

Zip Lines, Tower Colliery, Rhigos
Landscape Statement
(LVIA)



AMENDED DRAFT

Prepared for Zip World

by

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CONTENTS

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.0. LANDSCAPE BASELINE (1km radius)

Figure 1: LANDMAP Aspect Areas

Table 1: LANDMAP Matrix

Figure 2: Designations

Figure 3: Landscape character areas

3.0. VISUAL BASELINE (5km radius)

Figure 4: Visibility and Viewpoint Locations

Table 2: Viewpoints baseline

4.0. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Figure 5: Plan of Proposed Development

5.0. LANDSCAPE IMPACTS AND EFFECTS

Table 3: Summary of Landscape Impacts

6.0. VISUAL EFFECTS AND IMPACTS

Table 4: Summary of Visual Impacts

7.0. VIEWPOINTS AND PHOTOMONTAGES

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Appendix 1: Methodology

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. This Landscape Statement (Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment) has been prepared to accompany the Planning Application for the proposed development of four zip lines in three parts (Zips A, B & C), from Rhigos Mountain to Tower Colliery, plus associated parking, access and reception area. It has been undertaken by Bronwen Thomas Landscape Architect.

1.3. **Location:** The site is located in Rhondda Cynon Taff, between 0.5 and 1km to the west of the A4061 road as it winds down the scarp between Blaenrhondda and Hirwaun.

1.4. **Study areas:** A study area of **1km** on either side of the linear site has been taken for the **landscape** assessment. This includes part of Neath Port Talbot (NPT) CBC, as shown on **Figure 2**. For the **visual** assessment a study area of **5km** around the site has been assessed, which includes the southern border of Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) and parts of NPT in the west, as shown on **Figure 4**.

1.5. **Methodology: A full Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) is not required by the Planning Authority (RCT).** The methodology for this Landscape Statement is based on the guidelines in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third edition (GLVIA3) published jointly by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. It has been adapted to be commensurate with the site, the proposed changes and the LPA requirements. Annotated viewpoint photographs are used to illustrate the visual impacts. Appendix 1. gives brief details of the methodology used.

1.6. **Site visits:** Visits to identify viewpoints, visibility of site and locality were undertaken on 8th January, 17th January and 4th February 2019.

1.7. **Landscape Planning Policies:** The site is considered in the light of Welsh national planning policy and policies relating to the three Local Planning Authorities that the study area spans, namely Rhondda Cynon Taff, Neath Port Talbot and Brecon Beacons National Park.

1.8. The landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development are assessed relating the individual zip lines to landscape character areas (landscape assessment) and visible sections (visual assessment) as shown:

Zip line	Landscape character area	Visible section
Zip A	Scarp and cwms (Forested upland - indirectly)	Top section
Zip B	Scarp and cwms Forested foothills	Top section, and Central section
Zip C	Forested foothills Former opencast	Central section, and Lower section

1.9. **Amendments:** This Landscape Statement has been amended In October 2019 to take account of the revised alignment of Zip C to take a direct route to Tower Colliery, and the revised requirement for 50m. wide belts of tree felling on either side of the zips lines. An additional site visit was undertaken on 2nd October 2019.

2.0. LANDSCAPE BASELINE (1km radius)

LANDMAP

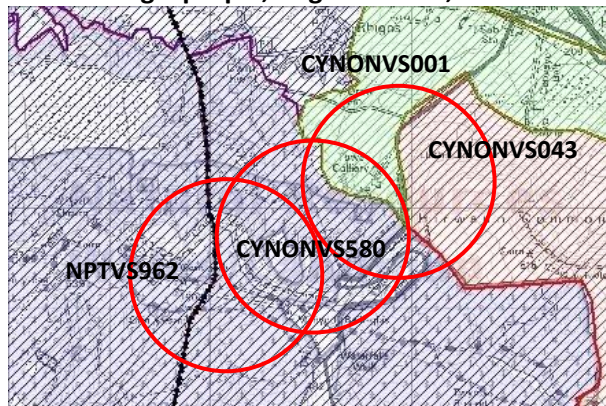
2.1. LANDMAP is a complete all-Wales GIS based landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent dataset. It comprises five spatial dataset layers known as aspects - Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape. LANDMAP is used as the baseline for defining the landscape character and assessing the landscape impact of the proposed development.

2.2. The relevant aspect areas and their overall evaluations of all five LANDMAP layers within 1km of the site are shown on **Figure 1.** and set out in **Table 1.**

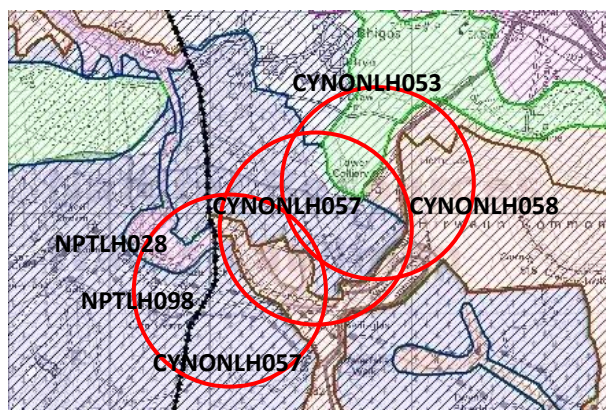
Figure 1: LANDMAP Aspect Areas

Study area = 1km radius red circles from top, centre and lower parts of the site

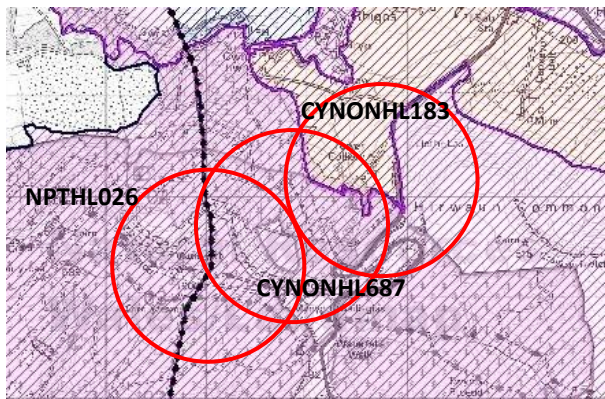
Outstanding = purple, High = brown, Moderate = blue, Low = green.



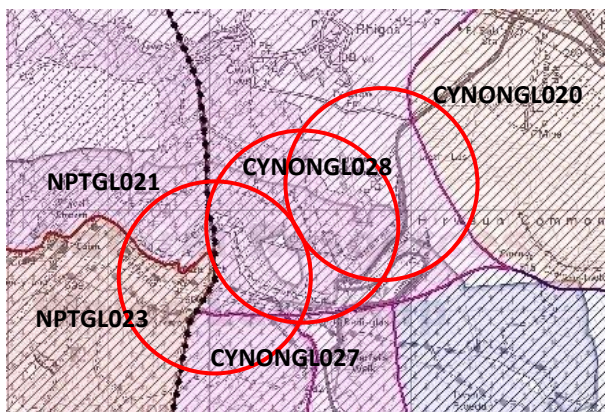
Visual & Sensory aspect areas



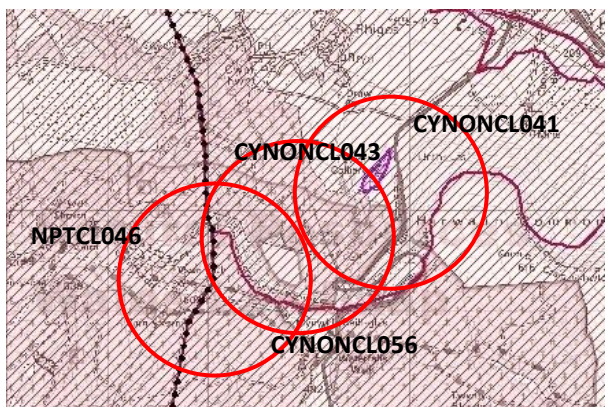
Landscape Habitats aspect areas



Historic Landscapes aspect areas



Geological Landscapes aspect areas



Cultural Landscapes aspect areas

2.3. Although the LANDMAP aspect areas provide a base for assessing the landscape resource, the large size of some of the aspect areas means that the information is not always specific or directly relevant to the study area. Where this is the case, it has been noted.

2.4. The LANDMAP data was last updated in 2013 or earlier and therefore more recent developments, such as the large Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm to the south of the study area, and the fact that Tower Colliery is now derelict, are not evaluated.

Table 1: LANDMAP matrix

Aspect Area no. & name	Classification (Level 3)	Overall evaluation
Visual & Sensory		
CYNONVS 001 Tower Colliery	Developed unbuilt land/excavation	Low
CYNONVS 430 Hirwaun Common	Upland plateau grazing	High
CYNONVS 580 St. Gwynno	Wooded upland & plateaux	Moderate
NPTVS 962 Mynydd Nant y bar/Mynydd Blaenafan	Wooded upland & plateaux	Moderate
Landscape Habitats		
CYNONLH 053	Improved grassland	Low
CYNONLH 057	Coniferous woodland	Moderate
CYNONLH 058	Mosaic	High
NPTLH 098	Coniferous woodland	Moderate
NPTLH 028	River corridors	Outstanding
Historic Landscape		
CYNONHL 687 Rhondda Uplands	Marginal land	Outstanding
CYNONHL 183 Tower Colliery	Reclaimed land	High
NPTHL 026 Afan Wallia	Woodland	Outstanding
Geological Landscape		
CYNONGL 028 Rhigos	Glacial mountain valley	Outstanding
CYNONGL 027 Upper Rhondda Fawr - W	Glacial mountain valley	Outstanding
CYNONGL 020 Upper Cynon Valley - W	Glacial mountain valley	High
NPTGL 023 Foel Fynyddau	Upland plateau	High
NPTGL 021 Blaengwath	Upland plateau	Outstanding
Cultural Landscape		
CYNONCL 056 Designated Landscape Areas	Other institutions	High
CYNONCL 043 Tower Colliery	Media	Outstanding
CYNONCL 041 The Rhigos	Sense of Place	High
NPTCL 046 Eastern High Lands: Resolven Mountain	Forestry	High

Designations

2.5. The following statutory and local designations lie within the study area, and are shown on **Figure 2**.

Craig y Llyn **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**: This statutory designation is due primarily to the geological interest, showing Westphalian stratigraphy and a fine example of a glacial cirque. It lies within both RCT and NPT CBC areas. Policy no. SP15/1(b) in NPT Local Plan relates to this site.

Craig y Llyn **Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS)**: This covers the same area as the SSSI in RCT (but not NPT). As a local designation, it is designated for its research and educational value. Policy AW8 - 185 in RCT Local Plan relates to this site.

Ffos Toncenglau **Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)**: This is a linear earthwork near the edge of the scarp in RCT.

Hirwaun Common **Special Landscape Area (SLA)**: This local designation covers all the scarp that forms the backdrop to the upper parts of the Cynon Valley. Policy no. NSA25.8 in RCT Local Plan relates to this site. Its reason for designation is stated as:

Prominence	Hillsides and tops of Hirwaun Common very prominent from A465 and BBNP
Spectacle	Very dramatic crags and steep high hillsides. Spectacular views from Rhigos road and Graig road
'Unspoilt'	Mainly traditional open commonland
Vulnerability	Vulnerable to skyline developments and erosion of wildness
Rarity	Some of highest points in heads of Valleys area, in scale and character with BBNP
Setting	Setting and intervisibility with BBNP

Hirwaun Common **Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC)**: This local designation covers the scarp and hillsides (other than SSSI) in RCT. Its interest lies in acid grassland and pockets of other habitats within the generally forested areas, such as blanket bog and heath. Policy no. AW8-10 in RCT Local Plan relates to this site.

Rhondda Uplands **Historic Landscape Conservation Area 030 (HLCA)**: This covers all the upland areas within the former Rhondda Borough area, including the south part of the study area.

