscape dominated by coniferous forest plantations interspersed among rough grazing and open land, indicating a medium susceptibility. Access being limited to footpaths and tracks lead to infrequent movement and contributes to a sense of tranquillity within the area, indicating a high susceptibility. The presence of large wind turbines and substation developments on exposed landscapes contribute to visual clutter, reducing the area’s susceptibility as well. Overall, susceptibility for this VSAA is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be Medium Sensitivity.</p>
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Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: NPTVS465 – Foel Fawr (Ref 5 - Figure 6.4)	
Summary Description	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 5 on Figure 6.4. The western OHL section of the Proposed Development runs through the VSAA adjacent to this, VSAA CYNONVS473 Mynydd Baedan. Although this VSAA contains no sections of the Proposed Development, it will have high levels of visibility of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Mixed coniferous woodland on hillside - extension of larger plateau, from approx 200m AOD to 350m AOD, this landform creates a sharp intervention into the Afan valley, reducing views and exaggerating the sense of enclosure. The area is heavily tracked and pathed and is in close proximity to the settlement of Croeserw to which it creates backdrop and an abrupt boundary.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): Low Scenic quality (Q46): Low Character (Q48): Moderate Overall Evaluation (Q50): Low</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – There are no SLAs located within this VSAA, however it is located on the eastern fringes of the Foel Trawsnant SLA.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Low</i>.</p>

	<p>This VSAA is a large-scale upland landscape dominated by mixed coniferous forest plantations that form hard solid edges with its adjacent open areas. The landscape’s poor coherence with the surrounding landscape, as well as the existence of a number of tracks and pathways, lead to a lower susceptibility. However, as there are no settlements or built development found within this VSAA, the landscape is considered to have moderate levels of susceptibility. Overall, susceptibility for this VSAA is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be Medium Sensitivity.</p>
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Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: NPTVS962 – Mynydd Nant y bar / Mynydd Blaenafan (Ref 9 - Figure 6.4)

<p>Summary Description</p> <p>Viewpoint 9</p>	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 9 on Figure 6.4. Although this VSAA contains no sections of the Proposed Development, it will have high levels of visibility of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Large area of undulating plateau running across the high ground between the Afan valley and Neath valley to the east of county borough. Rising from approx 50m AOD in Neath valley to 600m AOD. Numerous small valleys provide added topographical interest to this landscape which the conifers emphasise and add drama to. The area is almost entirely covered with coniferous plantation, mainly spruce, with larch which leads to a monotonous cover on the plateau tops. There are some areas of open ground and exposed rock, primarily at summits or steeper ground. There are no roads or settlements in this area although the Coed Morgannwy Way which almost dissects the area and provides access along a long distance trail. In many areas the abrupt forest edge sits uncomfortably with the surrounding open landscape. Cleared areas of forest are unsightly. Change detection 2014: Opencast mining active, and restored areas have become a feature but not particularly conspicuous from surroundings. Minor areas of broadleaf conversion.</p>
<p>Sensitivity</p>	<p>Value (Q26): Moderate Scenic quality (Q46): Moderate Character (Q48): Moderate Overall Evaluation (Q50): Moderate</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – There are no SLAs located within this VSAA, however it is located on the fringes of Mynydd y Gelli SLA.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p>

	<p>This VSAA is a large-scale area that is mainly dominated by coniferous plantations. The expanse of forest dominates the upland areas and provide a monotonous cover on its plateau tops, which lead to a high susceptibility. Additionally, there are no settlements or roads within the VSAA, with access limited to the Coed Morgannwy Way, a long-distance trail. Overall, susceptibility for this VSAA is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be High Sensitivity.</p>
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Visual and Sensory Aspect Area: NPTVS358 – Foel Trawsnant (Ref 2 - Figure 6.4)	
Summary Description	<p>Location: This Visual and Sensory area is referenced as No 2 on Figure 6.4. The western OHL section of the Proposed Development runs through the VSAA adjacent to this, VSAA CYNONVS473 Mynydd Baedan. Although this VSAA contains no sections of the Proposed Development, it will have high levels of visibility of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>LANDMAP Summary Description: Upland grazing ranging from approx 220m AOD to 271m AOD, with simple grass cover. The area is edged by woodland creating a strong edge and preventing views into this area from the surrounding valleys. The area contains minor valleys holding minor watercourses, as well as house platforms on higher ground. The area feels exposed and bleak. There are no settlements or dwellings and access is via foot and bridle paths. The area continues beyond the assessment area to the east. Change detection 2014: views to windfarm.</p>
Sensitivity	<p>Value (Q26): Moderate Scenic quality (Q46): Moderate Character (Q48): Moderate Overall Evaluation (Q50): Moderate</p> <p>Relevant Landscape Designations – This VSAA is located within the Foel Trawsnant SLA.</p> <p>The overall value is judged to be <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>This is a large-scale upland grazing land of simple grass cover, which does not contains any settlements or dwellings. Access to the area is limited to footpaths and bridleways, contributing to its high levels of tranquillity and remote qualities. Overall, the susceptibility for this VSAA is judged to be <i>High</i>.</p>

	In combination of value and susceptibility this landscape receptor is judged to be High Sensitivity.
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