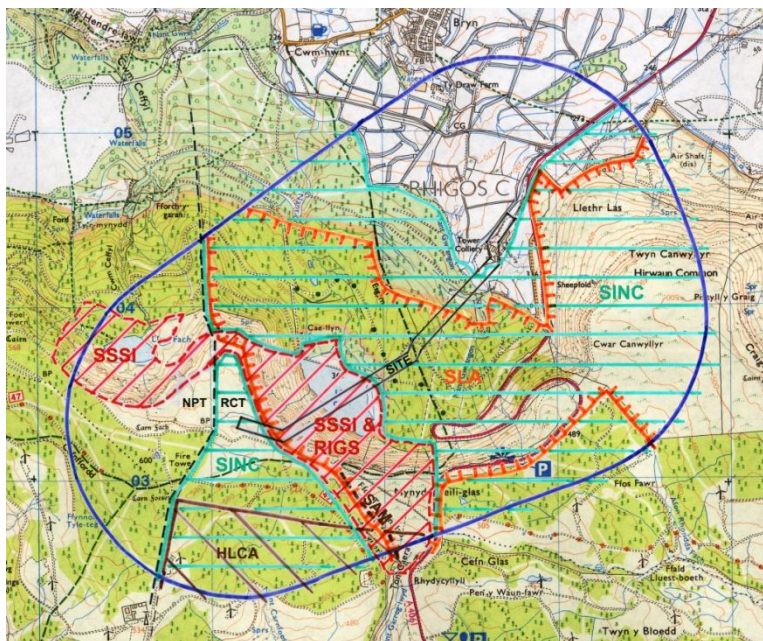


Figure 2: Landscape Designations

Public access

2.6. All the study area, apart from the northern section, is open access land comprising of forestry, open moorland and rocky slopes. Within the forestry there are some Public Rights of Way (PROW) and many of the forestry tracks are available for walking and riding and for access to Llyn Fawr. Sustrans cycle Route 47 also passes through the forestry. All these routes and areas are shown on the OS base map.

2.7. The only public road access through the study area is the A4061 Rhigos Mountain road, with a viewpoint layby.

Landscape character areas

2.8. The landscape character of the study area is very varied and readily falls into four separate areas, as shown on **Figure 3**. The following descriptions give a summary of the landscape of the study area, taking account of the LANDMAP data, designations and access .

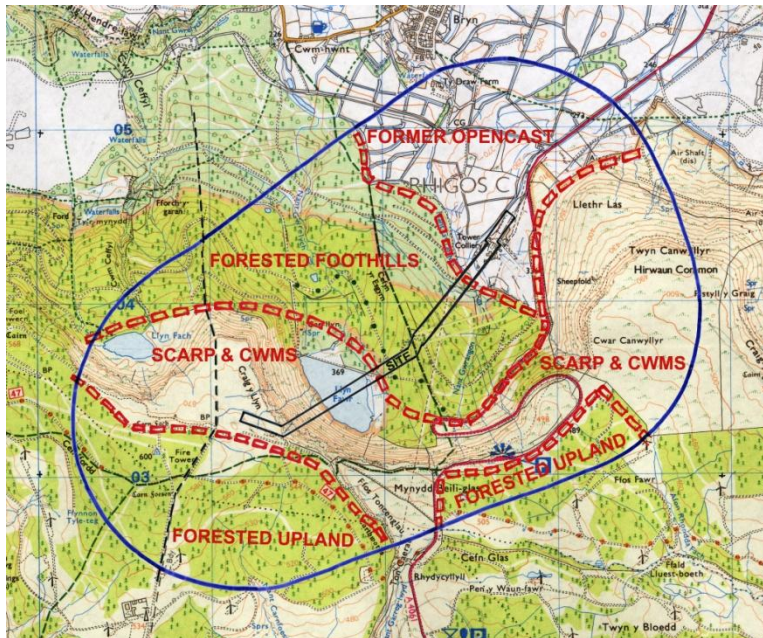


Figure 3: Landscape character areas

2.9. **Forested upland:** This southern part of the study area is high rolling plateau wrapping around the heads of the Rhondda valleys. It is generally swathed in commercial forestry - some mature stands, some recently felled, and others in varying stages of growth. The large Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm is now the dominant feature, with wide access tracks and signage as well as the turbines themselves. There is good access for walking and cycling, with some long-distance views south, but none northwards.



LANDMAP

- **Outstanding** and **High** value in **Geological Landscapes** aspect due to its exceptional glacial geomorphology
- **Outstanding** value in **Historic Landscapes** aspect as part of wide area of upland with multi-period remains from Mesolithic to present day (part of much larger area covering all of inter-valley uplands)
- **High** value in **Cultural Landscape** aspects as part of a large area with many designations and acting as a 'green lung' for the Valleys communities.
- **Moderate** value in **Visual and Sensory** aspect, lacking specific sense of place (as part of much larger aspect area covering much of inter-valley landscapes).
- **Moderate** value in **Landscape Habitats** aspect due to the generally low value of commercial forestry, with pockets of other more valuable habitats.

Designations:

- Hirwaun Common **SINC**
- Rhondda Uplands **HLCA 030 (part)**

Access:

- All open access land.
- Sustrans Route 47
- Parking laybys alongside A4061.
- Forestry tracks and 'Loops and Links' signage

2.10. **Scarp and Cwms:** This central belt of the study area is one of the most dramatic and well-loved areas of scenery in the Valleys, with the steep scarp face of Hirwaun Common and Craig y Llyn, and the two glacial lakes (although Llyn Fawr is considerably modified as a reservoir). Once away from the main road, this area feels remote, wild and tranquil, with fine views along the scarp and to the distance Brecon Beacons. Altogether this area has a very strong sense of place.



LANDMAP

- **Outstanding** value in **Geological Landscape** aspect due to the rarity and research value of the prominent cirque with landslips
- **Outstanding** value in **Historic Landscapes** aspect as part of wide area of upland with multi-period remains from Mesolithic to present day (part of much larger area covering all of inter-valley uplands)
- **High** value in **Landscape Habitats** aspect due to extensive areas of acid grassland and heath
- **High** value in **Cultural Landscape** aspect as the widely-known view from Rhigos Mountain shows a microcosm of the cultural influences in the area
- **High** and **Moderate** value in **Visual and Sensory** Landscapes aspect as part of the wider upland scenery with attractive views out (as part of much larger aspect area covering much of inter-valley landscapes).

Designations:

- Craig y Llyn **SSSI**
- Craig y Llyn **RIGS**
- Ffos Toncenglau **SAM**
- Hirwaun Common **SINC**
- Hirwaun Common **SLA**

Access:

- All open access land
- Single bridleway along top edge of scarp
- The scarp itself difficult to access
- Forestry tracks and ProW give access to Llyn Fawr, used by Upper Rhondda Angling Association (URAA)
- A4061 passes through

2.11. **Forested foothills:** A belt of rounded hills below the scarp which appear small from above but substantial from the valley floor. They are covered in commercial forestry, with blocks in varying stages of growth and some pockets of grassland and wetland habitats. Generally not very accessible, apart from access to the lakes, and without any special attractions, this area is little used for recreation and is tranquil.



LANDMAP

- **Outstanding** value in **Historic Landscapes** aspect as part of wide area of upland with multi-period remains from Mesolithic to present day (part of much larger area covering all of inter-valley uplands).
- **Outstanding** value in **Geological Landscapes** aspect, with extensive areas of boulder clay.
- **High** value in **Cultural Landscapes** aspect, as part of the Rhigos Mountain view
- **Moderate** value in **Landscape Habitats** aspect due to it mainly being coniferous forestry
- **Moderate** value in **Visual and Sensory** aspect, lacking specific sense of place (as part of much larger aspect area covering much of inter-valley landscapes).

Designations:

- Hirwaun Common **SLA (part)**
- Hirwaun Common **SINC**

Access:

- Mainly open access land
- PRow leading from A4061 used by URAA and part of 'Loops and Links' routes.
- Numerous forestry tracks

2.12. **Former opencast** : The flat farmland fields of the north part of the study area belie the fact that a few years' ago all this area was open cast. The derelict buildings of the iconic Tower Colliery, with its pithead winding gear, form the centrepiece to the area.



LANDMAP

- **Outstanding** and **High** value in **Cultural Landscapes**, having a very strong cultural identity relating to Tower Colliery
- **Outstanding** and **High** value in **Geological Landscapes** aspect (as part of cirque formation)
- **High** value in **Historic Landscapes** aspect due to important remains of Tower Colliery but otherwise reclaimed land with lesser value.
- **Low** value in **Landscape Habitats** aspect, due to its being improved grassland
- **Low** value in **Visual & Sensory** aspect, although with a strong sense of place

Designations:

- The rough grassland/scrub area between Tower Colliery and A4061 forms a small part of the Hirwaun Common **SINC**.

Access:

- No PRoW
- Forestry access track alongside A4061 used for unofficial parking and walking by locals.

2.13. Key points:

- The study area extends from the highest parts of the upland plateau north of the Rhondda valleys, down to the flat floor of the upper Cynon valley near its watershed with the Neath valley.
- The whole study area is evaluated as 'Outstanding' or 'High' in the LANDMAP Geological Landscapes, Historic Landscapes and Cultural Landscapes aspects.
- Evaluations in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory and Landscape Habitats aspects vary from 'High' (Hirwaun Common), to 'Moderate' (all forested areas), to 'Low' (reclaimed land in the north).
- Craig y Llyn Geological SSSI cover the scarp face, cwms and glacial lakes in a belt across the centre of the study area. Part of this is also RIGS.
- RCT's Hirwaun Common SLA also stretches across the centre of the study area, covering a wider belt of land that forms the backdrop to all views from the north.
- Apart from the reclaimed land, all of the study area (other than SSSI) in RCT is SINC.
- The A4061 Rhigos Mountain road is the only road in the study area, passing down the scarp face.
- Much of the study area is open access land, either commercial forestry or open rough grazing.
- Sustrans Route 47 passes east-west through the forestry in the south part of the study area.
- There are few PRow within the study area, the most notable being the bridleway that passes along the top edge of the scarp.
- Tranquility and remoteness are strong characteristics of much of the study area, especially in contrast to the busy valleys to north and south.
- Four landscape character areas have been identified, from south to north:
 - Forested upland
 - Scarp & cwms
 - Forested foothills
 - Former opencast

3.0. VISUAL BASELINE (5km radius)

3.1. This section describes the existing views of the site from within the study area. It discusses who experiences these views. These people are referred to as 'visual receptors' - people who are likely to be affected by the proposed development through changes to the views in places where they travel, work or take recreation. Definitions relating to visual receptor sensitivity to these changes are given in Appendix 1.

Visibility mapping

3.2. The visibility of the site within a 5km radius has been assessed by a combination of desk study using 1:25000 scale OS maps and Google Earth street view, with site verification from all roads and Public Rights of Way (PRoW), and from parts of the site itself. The extent of visibility and the locations of the representative viewpoints are shown on **Figure 4**. Specific roads, paths and residential areas that have clear views of the site (and proposed development) are shown on **Figure 6**.

General visibility of site

3.3. As the site of the proposed development is almost 2km in length and the land falls 270m from south west to north east, its visibility is discussed in three sections when relevant:

- 'top section' - Craig y Llyn (and Llyn Fawr, although the water is only visible from within about 1km), approximately 1km length;
- 'central section' - the forested hill between Llyn Fawr and the open land around Tower Colliery, approximately 700m length, and;
- 'lower section' - the flat fields around the former Tower Colliery, and the site of the colliery, 100mm length maximum.

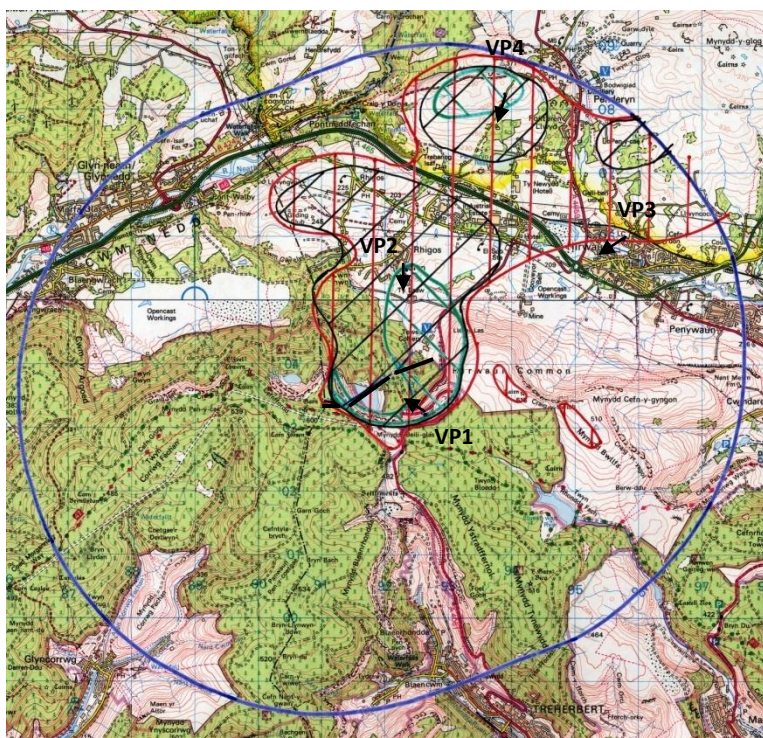


Figure 4: Visibility and Viewpoint Locations

— site of proposed development

➔ Viewpoint location and number

Blue outline = 5km study area boundary

Red hatch = visibility of top section

Black hatch = visibility of central section

Green hatch - visibility of lower section

3.4. To the **south, south west and south east** of the site all the land drops away southwards from the high ridge and scarp. As all the site, including the very top section, is on the north side of this ridge, there are no views to the site at all. Extensive forestry adds to the screening of views northwards. *Sections of site visible: **None***

3.5. To the **west and north west** of the site the Craig y Llyn promontory between Llyn Fawr and Llyn Fach and the forested lower slopes of the scarp and its foothills obstruct all views to all sections of the site. Only within approximately 300m is the very top of the site seen from the open top of the ridge to the west. *Sections of site visible: **None (or very top)***

3.6. To the **east** there are full views of the site from the steep sides of the scarp hillside, notably from the A4061 road, seen at a distance of between 1km and 1.5km distance. *Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower***

3.7. To the **north east** Twyn Canwyllr and Llethr Las on Hirwaun Common obscure all views to the central and lower sections of the site, with just the upper part of the top section being seen beyond in a few places. *Sections of site visible: **None (or very top)***

3.8. To the **north** much of the site are generally visible, from the skyline down to Tower Colliery (but excluding Llyn Fawr itself), although in many places this view is at least partially screened by vegetation and local topography. Winter light makes it difficult to pick out the features of the site from the north. *Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower (or none)***

Visibility of the site from roads

3.9. When travelling north on the **A4061, Rhigos Mountain road**, over the summit of Mynydd Beili-glas all of the site comes into view, at a distance of about 1.2km. This view is part of the spectacular panorama along the scarp and across the valley northwards to the distant peaks of the Brecon Beacons. The site continues coming in and out of view as the road hairpins down the scarp and passes alongside Tower Colliery.

When travelling south, all parts of the site is seen straight ahead and to the right from about 1.5km south of the Hirwaun Industrial Estate roundabout, and likewise coming in and out of view as the road mounts the scarp. **Viewpoint 1** provides a full assessment from a location on this road.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower***

Receptor sensitivity: Local regular road users - **medium**; Visitors seeking scenic route - **very high**

3.10. From the **A465, Heads of the Valleys road**, there are **no views** towards the site due to cuttings, adjacent vegetation, intervening building, woodland and local topography.

*Sections of site visible: **None***

3.11. From the **A4059, Brecon road**, when travelling south, there are some **glimpses** of the top and central sections of the site south of Penderyn at distances of approximately 5.5km to 3.7km. Elsewhere the adjacent woods, boundaries and local topography screen the views.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central***

Receptor sensitivity: Road users - **medium**

3.12. From some of the **minor roads in the Hirwaun/Rhigos vicinity** there are some views to the scarp and skyline to the south, and upper parts of the intervening forested hills. These are **mainly glimpses** and full views towards the site are limited to sections of roads around Cefn Rhigos.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower(very limited)***

*Receptor sensitivity: Local road users - **low/medium***

Visibility of the site from settlements

3.13. None of the site is visible from the centre, south or east of **Hirwaun** as Twyn Canwyllyr and Llethr Las on Hirwaun Common obstruct views. Only the upper part of the top section of the site is seen from the Mount Pleasant housing (although there are no publically-accessible views) and the houses near the former ironworks, at a distance of about 5km. **Viewpoint 3** gives a full assessment of this view.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, or none***

*Receptor sensitivity: Residents in their homes - **high***

3.14. From the scattered small settlements of **Rhigos, Bryn and Cefn Rhigos**, as with the minor roads in the vicinity, there are some general views to the scarp and the forested hills, and the site itself is seen from some houses in Bryn (1.5km at closest) and Cefn Rhigos (3.5km distance at most). **Viewpoint 2** provides a full assessment of this view from Bryn.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower, or none***

*Receptor sensitivity: Residents in their homes - **high***

3.15. Much of the village of **Penderyn**, alongside the Brecon road, is tucked into the valley with no clear views southwards to the scarp and the site. From the old part of the village, on higher ground, there are views across to the site, from the churchyard, for instance at between 6km and 4.5km distance. **Viewpoint 4** provides a full assessment of the view from nearby.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower, or none***

*Receptor sensitivity: Residents and visitors - **high***

Visibility from PRow and open access land

3.16. In **BBNP**, the bridleway along the edge of **Moel Penderyn**, to the west of the village, has **clear views** southwards towards the site at a distance of up to 6km away. This does not appear to be a particularly popular route. **Viewpoint 4** provides a full assessment of these views from a nearby viewpoint. As well as Moel Penderyn, there is **open access land within BBNP** to the east. Both these areas have full views south to all or the upper part of the site. These areas are little frequented, with no paths.

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower***

*Receptor sensitivity: Walkers/horse-riders - **high***

3.17. The extensive areas of upland forestry to south and west of the site have a network of tracks, some of which are defined walking routes in regular use. Also, **Sustrans cycle route 47** passes east/west about 250m to the south of the top of the site. There are, however, **no views** at all of the site from here. As noted previously, the topography and forestry screen almost all views to the site.

*Sections of site visible: **None,***

*Receptor sensitivity: Walkers/cyclists - **high***

3.18 The path that leads westwards from the A4061, along the top of the scarp is the exception, having views along the scarp and across the lower land to the north. From here most of the site is in full view.

*Sections of site visible: **Top and central***

*Receptor sensitivity: Walkers - **high***

3.19 The tracks through the areas of forestry below Craig y Llyn, have views of the site itself, often as glimpses along tracks between trees, or wider view of the scarp at Llyn Fawr where the land is open. Llyn Fawr is also used for recreational fishing by URAA

*Sections of site visible: **Top, central and lower***

*Receptor sensitivity: Walkers - **high**; Anglers - **very high***

3.20 There are few **other PROW**, either within BBNP or closer to the site. None of these have notable views of any parts of the site.

*Sections of site visible: **None***

*Receptor sensitivity: Walkers/cyclists - **high***

3.21. The **Neath Port Talbot** county boundary lies about 100m west of the top of the site. From the highest path that crosses this boundary the very top of the site is seen. Elsewhere in NPT, however, whether further west along the scarp, or within the forestry there are **no views** of the site. From Llyn Fach and the lower forested slopes the projecting scarp between the two cwms screens all views to the site. There are no views of the site from the Neath valley sides or bottom.

*Sections of site visible: **None, or top, central and lower***

*Receptor sensitivity: Walkers/horse-riders - **high***

Representative Viewpoints

3.20. Four key viewpoints have been selected to represent important views of the site. The viewpoints are in line with RCT's requirements and are all from publicly accessible locations. Photographs and full descriptions of the existing views and visual receptors are given in the **Viewpoints and Photomontage, chapter 7**. Briefly, the viewpoints are:

Table 2: Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Location	Receptors	Reason
Viewpoint 1: A4061 Rhigos Mountain road	Viewpoint layby, 1.5km west of top of the site, 1.1km south of bottom of site.	A4061 road-users, including local and long distance travellers and tourists, and those stopping to admire view, get refreshments and start walks along scarp/forestry	First stopping point/view of the site when travelling northwards.
Viewpoint 2: Rhigos/Bryn village	Southern edge of settlement, 1.2km north of bottom of site, 2.4km	Local residents within village	Closest view of site from any settlements

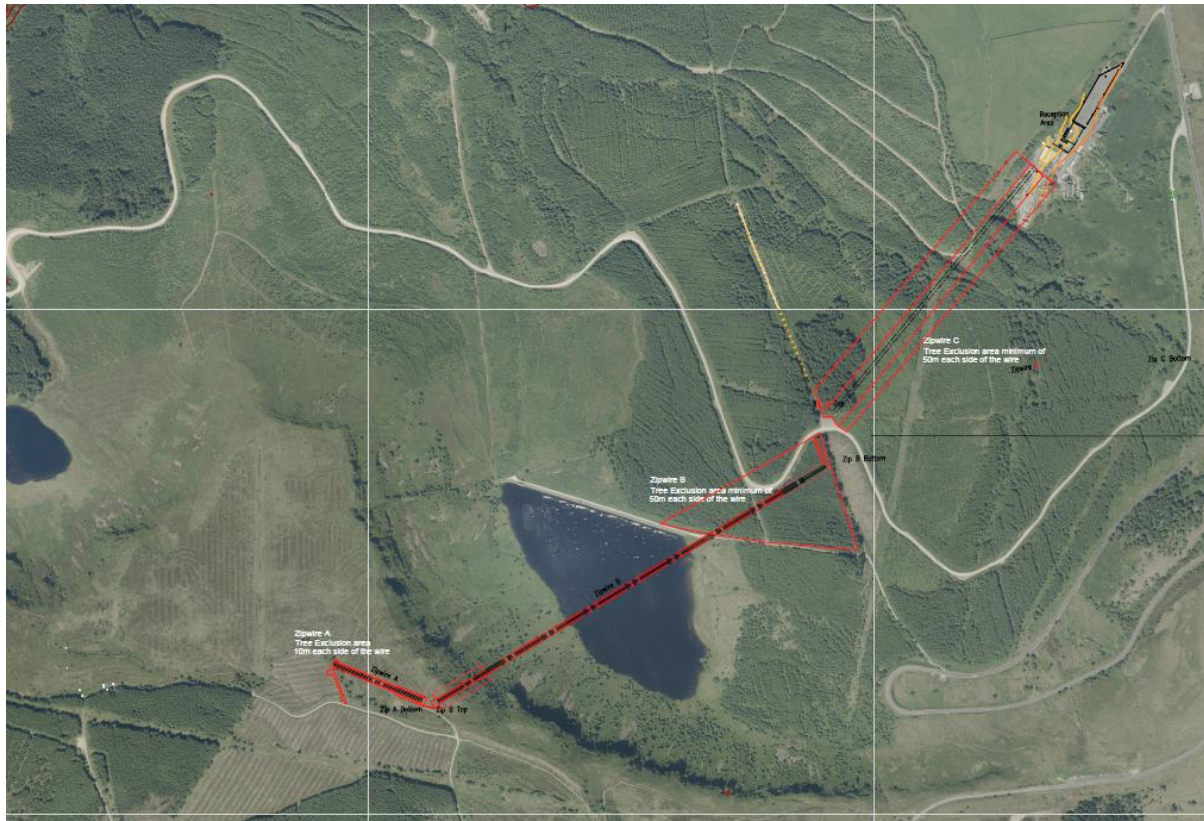
	north of top of site.		
Viewpoint 3: Hirwaun	Housing estate on north west edge of Hirwaun, 3km from bottom of site, 5km from top of site.	Local residents within estate	Only clear view from Hirwaun
Viewpoint 4: Penderyn, Rhigos Road, in BBNP	Upper stretch of unclassified road leading south west from Penderyn church	Mainly occasional local travellers, few walkers	Typical view from southern lower slopes of BBNP

3.21. Key points:

- The visibility map shows that notable views of the site are only available from places to the immediate east and from the north.
- From the south and west the site is hidden from views by the topography plus forestry.
- Road users on the A4061, particularly those who stop at the Rhigos viewpoint layby, are considered to have a higher than usual sensitivity to the views at this iconic location, and have relatively close-up views of the site.
- There are no other notable views of the site from roads.
- There are very few views of the site from settlements.
- Walkers/horse-riders, cyclists and other recreational users throughout the study area are considered to have a high sensitivity to views as they are specifically there to appreciate the 'great outdoors', the panoramic views and sense of remoteness and tranquility. However, there are very few views of the site from regular recreational routes, except close-up from the very top of Craig y Llyn, and from around Llyn Fawr.

4.0. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1. The proposed development consists of three zip lines, each with four parallel wires, leading one from the other, plus a reception area at the base at Tower Colliery.



Plan of proposed development

Reception area: existing bases remaining at the derelict Tower Colliery will be used for parking on compacted hardcore and for locating six portakabins. Road access will utilise the existing access road and forestry access track, both leading from the A4061. A new 4m wide compacted hardcore track will be constructed to link between the forestry access track and reception.



Plan of reception area



Existing access road to Tower Colliery

Access to top of zip lines: Minibuses or similar vehicles will ferry participants from the reception area to the top of Zip A using the A4061, the access road to Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm, a section of existing forestry track with minor upgrading, and a short new section of 4m. wide compacted hardcore track.



Diagram showing access route from A4061 in green

Dispatch platforms for Zip A and B:

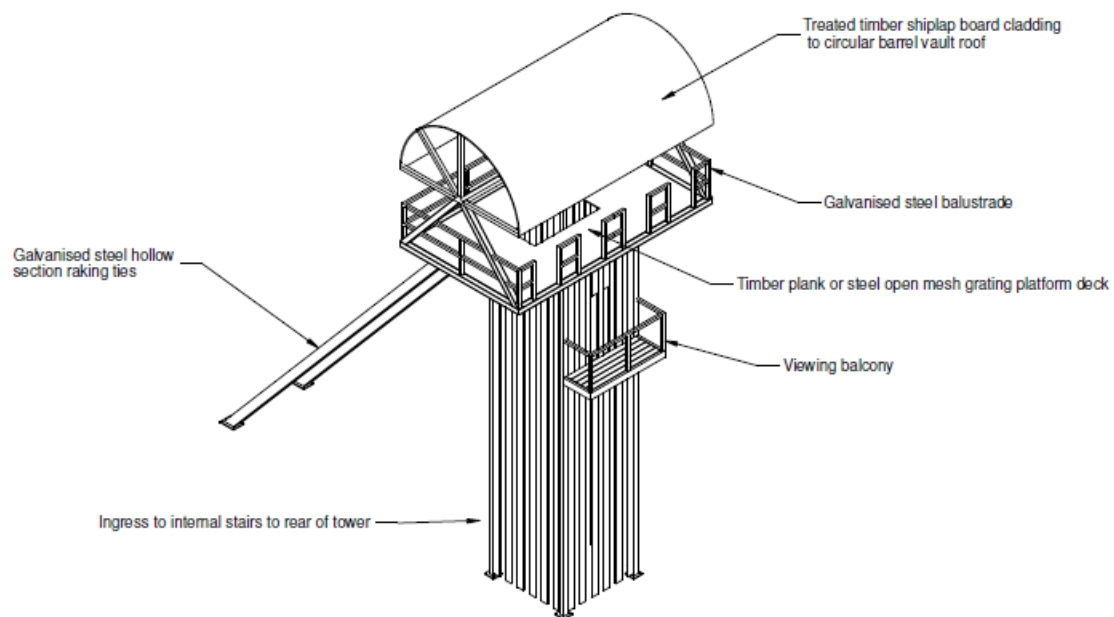
- Approximately 14.5m across, by 5m. wide
- Total height varies from 8.5m to 14.5m
- Open galvanised steel structure supporting platform and staircase
- Flat profiled steel roof
- Timber cladding to sides and rear of platform
- Wire rope backstays, reaching approximately 16m back from end of each zip line, buried in concrete.



Similar dispatch platform (but at ground level, without supporting steel legs)

Dispatch tower for Zip C

- Approximately 6.5m across, by 4m. wide
- Total height 13m
- Staircase access within 2.5m. square columns, clad in vertical timbers
- Balustraded open platform with timber-clad barrel-vaulted roof
- 2no. steel tube backstays, at right angles, reaching approximately 9m back from the platform.



Four zip lines in use

Stopping system:

- At lower end of each zip.
- Reduction gantries, followed by Powerfan gantries, either one or two of each, 18m wide, height varying from about 8m to 12m, with up to 25m between each gantry.
- VZIP at end, 7m height, with four backstays buried in concrete, with small timber-clad hut between backstays
- Compacted hardcore landing strip between Powerfan gantry and VZIP, 25m length.



Similar stopping system showing first reduction gantry

Zip A:

- **Zip A is all within the 'scarp and cwms' landscape character area, as described in the landscape baseline. It is all within the 'top section' of the site, as described in the visual baseline.**
- This starts from near the top of a small rise in the cleared forestry, set back about 160m from the edge of Craig y Llyn.
- The dispatch platform is 11m above the ground, making the total height to the roof about 14.5m.
- There will also be a 6m x 3m portakabin adjacent, with a compacted hardcore turning/parking area, 14m x 10m alongside.
- The zip lines run almost parallel to the edge of Craig y Llyn. Total length will be about 187m, with one reduction gantry and one Powerfan gantry. The end of the line is about 30m away from the edge of Craig y Llyn.

Zip B:

- **Zip B is mostly within the 'scarp and cwms' landscape character area, with the lower quarter of its length in the 'forested foothills' landscape character area, as described in the landscape baseline. The top quarter of its length is in the 'top section' with the rest being in the 'central section' of the site, as described in the visual baseline.**
- This starts near to the edge of Craig y Llyn, with a short path between the end of Zip A and the dispatch tower of Zip B.
- The dispatch platform is 5m above ground, making the total height to the roof about 8.5m.
- The zip lines will run over the edge of Craig y Llyn and pass about 90m above Llyn Fawr. The total length will be about 925m, ending on the top of the forested hill on the other side of the lake.
- There will be two reduction gantries and two Powerfan gantries, making the stopping system about 125m long.
- On the forested foothills, it is likely that the mature conifers will be felled for 50m. on either side of the lines, with the removal of all the triangle of mature conifers to the south east.

Exact amount of felling and possible re-planting will be dependent on ground and other conditions.

- There will be a length of new track leading to the top of Zip C, about 75m away.

Zip C:

- **Zip C is almost all in the 'forested foothills' landscape character area, with the end being just within the 'former opencast' landscape character area, as described in the landscape baseline. It is mainly in the 'central section' of the site, with the end being in the 'lower section' of the site, as described in the visual baseline.**
- This starts on the top of the northern side of the forested hill.
- Length: The zip lines will run down the hillside, ending on the flat land at the base of the hills. The total length will be about 500m.
- The dispatch tower total height to the roofline is about 13m. (less than the height of the nearby mature conifers).
- There will be two reduction gantries and two Powerfan gantries, making the stopping system about 125m long, ending very close to the Tower Colliery site.
- The existing overhead cables will be buried within the vicinity of the zip lines, towards the lower end.
- 50m. wide belt of mature conifers at the top of the line will be felled, plus younger stands of conifers to 50m. on either side of the rest of the length.

5.0. LANDSCAPE IMPACTS AND EFFECTS

5.1. The definitions and scales of magnitude relating to the assessment of landscape impacts are given in Appendix 1. In brief:

- **Landscape receptors** are the defined aspects, qualities and elements of the landscape that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. In this assessment these include the LANDMAP aspects and the landscape designations, and are discussed in relation to the four landscape character areas.
- The **sensitivity** of these landscape receptors to the type of changes that will occur as a result of the proposed development are discussed.
- The **magnitude of change** is described through an assessment of the loss of key elements of the landscape resource as a result of the proposed development. These may be **direct** effects (such as removal of trees) or **indirect** effects (such as an increase in use), and may be **temporary** (such as during construction) or **permanent**.
- The resulting **landscape impact** is an informed professional judgment combining the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of the changes to assess the overall impact on landscape receptors.
- The **scales of magnitude** for each of these definitions is graded from 'very high' to 'negligible'. If there are no effects and therefore no impacts, these are noted as 'none'.

5.2. No specific assessment of the impacts on heritage or ecology are included in this Landscape Statement as these are covered elsewhere in the Heritage Impact Assessment and the Ecology Report.

Forested uplands

5.3. **No parts of the proposed development will be within this landscape character areas.**

5.4. The proposed development will not impinge directly on this landscape. It is anticipated that there will be **no changes** that relate to the LANDMAP aspects with '**Outstanding**' or '**High**' values, or to any designated areas or features.

5.5. The existing forestry/wind farm **tracks**, including the entrance point from the A4061, will provide access to the top of Zip A. This will include heavy plant and machinery during construction, and minibuses or similar during operation. There is also likely to be an increase in the number of pedestrians and cyclists using the tracks and Sustrans Route 47 to view the zip lines.

*Sensitivity of access routes: **Low***

*Magnitude of change: **Indirect minor***

*Landscape impact on access: **Negligible***

Scarp and cwms

5.6. **All of Zip A and three-quarters of Zip B are in this landscape character area.**

5.7. This landscape, including the site of the proposed development, is evaluated as '**Outstanding**' or '**High**' in all five LANDMAP aspects.

*Sensitivity of LANDMAP aspects: **Very High***

*Magnitude of change: **Minor***

*Landscape impact: **Minor***

5.8. The construction of Zip A and the dispatch platform of Zip B may have a direct effect on the geological **SSSI** and **RIGS** at the top of Craig y Llyn. This may occur during construction, including during the fixing of the wires across Llyn Fawr. Full assessments of the impacts on the geological resource and ecological implications is beyond the scope of this report.

*Sensitivity of SSSI: **Very High***

*Magnitude of change to SSSI : **Minor (possibly) during construction and operation***

*Landscape impact: **Minor (possibly) during construction and operation***

5.9. All of this landscape character area, including the site of the proposed development, is within the Hirwaun **SLA** which forms part of the backdrop to the nearby settlements and valley floor. The proposed development will therefore have an impact on the SLA, especially its 'unspoilt' sense of remoteness and tranquility.

*Sensitivity of SLA: **High***

*Magnitude of change to SLA in this area : **High, during construction and operation***

*Landscape impact: **Major, during construction and operation***

5.10. The cultural and scenic importance of the Rhigos **viewpoint layby** on the A4061 means that this is very highly sensitive to changes in perception, and the loss of the sense of remoteness and tranquility that will occur with the proposed development. This is assessed fully in the visual assessment.

*Sensitivity: **Very high***

*Magnitude of change in perception from viewpoint: **High, during construction and operation***

*Landscape impact: **Major, during construction and operation***

5.11. It is likely that the **PRoW** along the top of Craig y Llyn will get more use as people watch the zip wires. This will have an indirect impact on the path.

*Sensitivity of PRoW: **Medium***

*Magnitude of change in use: **Medium indirect, during construction and operation***

*Landscape impact on PRoW: **Moderate indirect, during construction and operation***

Forested foothills

5.12. **The lower quarter of Zip B and most of Zip Care in this landscape character areas.**

5.13. This area is evaluated as '**Outstanding**' or '**High**' in Historic Landscapes, Geological Landscapes and Cultural Landscape aspects. However, it is not known that this relates to any specific features or qualities here apart from being in the culturally important view from Rhigos.

*Sensitivity: **High***

*Magnitude of landscape change: **Minor/negligible***

*Landscape impact: **Minor/negligible***

5.14. Much of this landscape character area, including the site of the proposed development, is within the Hirwaun **SLA** which forms part of the backdrop to the nearby settlements and valley floor. The proposed development will therefore have an impact on the SLA. This relates mainly to the loss of 'unspoilt' remoteness and tranquility, and to the opening up of areas of forestry on either side of the zip lines.

*Sensitivity of SLA: **High***

*Magnitude of landscape change: **Medium***

*Landscape impact: **High/moderate***

5.15. Much of this landscape character area is within the Hirwaun Common **SINC**. Although the site of the proposed development is all within the commercial forestry, and therefore may not have as much ecological value as other parts of the SINC, there may be changes to the habitats both during construction and operation, including the felling of trees. This may allow more varied habitats to develop, improving the value of the SINC.

*Sensitivity of SINC: **Medium***

*Magnitude of landscape change: **Minor***

*Landscape impact: **Minor beneficial***

5.16. There is likely to be increased usage of existing forestry **tracks**, both for access to the zip lines and for recreational use will have an indirect impact, both during construction and when in use. Additional wear-and-tear on the PRow to Llyn Fawr and the parking area that serves it are most likely.

*Sensitivity of tracks to increased use: **Low***

*Magnitude of change: **Minor***

*Landscape impact: **Minor indirect***

Former opencast

5.17. **The end of Zip C, the reception area and the link between them are in this landscape character area.**

5.18. This area is evaluated as '**Outstanding**' or '**High**' in Historic Landscapes, Geological Landscapes and Cultural Landscape aspects. However, it is not known that this relates to any specific features or qualities here apart from specifically the cultural importance of Tower Colliery. The integrity of the buildings of Tower Colliery will not be directly effected by the proposals for the reception area as these are not permanent structures and no demolitions are required.

*Sensitivity of Tower Colliery: **Very high***

*Magnitude of change: **Negligible***

*Landscape impact on Tower Colliery: **Negligible***

5.19. The end of the zip line is in Hirwaun Common **SINC**. This is rough wet grassland and scrub and there may be localised changes to the habitats both during construction and operation.

*Sensitivity: **Medium***

*Magnitude of landscape change: **Minor/negligible***

*Landscape impact: **Minor/negligible***

5.20. It is anticipated that there will be an improvement to the existing road to Tower Colliery which is currently in poor condition and used by fly-tippers.

*Sensitivity: **Low***

*Magnitude of landscape change: **Minor***

*Landscape impact: **Minor beneficial***

5.21. The forestry access track may get more use by vehicles and pedestrians as a viewing point for the end of Zip C, across a field..

*Sensitivity: **Low***

*Magnitude of change to the track: **Minor indirect***

*Landscape impact: **Minor or negligible***

Table 3. Summary of landscape impacts

Landscape character area	Landscape receptor	Sensitivity to change	Magnitude & type of change	Landscape impact
Forested uplands	'Outstanding' and 'High' value LANDMAP aspect areas	High	None	None
	Designations	High	None	None
	Access tracks and cycle route	Low	Indirect Minor during construction and operation	Negligible
Scarp and cwms	'Outstanding' and 'High' value LANDMAP aspect areas	High/very high	Minor	Minor
	SSSI/RIGS	Very high	Minor (possibly) during construction and operation	Minor (possibly) during construction and operation
	SLA	High	High during construction and operation	Major during construction and operation
	Viewpoint (perception)	Very high	High During construction and operation	Major during construction and operation
	Pedestrian access (top of scarp)	Medium	Medium indirect during construction and operation	Moderate indirect during construction and operation
Forested foothills	'Outstanding' and 'High' value LANDMAP aspect areas	High	Minor/negligible	Minor/negligible
	SLA	High	Medium	High/moderate
	SINC	Medium	Minor	Minor beneficial
	Access tracks & PRow	Low	Minor	Minor indirect
Former opencast	'Outstanding' and 'High' value LANDMAP aspect areas	High/very high	Negligible	Negligible
	SINC	Medium	Minor or negligible	Minor/negligible
	Access road & tracks	Low	Minor	Minor or negligible

5.22. Key points:

- **Forested uplands:**
 - No parts of the proposed development will be within this landscape character areas.
 - The access tracks within the forestry will get more usage but the impact is considered to be negligible.
- **Scarp and cwms:**
 - All of Zip A and three-quarters of Zip B are in this landscape character area.
 - This landscape has a generally high or very high sensitivity to change, being highly valued for its geological features and cultural and scenic qualities.
 - The impacts on SSSI are unknown but may be minor or more
 - It is judged that the impacts on the scenic and cultural perceptions, especially when viewed from Rhigos viewpoint and the vicinity of Llyn Fawr, will be major.
 - The PRoW along the top of Craig y Llyn is likely to get more use, leading to a moderate indirect impact on this path.
- **Forested foothills:**
 - The lower quarter of Zip B and most of Zip C are in this landscape character areas.
 - Being in the SLA and part of the view from the Craig y Llyn viewpoint, the zip lines will have a major impact on the 'unspoilt' qualities of remoteness and tranquility within the study area
- **Former opencast:**
 - The end of Zip C and the reception area are in this landscape character area.
 - There will be a negligible impact on the culturally-valuable Tower Colliery.
 - There may be a minor impact on the SINC
 - Increased use of the forestry access track by zip line vehicles and for parking and spectating will occur. This will be a minor indirect impact.

6.0. VISUAL EFFECTS AND IMPACTS

6.1. The zip wire development will have an impact on the *perception*, as much as a visual impact on the view from VP1. It is also bound to bring a lot of spectators using A4061 and the viewpoint car park (VP1). The likely resulting perceptual impacts have been assessed separately at the end of this chapter in 6.23 - 25, whilst the loss of tranquillity has been assessed on the impacts on the SLA in the preceding chapter.

6.2. When considering the visual impact of the proposed development the following facts have been taken into account:

- It has been assessed that there are generally no areas that will have views to the proposed development that do not currently have views to the site, therefore no additional visibility mapping for the proposed development has been prepared.
- If the visual impacts during the construction phase differ from those during operation, these have been assessed and noted.
- No structures in the proposed development (other than the zip lines themselves) are over 14.5m high and therefore of similar height or lower than nearby mature conifers.
- The timber cladding and curved roofline of Zip C's dispatch tower means that it will generally blend in with the backdrop and surrounds of the scarp face and woodlands.
- The series of gantry frameworks of the stopping systems are likely to be rather more visible, being up to four in number, aligned at about 25m apart.
- The portakabins and parking at the reception area are low key and set within the Tower Colliery complex of disused buildings and hardstandings. It is unlikely that these will be noticeable from publically-accessible places.
- The vehicle access routes, both to the reception area and to the top of Zip A, mainly utilise existing tracks and roadways and therefore the only visual impact will be from additional traffic.
- Zip A and the top part of Zip B (dispatch platform) will be seen generally on the skyline. These will be far less conspicuous than the numerous wind turbines that break the skyline of the scarp.
- The four parallel zip lines themselves will generally be inconspicuous and difficult (or impossible) to pick out against the backdrop of the scarp face and forested hillsides apart from at close quarters, or if they catch the sun in certain lights.
- Only from parts of the A4061 will Zip B lines be seen against the sky or more distant views.
- Riders on the zip lines are likely to be just visible, but, even if clad in bright colours, will be difficult to pick out except from the closest viewpoints.
- Groups of red-clad riders on the platforms and at the top and bottom of each line may be more visible at distances of up to about 1km.
- In winter most views to the proposed development will be into the sun and the various features of the landscape and zip lines will not be conspicuous.
- The lower part of Zip B and all of Zip C will be seen against the backdrop of the scarp face and forested hillsides and are therefore will not generally be conspicuous from most places.

- The 100m swathe cut through mature conifers plus adjacent blocks of felling the lower end of Zip B and top of Zip C will be seen as straight lines in the flowing landscape, but not generally be seen 'head-on' and therefore will not be too conspicuous.
- There is potential to reduce the impact of the cut swathe by softening the straight edges of the felling, retaining some mature conifer groups and by new planting of native trees and shrubs at the edges.

6.3. The **sensitivity** of visual receptors (i.e. people) has been stated in the baseline conditions in 3.0. The definitions relating to the scale of changes is given in Appendix 1. The **magnitude of change** is given as an assumed average, taking into account varying light conditions and leaf cover over the year.

6.4. The resulting **visual impact** is an informed professional judgment combining the sensitivity of receptors and the magnitude of the changes to assess the overall impact on receptors. The definitions are given in Appendix 1.

General visibility of proposed development

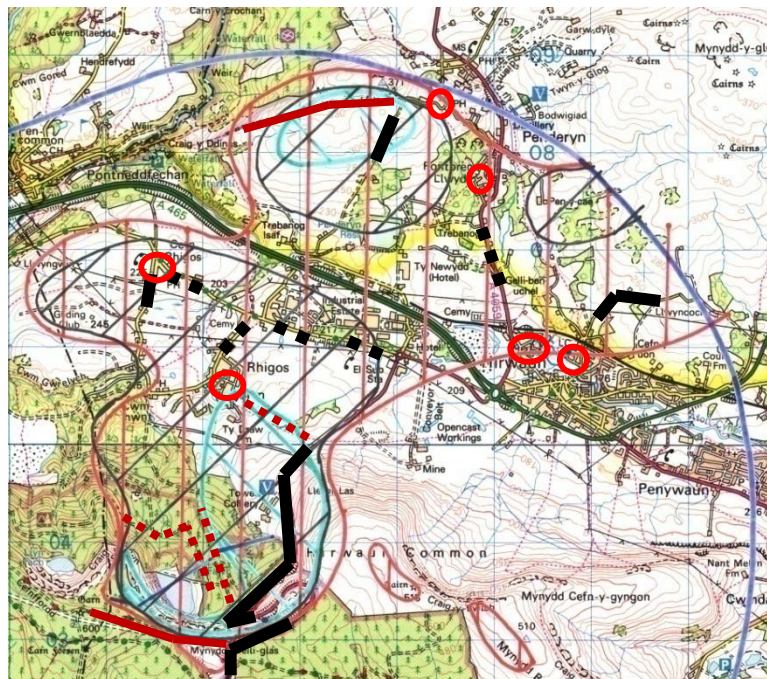


Figure 6: Views to proposed development

- Views from roads
- - - Glimpses from roads
- Views from PRoW
- - - Glimpses from PRoW
- Views or glimpses from houses

6.5. From **south, south west and south east**: It is unlikely that there will be any views of the top section of the proposed development and it will remain below the height of the intervening ridge

6.6. From **west and north west**: The top section of the proposed development - Zip A and dispatch platform of Zip B - will be visible from the top of Craig y Llyn. Elsewhere in this sector the proposed development will not be seen

6.7. From **east**: All sections of the proposed development will be seen from the hillside to the east, but not from further afield in this direction.

6.8. From **north east**: in a few places Zip A and the dispatch platform of Zip B will be seen on the skyline, similar in height to the mature conifers, but considerably lower and less conspicuous than the wind turbines.

6.9. From **north**: There is potential for all sections of the proposed development to be seen.

Visual impact of the proposed development from roads

6.10. **A4061**: The impacts on views from the nearest parts of this road, and the viewpoint layby are discussed under **Viewpoint 1** and in 6.23 onwards. Travelling south from the roundabout at Hirwaun Industrial Estate, for a distance of approximately 1.5km, all sections of the zip lines will be seen straightahead at between 5km and 3.5km. Zip A and the top of Zip B will break the skyline, and the swathe cut through the forestry for Zip C will be the most visible parts.

Magnitude of change - moderate

Visual impact from A4061: moderate

6.11. **A465, Heads of the Valleys road**: There will be no views of the proposed development from this road.

Magnitude of change - none

Visual impact from A465: none

6.12. **A4059, Brecon road**: There will be a few glimpses of the top and central sections of the proposed development whilst travelling south and a distance of 4 to 5km .

Magnitude of change: negligible

Visual impact from A4059: negligible

6.13. **Minor roads in the Hirwaun/Rhigos vicinity**: There will be a few glimpses of full views of the top and central sections of the proposed development at distances of approximately 3km.

Magnitude of change: minor or less

Overall visual impact on users of minor roads: negligible

Visual impact from settlements

6.14. **Hirwaun**: Only from the two outlying parts in the north west of Hirwaun will the very top section of the proposed development be seen at a distance of 5km. **Viewpoint 3** gives a full assessment of this view. Elsewhere in Hirwaun the proposed development will not be seen.

Magnitude of change: negligible, or none

Overall visual impact from Hirwaun: negligible

6.15. **Rhigos, Bryn and Cefn Rhigos**: A few houses and street in these settlements will have views to the top and central sections of the proposed development, at distances of between 1.5 and 3.5km. These are discussed fully in **Viewpoint 2**. Most parts, however, will not have views.

Magnitude of change: moderate, negligible or none

Overall visual impact on Rhigos, Bryn and Cefn Rhigos: minor or less

6.16. **Penderyn**: A few places in the old village and upper parts of estates will have views to all the proposed development at a distance of between 5 and 6km, similar to those discussed in **Viewpoint 4**. Elsewhere in Penderyn the proposed development will not be seen.

*Magnitude of change: **negligible or none***

*Overall visual impact from Penderyn: **negligible or none***

Visual impact from PRow and open access land

6.17. **Sustrans cycle route 47:** The proposed development will not be seen from this route. However, vehicle access to the top will use part of route 47.

*Magnitude of change: **negligible***

*Visual impact from Sustrans route 47: **negligible***

6.18. **Moel Penderyn (BBNP):** At a distance of between 4.5 and 5.5km the proposed development will be in full view. This will be similar to the view discussed in **Viewpoint 4**.

*Magnitude of change: **negligible***

*Visual impact from Moel Penderyn: **negligible***

6.19. **Other paths and open access land in BBNP:** At distances of 5km or more, there will be views or glimpses of the top of the proposed development against the skyline.

*Magnitude of change: **negligible***

*Overall visual impact from paths and open access land in BBNP: **negligible***

6.20. **Paths and open access land in RCT:** The footpath along Craig y Llyn ridge will have full views of the proposed development at close quarters, especially Zips A and B. Also the paths through the forestry of the foothills will have clearviews to Zip B as it passes overhead and some of Zip C nearby. The zip lines may be considered to add interest to the views. Elsewhere there will be no views of the proposed development from paths in RCT.

*Magnitude of change: **Moderate or none***

*Overall visual impact from paths and open access land in RCT: **Moderate***

6.21. **Access alongside Llyn Fawr:** Zip B will pass high overhead directly across the main aspect of this view, and related felling of forestry will open up further views through. The tranquility of the area will be lost, especially when the zip lines are in use.

*Magnitude of change - **High***

*Visual and perception impacts from Llyn Fawr: **Major***

6.22. **Paths and open access land in NPT:** From the footpath along Craig y Llyn ridge Zip A and the top of Zip B will be seen at close quarters for a short section adjacent to the RCT boundary. The zip lines may be considered to add interest to the views. Elsewhere in NPT there will be no views of the proposed development.

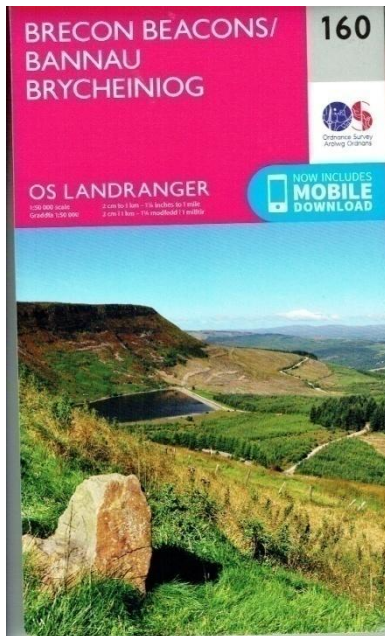
*Magnitude of change generally: **negligible***

*Overall visual impact on paths and open access land in NPT generally: **negligible***

Impacts on Rhigos Mountain road (A4061) and viewpoint (VP1) - perception

6.23 The dramatic view that opens up when travelling north over the watershed is truly 'stunning', its iconic status being apparent from the number of times that photographs of the view of

Craig y Llyn are used in tourist information, on calendars, and even on the cover of the Brecon Beacons Landranger map although the map does not cover this area and it is not in the Brecon Beacons!



6.24. There are many man-made modifications in view - forestry, reservoir, road, wind farms, solar farm. It is, however, the large-scale glacial scenery that dominates. On leaving the car at the viewpoint, there is a truly upland character to the chill wind and the call of ravens. The location's importance in local peoples' and visitors' eyes is evident from the tourism 'brown signs', informal roadside memorials, and the viewpoint facilities of picnic tables and interpretation board.



6.25. At distances of around 1km, the proposed structures and their riders will be minor features in the view, but will add more man-made features and will cut across the grain of the landscape, especially when moving figures can be seen on the zip lines. The addition of the proposed zip lines will spoil the special view for many people, whilst for others, it will add more excitement and become a spectacle in itself. The dramatic scenery will not be able to be photographed or perceived from here without the zip lines, changing people's perception of the whole view.

*Magnitude of visual change: **Minor***

*Magnitude of change in perception: **Major - both adverse and beneficial***

*Visual and perception impacts from Rhigos viewpoint: **Major - both adverse and beneficial***

Table 4: Summary of Visual Impacts

Type	Receptor	Distance	Sensitivity	Sections visible	Magnitude of change	Visual impact	Related Viewpoint
Roads	Rhigos viewpoint layby users	0.9km	Very high	Top Central Lower	Minor <i>visual</i>	Minor	VP1
					High adverse/beneficial <i>in perception</i>	Major adverse or beneficial <i>in perception</i>	
	A4061	0.5 - 3.5km	Medium	Top Central Lower	Moderate	Moderate	-
	A465 Heads of the Valleys road users	-	-	None	None	None	-
	A4059 Brecon road users	4 - 5km	Medium	Top	Negligible	Negligible	(VP4)
	Minor road users	3 - 5km	Low/medium	Top	Minor or less	Negligible	(VP2)
Settlements	Hirwaun residents	5km	High	Top Or none	Negligible	Negligible	VP3
	Rhigos, Bryn and Cefn Rhigos residents	1.5 - 3.5km	High	Top Central Lower Or none	Minor or less	Negligible or none	VP2
	Penderyn residents	5 - 6km	High	Top Or none	Negligible or none	Negligible or none	(VP4)
PRoW & open access	Sustrans route 47 cyclists	Less than 1km	High	Access route to top	Negligible	Negligible	-
	Moel Penderyn walkers	4.5 - 5.5km	High	Top	Negligible	Negligible	VP4
	Other walkers in BBNP	5km or more	High	Top	Negligible	Negligible	-
	Walkers, etc. generally in RCT	Within 1km	High	Top and central or none	Moderate	Moderate	-
	Walker/anglers at Llyn Fawr	Less than 0.5km	Very high	Top Central	High	Major <i>visual and perception</i>	-
	Walkers, etc. in NPT	Within 500m	High	Top or none	Negligible	Negligible	-

6.25. Key points:

- The general visibility map (Figure 6) shows that notable views of the proposed development do not differ from views of the site itself, and are only available from places to the immediate east and from the north.
- From the south and west the proposed development will be hidden from views by the topography plus forestry.
- The impact on *perception* from the Rhigos viewpoint layby and hairpins, is assessed to be major, either adverse or beneficial, depending on the individual. The visual impact, however, will be minor.
- There will be a moderate visual impact on views from the lower part of the A4061 where the proposed development will be seen 'head-on'.
- There will be no notable visual impacts of the proposed development from any other roads.
- There will be very little visual impacts of the proposed development from settlements.
- There will be major visual impact and loss of tranquillity at Llyn Fawr.
- There will be very little visual impact of the proposed development on regular recreational routes in BBNP or RCT, except on the very top of Craig y Llyn.
- There will be negligible visual impact on any parts of NPT.

7.0 VIEWPOINTS AND PHOTOMONTAGES

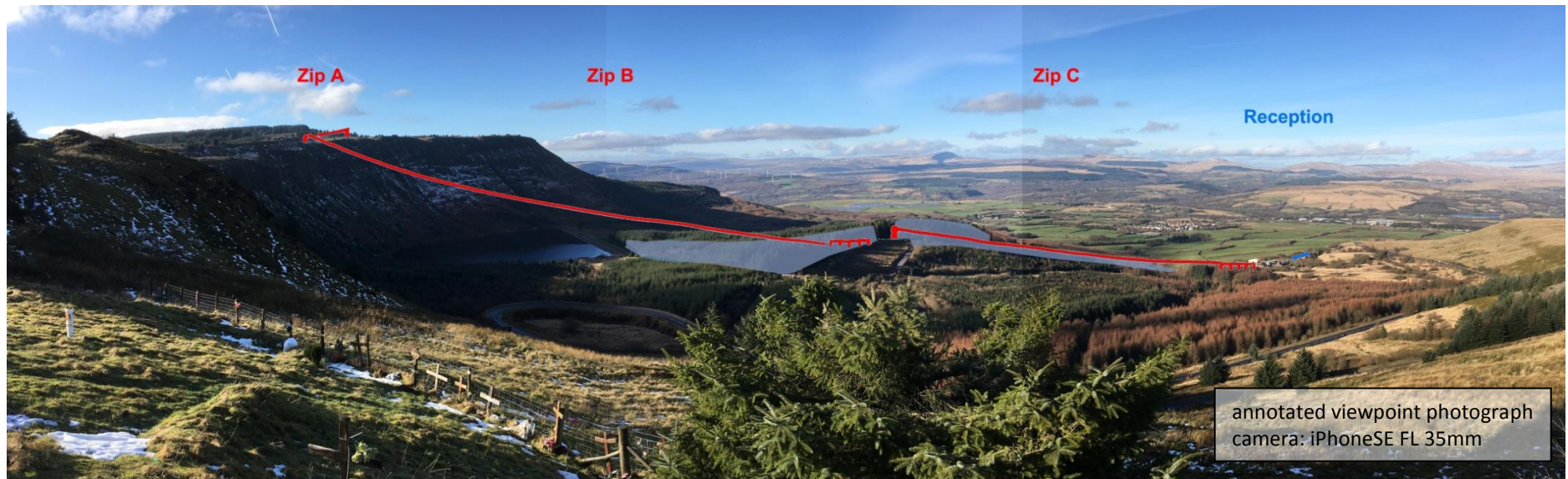
7.1. The following tables and accompanying photomontages provide the visual assessment from each of the four viewpoints, explaining the current views and how the proposed development will change these, and therefore the visual impacts. Definitions for sensitivities, value, magnitude of change and visual impact are given in Appendix 1.

7.2. The photomontages take the form of annotated viewpoint photographs, conforming with Visualisation Type 1 described in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals.

7.3. For clarity of illustration, the approximate locations of the zip lines and supports are shown as red lines, with additional other features noted. In reality the zip lines will be seen as four fine lines.

7.4. All locations and alignments of the proposed development have been carefully examined on site to achieve a reasonable level of accuracy, but without the use of 3D wirelines or computer-generated photomontages, these must be considered as approximate representations.

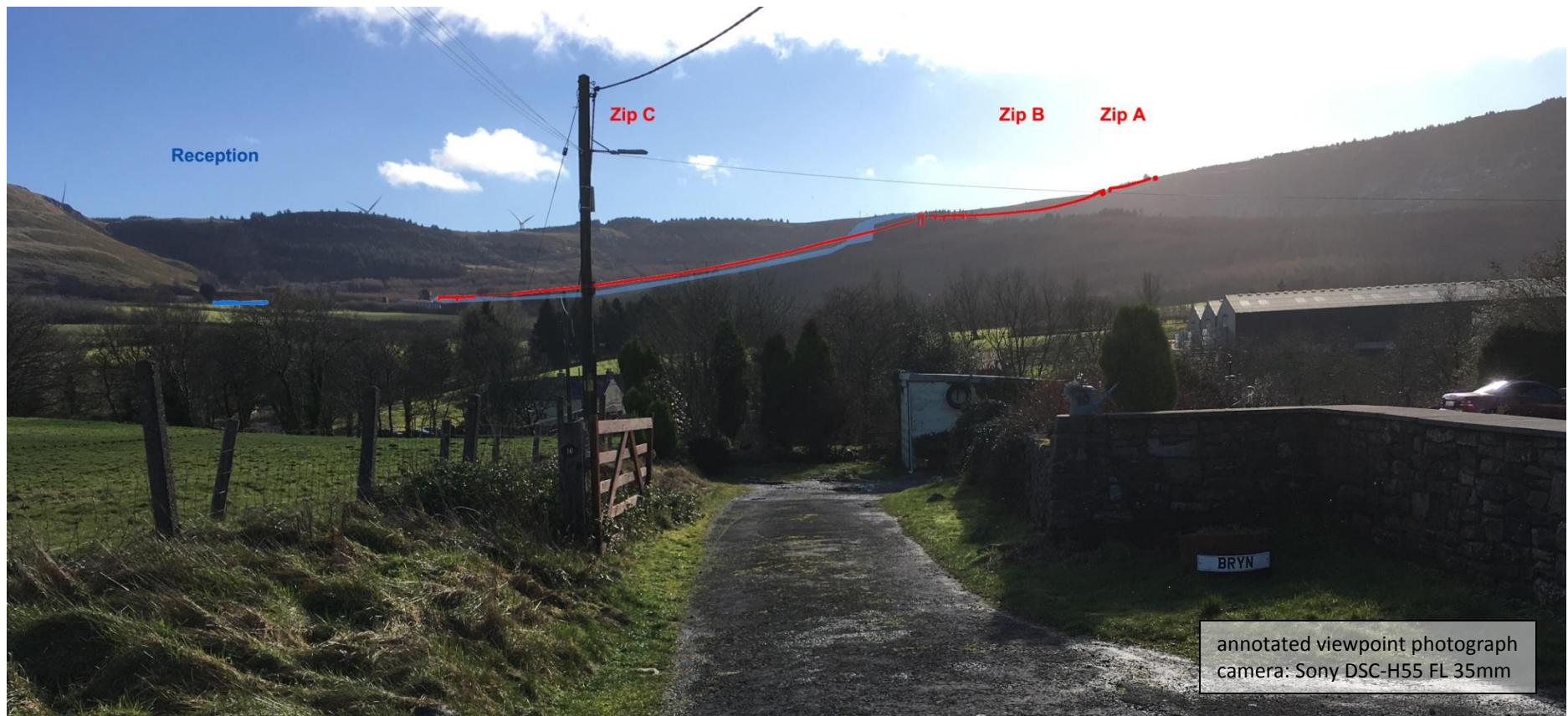
VIEWPOINT 1



Areas of felled forestry are shown shaded blue

Viewpoint 1: Rhigos Mountain Viewpoint layby 0.9km. south east of nearest part of site (central). On A4061 near summit of Rhigos road.			
Current view	Visual receptors and sensitivity, value of view	Change to view and magnitude of visual change	Visual impact
Locale: Set right on the edge of the high pass over between the Rhondda Fawr and Cynon valleys. Spectacular panoramic view west, north and east to Craig y Llyn ridge, broad valley and south-facing slopes of Brecon Beacons rising to sweeping distant skyline with prominent peaks, with Craig y Llyn and Llyn Fawr prominent to left side. The whole of the site is seen ahead and below. The view is similar from the main road, being seen alternatively straight ahead and then hidden as the road hairpins down the scarp, gradually becoming less spectacular.	This viewpoint is popular with road-users, both local and visitors, stopping to admire the view and getting refreshments at all times of year. It is also used by walkers setting off along Craig y Llyn. It is one of the most enduring views in South Wales. <i>layby-user sensitivity: very high</i> This view has iconic status as probably the most spectacular view on the edge of the Valleys. <i>Value of view: very high</i>	Construction stage: Moving machinery and plant, including that used for setting out the lines of Zip B, will be visible. Associated tree felling operations will also be visible. <i>Magnitude of change: temporary moderate</i> During operation: The zip lines, especially Zip B which crosses the main view, will just be visible, as will the bright-coloured riders rapidly passing along the lines. They are likely to be more visible when caught in sunlight against the dark backdrop. The swathes cut through the forestry will appear as straight lines across the rounded hill. The stopping system gantries for Zip B and the dispatch tower for Zip C, approximately 750m. distance away, will be visible against the cut edge of the mature forestry. Groups of red-clad riders in this vicinity will also be noticeable. <i>Magnitude of visual change: Moderate</i> For many people, this development will be seen as an intrusion, and will spoil the view and their perception of a dramatic natural landscape. For others, the zip lines will add interest to the view. <i>Magnitude of change in perception: High</i>	Construction stage: <i>Visual impact: Moderate</i> <i>Perceptual impact: High</i> During operation: <i>Visual impact: Moderate</i> <i>Perceptual impact: Major</i>

VIEWPOINT 2



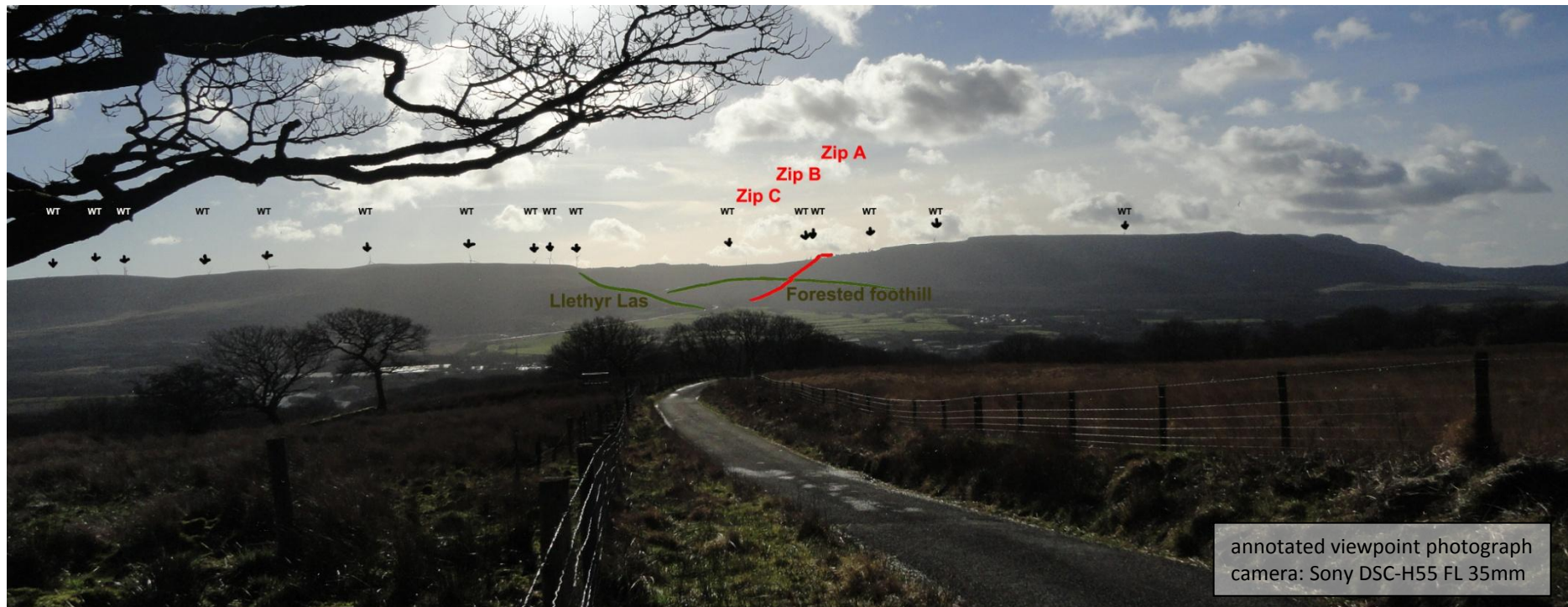
Viewpoint 2: Rhigos/Bryn 1.1km. north of nearest part of site (reception area). At south east corner of housing at Bryn.			
Current view	Visual receptors and sensitivity, value of view	Change to view and magnitude of visual change	Visual impact
Locale: This main part of the settlement of Rhigos is a mid-twentieth-century estate of social housing, now forming a pleasant quiet backwater, set in farmland. There is a wide view south to the escarpment, with the projecting Craig y Llyn and Twyn Canwylyr on either side of the main cwm and the top part of the site, receding back 2.2km away. The forested lower slopes and hill (central part of the site) is central to the view and hides Llyn Fawr and the lower slopes of the cwm. Wind turbines break the skyline to the south. In winter, when the sun is to the south, the scarp is seen mainly in shadow and silhouette, with the lower features difficult to make out. This gives a brooding presence to the backdrop. The green farmland intervening on flatter land now belies its reclaimed opencast origins although the derelict building of the iconic Tower Colliery (the lowest end of the site) are noticeable as a potent reminder of the recent past. This is the fullest and nearest view of the site from the settlements of the Cynon valley. The view is similar from a few lengths of the minor roads and adjacent buildings around Cefn Rhigos and to the west of Bryn. However, elsewhere there are only glimpses to parts of the site.	This view is seen mainly by residents in nearby houses on the edge of Bryn and by local people walking. <i>Residents sensitivity: high</i> This view is part of the backdrop to the settled areas of Rhigos. <i>Value of view: high</i>	Construction stage: Although just visible, it is unlikely that the construction works will be noticeable from here. Likewise, the felling operations relating to Zip C will be visible but unlikely to be intrusive. <i>Magnitude of change: temporary minor</i> During operation: Zip A and the top of Zip B will break the skyline at distance of approximately 2.5km. but it is unlikely that the zip wires and riders on Zips A and B will be seen. The stopping system of Zip B and the dispatch platform for Zip C will be screened by intervening mature conifers remaining on the top of the hill. Zip C and riders travelling on it will be just visible as they cross the view about 1.5km away against the wooded backdrop. <i>Magnitude of change: Minor</i>	Construction stage: <i>Visual impact: Minor</i> During operation: <i>Visual impact: Minor</i>

VIEWPOINT 3



Viewpoint 3: Hirwaun 3km north east of nearest part of site (reception area). Tudor Avenue on north west edge of Hirwaun.			
Current view	Visual receptors and sensitivity, value of view	Change to view and magnitude of visual change	Visual impact
Locale: This block of early 20th century terraced housing lies on the outskirts of Hirwaun, adjacent to the site of the original ironworks. It is mainly detached from the main part of Hirwaun and sits in a slightly elevated position, above the Cynon river. Long panoramic view south taking in the broad sweep of the north-facing escarpment above the upper stretch of the Cynon valley, with Craig y Llyn just visible to the west (right) over the projecting promontory of Twyn Canwyllyr. Several large wind turbines break the skyline, including those directly behind (south of) Craig y Llyn. Forestry clothing the slopes and also parts of the skyline. In winter, when the sun is to the south, the scarp is seen mainly in shadow and silhouette, with the lower features difficult to make out. The opencast mining on the lower slopes is prominent, overshadowed by the scarp behind. The view is similar parts of Mount Pleasant housing estate, another outlying part of Hirwaun to the west.	Residents in houses in the vicinity have these views and/or glimpses from their homes and gardens. <i>Resident sensitivity: high</i> This view to the ridge is an attractive feature of Hirwaun generally. <i>Value of view: moderate</i>	Construction stage: It is very unlikely that any of the construction activity will be seen . <i>Magnitude of change: none</i> During operation: At 5km distance, and with only a very small part of the top of the development being visible (if any), there will be very little change to the view from here. <i>Magnitude of change: negligible</i>	Construction stage: <i>Visual impact: none</i> During operation: <i>Visual impact: negligible</i>

VIEWPOINT 4



Viewpoint 4: Rhigos Road, Penderyn 4km. north of nearest part of site (reception area). On unclassified road leading from Penderyn to Rhigos/Hirwaun Industrial Estate.			
Current view	Visual receptors and sensitivity, value of view	Change to view and magnitude of visual change	Visual impact and significance of visual effect
Locale: This is part of BBNP Landscape Character Area 4: Waterfall Country and Southern Valleys. It is a sparsely populated pastoral hillside of small fields of rough grazing, bounded by dilapidated limestone walls and becoming more wooded further down. Long panoramic view south taking in the broad sweep of the north-facing escarpment from above the Neath valley in the west to Hirwaun Common to the east, with Craig y Llyn and the site directly ahead. Numerous large wind turbines break the skyline, including those directly behind (south of) Craig y Llyn. Forestry clothes parts of the slopes and the skyline. In winter, when the sun is to the south, the scarp is seen mainly in shadow and silhouette, with the lower features such as foothills difficult to make out. The activity in the valley floor of opencast mining, industrial estates and small settlements is not highly visible, or conspicuous, overshadowed by the scarp behind and partially screened by trees. The view is similar from: • 400m length of road on either side from the brow of the hill to where the road dips into more wooded lower slopes. • Penderyn churchyard. • 1.5km length of PRoW along Moel Penderyn. • All within BBNP	This road is little used, mainly by local people going about their business, plus occasional BBNP visitors <i>Road-user sensitivity: medium</i> This view, although attractive, is little seen. <i>Value of view: moderate</i>	Construction stage: It is very unlikely that any of the construction activity will be seen at this distance and against the light . <i>Magnitude of change: negligible</i> During operation: At more than 4km distance, about half of the development will be just visible against the backdrop of the scarp. Although Zip A and the top of Zip B will just break the skyline, they will not make much impact in comparison with the wind turbines. If the light catches the wires and gantries, these may be more visible on some days. <i>Magnitude of change: negligible</i>	Construction stage: <i>Visual impact: negligible</i> During operation: <i>Visual impact: negligible</i>

8.0. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1. This summary brings together the key points from each of the preceding chapters.

8.2. **Landscape baseline (Ch.2)** summary within 1km of the site:

- The study area extends from the highest parts of the upland plateau north of the Rhondda valleys, down to the flat floor of the upper Cynon valley near its watershed with the Neath valley.
- The whole study area is evaluated as 'Outstanding' or 'High' in the LANDMAP Geological Landscapes, Historic Landscapes and Cultural Landscapes aspects.
- Evaluations in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory and Landscape Habitats aspects vary from 'High' (Hirwaun Common), to 'Moderate' (all forested areas), to 'Low' (reclaimed land in the north).
- Craig y Llyn Geological SSSI cover the scarp face, cwms and glacial lakes in a belt across the centre of the study area. Part of this is also RIGS.
- RCT's Hirwaun Common SLA also stretches across the centre of the study area, covering a wider belt of land that forms the backdrop to all views from the north.
- Apart from the reclaimed land, all of the study area (other than SSSI) in RCT is SINC.
- The A4061 Rhigos Mountain road is the only road in the study area, passing down the scarp face.
- Much of the study area is open access land, either commercial forestry or open rough grazing.
- Sustrans Route 47 passes east-west through the forestry in the south part of the study area.
- There are few PRoW within the study area, the most notable being the bridleway that passes along the top edge of the scarp.
- Four landscape character areas have been identified, from south to north:
 - **Forested upland:** This southern part of the study area is high rolling plateau wrapping around the heads of the Rhondda valleys. It is generally swathed in commercial forestry - some mature stands, some recently felled, and others in varying stages of growth. The large Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm is now the dominant feature, with wide access tracks and signage as well as the turbines themselves. There is good access for walking and cycling, with some long-distance views south, but none northwards.
 - **Scarp & cwms:** This central belt of the study area is one of the most dramatic and well-loved areas of scenery in the Valleys, with the steep scarp face of Hirwaun Common and Craig y Llyn, and the two glacial lakes (although Llyn Fawr is considerably modified as a reservoir). Once away from the main road, this area feels remote and wild, with fine views along the scarp and to the distance Brecon Beacons.
 - **Forested foothills:** A belt of rounded hills below the scarp which appear small from above but substantial from the valley floor. They are covered in commercial forestry, with blocks in varying stages of growth. Generally not very accessible and without any special attractions, this area is little used for recreation.
 - **Former opencast:** The flat farmland fields of the north part of the study area belie the fact that a few years' ago all this area was open cast. The derelict buildings of the iconic Tower Colliery, with its pithead winding gear, form the centrepiece to the area.

8.3. Visual baseline (Ch. 3) summary within 5km of the site:

- The visibility map shows that notable views of the site are only available from places to the immediate east and from the north.
- The general visibility of the site is discussed in three sections:
 - **'top section'** - Craig y Llyn (and Llyn Fawr, although the water is only visible from within about 1km), approximately 1km length;
 - **'central section'** - the forested hill between Llyn Fawr and the open land around Tower Colliery, approximately 700m length, and;
 - **'lower section'** - the flat fields around the former Tower Colliery, and the site of the colliery, approximately 100mm length.
- From the south and west the site is hidden from views by the topography plus forestry.
- Road users on the A4061, particularly those who stop at the Rhigos viewpoint layby, are considered to have a higher than usual sensitivity to the views at this iconic location, and have relatively close-up views of the site.
- There are no other notable views of the site from roads.
- There are very few views of the site from settlements.
- Walkers/horse-riders, cyclists and other recreational users throughout the study area are considered to have a high sensitivity to views as they are specifically there to appreciate the 'great outdoors', the panoramic views and sense of remoteness and tranquility. However, there are very few views of the site from regular recreational routes, except close-up from the very top of Craig y Llyn and around Llyn Fawr.

8.4. Proposed development (Ch.4) summary:

- The proposed development consists of three zip lines, each with four parallel wires, leading one from the other, plus a reception area at the base at Tower Colliery.
- Each zip line has a dispatch tower at the top and a stopping system at the bottom.
- Access to the top and from the bottom will mainly utilise existing forestry tracks.
- **Zip A**, approximately 187m length, is all within the 'scarp and cwms' landscape character area, as described in the landscape baseline. It is all within the 'top section' of the site, as described in the visual baseline.
- **Zip B**, approximately 925m. length, is mostly within the 'scarp and cwms' landscape character area, with the lower quarter of its length in the 'forested foothills' landscape character area, as described in the landscape baseline. The top quarter of its length is in the 'top section' with the rest being in the 'central section' of the site, as described in the visual baseline.
- **Zip C**, approximately 500m. length, is almost all in the 'forested foothills' landscape character area, with the end and the route back to the reception area being in the 'former opencast' landscape character area, as described in the landscape baseline. It is mainly in the 'central section' of the site, with the end and the reception area being in the 'lower section' of the site, as described in the visual baseline.

8.5. Landscape impacts (Ch. 5) summary:

- Forested uplands:
 - **No** parts of the proposed development will be within this landscape character areas.
 - The access tracks within the forestry will get more usage but the impact is considered to be **negligible**.
- Scarp and cwms:
 - All of Zip A and three-quarters of Zip B are in this landscape character area.
 - This landscape has a generally high or very high sensitivity to change, being highly valued for its geological features and cultural and scenic qualities.
 - The impacts on **SSSI** are unknown but may be **minor or more**.
 - It is judged that the impacts on the **scenic and cultural perceptions**, especially when viewed from Rhigos viewpoint, will be **major**.
 - The **PRoW** along the top of Craig y Llyn is likely to get more use, leading to a **moderate indirect** impact on this path.
- Forested foothills:
 - The lower quarter of Zip B and most of Zip C, plus the track that links between them, are in this landscape character areas.
 - Being in the **SLA** and part of the view from the Craig y Llyn viewpoint, the zip lines will have a **major** impact on qualities of remoteness and tranquility.
- Former opencast:
 - The end of Zip C, the reception area and the tracks that link between them are in this landscape character area.
 - There will be a **negligible** impact on the culturally-valuable **Tower Colliery**.
 - There may be a **minor** impact on the **SINC**
 - Increased use of the forestry **access track** by zip vehicles and for parking and spectating will occur. This will be a **minor indirect** impact.

8.6. Visual impacts (Ch.6) summary:

- The general visibility map (Figure 6) shows that notable views of the proposed development do not differ from views of the site itself, and are only available from places to the immediate east and from the north.
- From the south and west the proposed development will be hidden from views by the topography plus forestry.
- The impact on **perception** from the **Rhigos viewpoint layby** and A4061 hairpins, is assessed to be **major**, either adverse or beneficial, depending on the individual. The **visual impact**, however, will be **minor**.
- There will be **no** other notable **visual impacts** of the proposed development from **roads**.
- There will be **very little visual impact** of the proposed development from **settlements**.
- There will be **very little visual impact** of the proposed development on regular **recreational routes in BBNP, RCT or NPT**, except on the very top of Craig y Llyn and around Llyn Fawr.
- From **Viewpoint 1**, Rhigos Mountain viewpoint layby, the **visual impact** is judged to be **minor** during construction and operation. The **perceptual impacts** are judged to be **major**.

- From **Viewpoint 2**, on the edge of Bryn, the **visual impact** is judged to be **minor** during operation.
- From **Viewpoint 3**, on the edge of Hirwaun, the **visual impact** is judged to be **negligible**.
- From **Viewpoint 4**, near Penderyn, the **visual impact** is judged to be **negligible**.

8.7. In conclusion:

- The **landscape impacts** overall within 1km of the site are judged to be **minor**.
- The **visual impacts** overall are judged to be **minor** at most, with **negligible** or **no** visual impacts from most parts of the 5km study area.
- At the **Rhigos viewpoint layby**, and elsewhere within about 1km, will there be a **major** impact on the **perception** of the view. This may be considered adverse or beneficial, depending on each individual's point of view.

Appendix 1: METHODOLOGY

This Landscape Statement is based on the methodology set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute.

The following definitions relate specifically to this Landscape Statement

Landscape receptors are the defined aspects, qualities and elements of the landscape that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development.

Sensitivity of landscape receptors:

Very high sensitivity to landscape change:

- particularly important on a national or regional scale;
- evaluated as 'Outstanding' in Landmap
- landscape with very highly valued qualities or elements that are particularly sensitive to change.

High sensitivity to landscape change:

- important on national, regional or local scale;
- evaluated as 'High' in Landmap;
- landscape with highly valued features sensitive to change

Medium sensitivity to landscape change:

- medium importance on national, regional or local scale;
- generally positive character but may have been some degradation;
- some erosion of positive features or qualities resulting in mixed value;
- tolerant to some change provided appropriately dealt with;
- evaluated as 'Moderate' in Landmap.

Low sensitivity to landscape change:

- low importance or rarity on national, regional or local scale;
- few valued features or attributes;
- tolerant to change, or in need of positive change.

Landscape effects or change are the effects of the proposed development on the landscape as a resource in its own right:

- **direct** effects are changes to the landscape receptors within the site and immediate surrounds as a result of the proposed development;
- **indirect** effects are changes to key landscape character elements within the study area, or changes to the overall condition of the landscape as a result of the proposed development.

Magnitude of change to landscape receptors is described through an assessment of the loss of key elements of the existing landscape and/or the introduction of new elements which result in changes to the overall landscape character. These changes may be adverse or beneficial:

High magnitude of landscape change:

- total loss or major alteration to key elements of the landscape;
- proposed development becomes a dominant feature;

Medium magnitude of landscape change:

- partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape;
- introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic;
- some alteration or improvement to negative or inappropriate aspects, qualities or elements (beneficial change)

Minor magnitude of landscape change:

- minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape;
- introduction of elements that form a minor component of the wider landscape;
- elements that are not uncharacteristic in the landscape;
- minor alteration or improvement to negative or inappropriate aspects, qualities or elements (beneficial change).

Landscape impact is determined by the magnitude of change combined with the sensitivity of the landscape to change. This relies on professional judgement and generally can be expressed in the following table:

Magnitude of landscape change	Very high sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Minor	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible
Moderate	High	Moderate/major	Moderate	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate/major	Minor

Visual receptors are individuals or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by the proposed development.

Sensitivity of visual receptors depends on:

- distance from site, its size, angle/elevation of viewpoint, context, weather conditions
- differing activities of individual receptors (people) and their expectations
- importance of view, number of people affected, popularity,

Very high sensitivity to visual change:

- particularly important or iconic viewpoints;
- users have a particularly high interest in the aesthetics and views.

High sensitivity to visual change:

- viewpoints within high quality landscape;
- views recognised nationally or locally for amenity value;
- users have a high interest in the landscape, engage in leisure activities that value the views.

Medium sensitivity to visual change:

- viewpoints within a medium quality landscape;
- users have a moderate degree of interest in the views but aesthetic experience is not the main purpose of their activities.

Low sensitivity to visual change:

- viewpoints within a low quality landscape;
- users have little interest in the views.

Visual effects or change: direct effects or changes to the available views of the proposed development. These can be beneficial or adverse.

Magnitude of visual effects or change is assessed by:

- loss or addition of key elements of the pre-development view;
- alteration of the overall composition of the wider view;
- over how much of the area will the change in view be apparent;
- temporary/permanent;
- to what extent the scale, massing, layout, colours contrast with the pre-development view;
- topography of site and surrounds;
- distance between viewer and development.

High magnitude of visual change:

- total loss or major alteration to key elements of the existing view;
- substantial beneficial or detrimental change in visual character;

- development becomes dominant feature in view;
- major alteration or improvement or screening to negative or inappropriate aspects of the view(beneficial change).

Moderate magnitude of visual change:

- partial loss or moderate alteration to some elements of the existing view;
- may be noticeable or prominent but not constitute major improvement or loss of existing visual character;
- minor alteration or improvement or screening to negative or inappropriate aspects of the view (beneficial change).

Minor magnitude of visual change:

- minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the view;
- changes constitutes minor element of view;
- minor alteration or improvement or screening to minor negative or inappropriate aspects of the view(beneficial change).
- no marked effect on overall view.

Negligible magnitude of visual change:

- no perceivable change to elements of the view;
- no perceivable change to the scenery

Visual impact is determined by the magnitude of visual change combined with the sensitivity of the visual receptor. This relies on professional judgement and generally can be expressed in the following table:

Magnitude of visual change	Very high sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
High	Major	High	High/moderate	Moderate
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Minor
Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor/negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible