

## CHAPTER 11: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

### Introduction

- 11.1 This chapter considers the likely effect of the development proposal on the landscape features of the site and the character and appearance of the identified study area.
- 11.2 The methodology used in this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been based on the following published guidelines:
- Preparation of Environmental Statements for Planning Projects that require Environmental Assessment - A Good Practice Guide (1999) DETR London, The Stationery Office;
  - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment 3rd Edition (2013) the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, E and FN Spon (GLVIA3);
  - An approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England (2014);
  - Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment – The Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11; and
  - Visual representation of development proposals – Technical Guidance Note 02/17 (2017);

### Assessment Approach

- 11.3 The approach to this LVIA comprises the following stages:
- Determining the scope of the assessment;
  - A summary of the relevant national and local planning policy, along with supporting supplementary planning guidance;
  - The detailed consideration of the landscape and visual baseline conditions of the site that includes the identification of key resources and receptors through a combination of the desktop and research and field based survey work. This in turn results in the determination of value;
  - The description of the development proposals;

- The determination of the susceptibility of each land and visual receptors that is then combined with the judgement of value to make an overall assessment of sensitivity.
- The determination of the likely magnitude of change experience by each receptor;
- The assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development when assessed against the baseline of the approved development;
- The identification of measures that seek to avoid, remedy or compensate any likely significant adverse effects (mitigation measures);
- The subsequent reassessment of any residual effects of development specifically highlighting any remaining significant effects; and
- The consideration of any cumulative effect arising from developments in the locality of the site likely to further influence any change on the landscape and visual resource within the study area.

11.4 The assessment of landscape and visual effects is set out as a series of transparent and balanced professional judgements that follow three specific stages:

- The evaluation of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors. This process considers both the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change and the perceived value of each receptor;
- The identification of the extent of physical change to the existing landscape resource, to landscape character, and to the visual setting of the site; and
- The combined assessment of the nature of receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the proposed change (magnitude) resulting in a professionally informed judgement as to the significance of any likely impacts.

11.5 In carrying out the desk-based study for this LVIA the following data resources have been referred to:

- Planning Policy Wales – Edition 9 (2016) (PPW);
- Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design 2016 (TAN 12)
- Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011 to 2026 (2016) (NPTLDP);
- Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006 to 2021 (2013) (BLDP);
- LANDMAP – the Welsh landscape baseline – Natural Resource Wales
- Geological dataset – 25/10/13
- Habitats dataset – 04/02/2013

- Visual and Sensory dataset - 17/10/2013
- Historic dataset – 18/10/2013
- Cultural dataset – 20/12/2011
- Neath Port Talbot Landmap Landscape Assessment (2004)
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough – Consultancy Services for the Provision of Landscape Advice (Contract No.049/2009) (2011)
- Bridgend County Borough Council – Designation of Special Landscape Areas (2010)
- Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough (2013);
- British Listed Buildings online resource (<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/map>);
- Cadw – National Historic Assets of Wales
- (<http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en>)
- Ordnance Survey information Explorer 1:20,000 and Street Plus 1: 10,000; and
- Google Maps aerial photography.

### Scoping and Consultation

11.6 White Consultants (WC) has been appointed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) to assist in the scoping, consultation, and review of this project. Golby + Luck Landscape Architects (GL) has consulted with NPTCBC and WC in the preparation of this LVIA that includes a site meeting, initial advice provided by WC in relation to the scope of the project and key issues, and continued dialogue in relation to assessment views and the presentation of assessment information. The following has been agreed:

- LVIA assessment methodology;
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV);
- The location and number of representative views;
- Presentation of views; and
- Agreement of key views to be presented as DTM views.

11.7 Site work has been conducted between Autumn 2016 and Autumn 2017 to examine the likely extent of the study area; gather information to inform the baseline assessment; identify the key landscape constraints and opportunities; and identify the key visual receptors local to the site.

- 11.8 A number of representative views have been taken during field survey work that covers a range of identified visual receptors within the study area. Photographic views were taken during Autumn 2016 and Autumn 2017 with a digital camera with a 50mm lens (equivalent focal length) at eye line. Views have been presented to provide an accurate understanding of extent and scale of view at time of assessment.
- 11.9 A ZTV has been prepared to illustrate the extent of the visual influence of the proposal. An initial ZTV was prepared to illustrate the extent of visibility of the site, this has subsequently been updated to illustrate the extent of visibility of the proposed development parameters. The ZTV model has been produced using Ordnance Survey Terrain 50 to create a digital terrain model (DTM) in LSS Elite. The development parameters have been digitised on the existing ground levels and a line of sight (LOS) model created using multiple point assessment based on a 20m grid covering the study area.

## Methodology

### Landscape Baseline

- 11.10 The landscape baseline seeks to establish the value associated with the site, its local landscape setting, and its associated features. To understand value the assessment considered several factors when describing the site context and location that includes:
- Lane use;
  - Vegetation;
  - Topography;
  - Water features;
  - Public access; and
  - Local key characteristics
- 11.11 Landscape planning designation and published landscape character studies help to inform this assessment but their relevance will depend on the purpose and geographic extent of the designation, and detail of the study when considered against the nature and extent of the study.

11.12 As part of the landscape baseline an assessment of value is made. Box 5.1 in the GLVIA sets out a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscape and therefore inform a judgement as to their sensitivity. These include:

- [Landscape quality](#): A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- [Scenic quality](#): The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual sense).
- [Rarity](#): The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
- [Representativeness](#): Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- [Conservation interests](#): The presence of features or wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- [Recreation value](#): Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- [Perceptual aspects](#): A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- [Associations](#): Some landscape are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

11.13 At varying levels communities and individual will have differing perceptions as to the value of a landscape. However, for the purposes of landscape assessment it is important to set out a reasoned hierarchy of criteria for assessing value. Value is essentially concerned with the importance or rarity of a landscape and its ability to be substituted or replicated. Value can be categorised as follows:

- [Very High Landscape Value](#) – landscapes of great importance or rarity that would have limited potential for substitution or replication. Such landscapes are often identified by designation such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or World Heritage Sites. This may also include local destinations such as Areas of Great Landscape Value or Special Landscape Areas where the special interest of the designation is strongly represented and would be difficult to replicate. It is not the case

that all designated landscapes are of high value, areas where features of special interest are poorly represented may be of a reduced value. Likewise, undesignated landscapes with high concentrations of designated features in close proximity (such as heritage assets) where the landscape between them makes a critical contribution to their setting and interrelationship may be of increased value.

- [High Landscape Value](#) – landscapes of local value that are of good condition and/or strong strength of character with some potential for substitution or replication. This will include both local designated and undesignated landscapes, and landscapes with high concentrations of designated features in close proximity (such as heritage assets) where the landscape between them makes a valuable contribution to their setting and interrelationship.
- [Medium Landscape Value](#) – landscapes of moderate value or rarity that have potential for substitution or replication. Such landscapes can be identified through local designation, or may be undesignated but provide an important setting to locally designated landscape or heritage assets such as Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. There may also be parts of broader national designations where the features of special interest are either weak or poorly represented, and/or detracting features that limit the value attached to that particular part of the wider designation.
- [Low Landscape Value](#) – landscapes of limited value or rarity that can be substituted or replicated. Such landscapes are unlikely to be designated with a moderate to weak strength of character, and will be made up of features that are both common and widespread, and are of moderate to poor quality (condition).

## Visual Baseline

11.14 In establishing the visual baseline a series of representative view towards the site covering a range of visual receptors have been identified through field survey work and are identified on plans. The selected viewpoints can typically cover three types of views that are described in the GLVIA as:

- [Representative viewpoints](#) – selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where large numbers of viewpoints cannot be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ;
- [Specific viewpoints](#) – chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, including for example specific local visitor attractions,

viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscape with statutory landscape designations, or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations. Specific views include those from recreational spaces, cemeteries, public footpaths, open access land, and promoted trails.

- [Illustrative viewpoints](#) – chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be the restricted visibility at certain locations.

11.15 Not all of these types of viewpoints will be present or need to be considered in all of the assessment. The majority of viewpoints will be representative but not exclusively. All of the viewpoints considered are taken from publicly accessible locations. The likely effect of the development proposal on private locations, such as houses, is made through professional judgement based on views from publicly accessible locations nearby.

11.16 The representative views are described as part of the visual baseline assessment and consider the following criteria:

- Location of the viewpoint;
- Type of existing view;
- Distance between the observer and the site; and
- Extent and context of the site and/or likely view of development proposal observed.

11.17 With specific regard to distance between the observer and site and the extent of the site/development observed the following descriptions are used:

- Open views – uninterrupted views into the site;
- Filtered views – views partially obstructed by vegetation, landform, built-form or combinations of each; and
- Distant views – views over 2km from the site.

11.18 As part of the baseline assessment judgements must be made about the value attached to a view. Value may be attached to views that relate to designated landscapes and heritage assets. Value may also be attached through appearance in guide books, on maps, and through the provision of facilities specific to the enjoyment of a view such as benches or interpretation boards. Value may also be attached to views associated with heritage assets,

these are often identified in heritage assessments and conservation area appraisals. Value can be categorised as:

- [Very High Visual Value](#) – Promoted views identified on maps, or local walks/guides that are highly valued as a destination to appreciate a particular landscape or feature. This may include views towards notable natural features, structures, houses, heritage assets, or exceptional landscapes. These views are considered to be of greater than local value and are likely to be marked by signs, seating, or features that promote the view.
- [High Visual Value](#) – Views from publicised vantage points, or to a landscape of national importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience, or has important cultural associations. This may include particularly noteworthy views from identified trails, designated landscapes, and statutory heritage assets. These views are considered to be of greater than local value and regularly visited. Private views may include residential properties specifically designed to take advantage of a particular view;
- [Medium Visual Value](#) – Locally known or valued viewpoints. Views from promoted public rights of way or clear evidence of regular use and areas of informal open space. Views from regularly used rooms or living spaces. Panoramic views, vistas, or other noteworthy views from active recreation land, or highways; and
- [Low Visual Value](#) – Views that are not published and/or where there is limited evidence of regular use. Views from secondary windows not forming the main living or working spaces in properties. Views of little noteworthiness from active recreation land, or highways.

### [Assessment of Landscape Effects](#)

- 11.19 The initial stage of the assessment of landscape effect is to determine the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change, and an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.
- 11.20 The following criteria are used to establish landscape susceptibility. Whilst these are typical examples it does not always follow that a site within a specific landscape designation will automatically fit with this categorization. Much will depend on the specific site conditions:

- [Very High Landscape Susceptibility](#) – A landscape possessing a strong and defined character of notable scenic quality, in good condition with a very low tolerance to the proposed change.
- [High Landscape Susceptibility](#) - A landscape possessing a defined character of good scenic quality, in good condition with a low tolerance to the proposed change.
- [Medium Landscape Susceptibility](#) – A landscape possessing a moderate strength character and scenic quality, in moderate condition with a moderate tolerance to the proposed change
- [Low Landscape Susceptibility](#) – A landscape possessing a weak and undefined character of limited scenic quality, in poor condition with a high tolerance to the proposed change.

11.21 Judgements of value and susceptibility are then combined as an assessment of overall sensitivity:

Table 11.1: Matrix of Landscape Sensitivity

|       |           | SUSCEPTIBILITY |           |        |        |
|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------|--------|
| VALUE |           | VERY HIGH      | HIGH      | MEDIUM | LOW    |
|       | VERY HIGH | Very High      | Very High | High   | Medium |
|       | HIGH      | Very High      | High      | Medium | Medium |
|       | MEDIUM    | High           | Medium    | Medium | Low    |
|       | LOW       | Medium         | Medium    | Low    | Low    |

11.22 The following stage of the assessment process considers the magnitude of change imposed by the proposed development on each landscape receptors. Issues that inform this judgement include:

- [Size or scale](#): The amount of change resulting from the proposal to features, or key characteristics and attributes of the landscape type or area.
- [Geographic extent](#): Determines the extent to which the landscape type or area will be affected by the proposed development.

- Duration and reversibility of the landscape effect: The timeframe, or duration of the effect by the proposed development, and whether the effect is permanent or temporary.

11.23 The likely magnitude of change of the development proposal can be guided by the following criteria:

- [High magnitude of change](#) – The proposal will result in a total change in the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements into the landscape that are totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape, and/or will result in the substantial loss, or alteration of key elements/features.
- [Medium magnitude of change](#) – The proposal will result in a change in the key characteristic of the landscape character, will introduce elements uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in loss, or alteration to key elements/features.
- [Low magnitude of change](#) – The proposal will result in a partial change to the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements that are not entirely uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in the minor loss, or alteration to key elements/features.
- [Negligible magnitude of change](#) – The proposal will result in a very limited changed to the key characteristics of the landscape character, will introduce elements consistent with the attributes of the receiving landscape, and/or will result in an limited loss, or alteration to key elements/features.

11.24 The combined judgements on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) are combined to arrive at a clear and transparent judgement of significance. The significance of landscape effects is described in the assessment text and are guided by the matrix set out below:

Table 11.2: Matrix of Landscape Significance

|                        |            | SENSITIVITY    |                |                |          |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| MAGNITUDE<br>OF CHANGE |            | VERY HIGH      | HIGH           | MEDIUM         | LOW      |
|                        | HIGH       | Major          | Major          | Major-Moderate | Moderate |
|                        | MEDIUM     | Major-Moderate | Major-Moderate | Moderate       | Minor    |
|                        | LOW        | Moderate       | Moderate       | Minor          | Minimal  |
|                        | NEGLIGIBLE | Minor          | Minor          | Minimal        | Minimal  |

- 11.25 For the purpose of this assessment, effects that are of major and major-moderate significance (highlighted in blue) are those considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process.

### Assessment of Visual Effects

- 11.26 The initial stage of the assessment of visual effect is to determine the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change, and an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.
- 11.27 GLVIA describes the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity as a function of:
- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
  - the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience in particular locations.
- 11.28 The GVLIA goes on to categorise those receptor groups that are likely to be most susceptible to change:
- residents at home;
  - people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including people using public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views;

- visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by the residents in the area.

11.29 Whilst this covers a number of potential visual receptors it does not automatically make them all highly susceptible to change. Susceptibility can be categorised as follows:

- [Very High Susceptibility](#) – Views that provide a key understanding and appreciation of valued landscapes (most notably National Parks and AONB's), notable natural features, or historic structures/properties (such as engineering structures or country houses).
- [High Visual Susceptibility](#) - Primary views from residential properties; users of public rights of way, informal footpaths, cycleways and public open space where the appreciation of the wider landscape setting is critical to its function and enjoyment; visitors to local attractions and heritage/wildlife assets where views of the wider landscape are important to its setting.
- [Medium Visual Susceptibility](#) - Secondary/restricted views from residential properties; users of public rights of way, informal footpaths, cycleways, lanes and public open space where the appreciation of the wider landscape setting is moderately important to its function and enjoyment; and visitors to local attractions and heritage/wildlife assets where views of the wider landscape make a contribution to its setting but are not critical to its appreciation and enjoyment.
- [Low Visual Susceptibility](#) - People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation where the appreciation of views is not critical to their enjoyment; people at their workplace where the setting is not important to the quality of working life, and road or footpath users where views of the wider landscape make a limited contribution to its setting.

11.30 In terms of views from residential properties it is important to note that the planning system does not serve to protect private interests. The key issues in considering residential views is not whether an occupier would experience financial or other loss from development but whether such development would unacceptably affect the residential amenity of the property and associated land holding. A number of Local Authorities have adopted residential amenity standards for new development that have been specifically implemented to control the

relationship between existing and proposed development. Where such standards exist these will be relied upon and not replicated through further assessment.

- 11.31 Judgements of value and susceptibility are then combined as an assessment of overall sensitivity:

Table 11.3: Matrix of Visual Sensitivity

|       |           | SUSCEPTIBILITY |           |        |        |
|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------|--------|
| VALUE |           | VERY HIGH      | HIGH      | MEDIUM | LOW    |
|       | VERY HIGH | Very High      | Very High | High   | Medium |
|       | HIGH      | Very High      | High      | Medium | Medium |
|       | MEDIUM    | High           | Medium    | Medium | Low    |
|       | LOW       | Medium         | Medium    | Low    | Low    |

- 11.32 The following stage of the assessment process considers the magnitude of change imposed by the proposed development on each visual receptors. Issues that inform this judgement include:

- Size or scale: This includes the loss of important features to the character and composition of the views, the degree of consistency between the proposals and visual setting of the receiving landscape, and the extent of the view and proportion of that view the proposals in likely to influence or change.
- Geographic extent: The extent of the area in which the proposed change will be visible.
- Duration and reversibility of the visual effect: The timeframe, or duration of the effect by the proposed development, and whether the effect is permanent or temporary.

- 11.33 The likely magnitude of change of the development proposal can be guided by the following criteria:

- High magnitude - The proposal will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting in the loss or addition of substantial features in the view, at odds with the existing visual character, and substantially altering the appreciation of the view.

- [Medium magnitude](#) - The proposal will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which will have an effect on composition through the loss or addition of features, noticeably altering the appreciation of the view.
- [Low magnitude](#) - The proposal will cause a perceptible change or contrast in the view, but which will not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
- [Negligible magnitude](#) - The proposal will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view that will not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
- [No change](#) – no part of the scheme or associated works will be discernible in the view.

11.34 The combined judgements on the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the impact (magnitude) are combined to arrive at a clear and transparent judgement of significance. The significance of visual effects are described in the assessment text and are guided by the matrix set out below:

Table 11.4: Matrix of Landscape Significance

|                        |            | SENSITIVITY    |                |                |          |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
|                        |            | VERY HIGH      | HIGH           | MEDIUM         | LOW      |
| MAGNITUDE<br>OF CHANGE | HIGH       | Major          | Major          | Major-Moderate | Moderate |
|                        | MEDIUM     | Major-Moderate | Major-Moderate | Moderate       | Minor    |
|                        | LOW        | Moderate       | Moderate       | Minor          | Minimal  |
|                        | NEGLIGIBLE | Minor          | Minor          | Minimal        | Minimal  |
|                        |            |                |                |                |          |

11.35 For the purpose of this assessment, effects that are of major and major-moderate significance (highlighted in blue) are those considered particularly relevant to the planning decision making process.

#### Criteria of Other Factors Assessed

11.36 The assessment also considers the following aspects;

- [Directs and indirect effects](#) – direct effect effects are those directly attributable to the development. These include changes to features, character, and views. Indirect

effects are those resulting indirectly from the development. These effects may result as a consequence of direct effects over distance from the site, or a sequence of change over time or distance;

- [Seasonal variation](#) – due to the role that vegetation can play in preventing or limiting views, or influencing the character of the landscape, the difference between winter and summer needs to be considered. This is considered by assessing winter views (in the first year following completion) and in summer (after 15 years);
- [Beneficial, neutral, or adverse effects](#) - adverse effects are those that would be damaging to the quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource. Beneficial effects are those that would result in an improvement in the quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource. Neutral effects are those effect that would maintain, on balance, the existing levels of quality, integrity, or key characteristics of the landscape and/or visual resource.

## Site Context

- 11.37 The site is located within the jurisdiction of NPTCBC set within the Coalfield Plateau to the south of the River Afan, approximately 15km to the north of Bridgend; see Figure 11.1. The site comprises an area of cleared commercial forestry land associated with Foel Fawr at the upper extent of the Afan Valley. The site is bound the to the north by the Brytwn Road (A4107), and to the east by the Measteg Road and Pen y Bryn (A4063). To the south and west the site is undefined, following the district boundary of NPTCBC.
- 11.38 In terms of settlement, the site is bound by Cymmer to the north, Croeserw to the east, and Caerau and Brynheulog to the south; see Figure 11.2. These settlements are typically of a linear form and characterised by rows of terraced houses. To the west there are the two smaller settlements of Duffryn and Cynonville that comprise small clusters of terraced housing rising up the valley slopes on the south side of the Afan Road (A4107).
- 11.39 Abercregan is small hamlet at the mouth of Cwm Cregan just to the north of the site. This hamlet is also characterised by roadside terraces that front onto the valley.
- 11.40 To the north of Cymmer the River Corrwg converges with the River Afan. To the north Heol y Glyn follows Cwm Corrwg and is defined by short sections of terraced housing that includes

Avondale Terrace and Sunnyside Terrace. Further to the north Glyncorrwg sits at the head of the valley. To the east the A4107 meanders alongside the River Afan towards Abergwynfi.

- 11.41 In terms of infrastructure, the principal highway network comprises the A4107 to the north of the site that follows the valley floor on the southside of the River Afan; and the A4063 to the south and west of the site that follows the River Llynfi south towards Bridgend. Beyond these main highways there is a network of local roads associated with the settlements but notably few highways that extend beyond the valley floor onto the surrounding uplands.
  
- 11.42 Commercial forestry plantation has a strong influence on this landscape comprising extensive areas of coniferous plantation, and cleared plantation that have left the valley sides open and exposed the network of access tracks and trials.
  
- 11.43 Wind farms are notable to the north and east of the site. Ffynnon Oer to the north of the site is a relatively large windfarm located on an upland area between valley setting of Melin Court Brook to the north and Cwn Cregan to the south. To the east of the site the western extent of the Llynfi Afan wind farm extends across the upland pastures at Mynydd y Gelli.
  
- 11.44 Evidence of the former mining activity associated with this landscape is present in the form of small-scale excavations and tips. Of particular note are the tips to the north of Duffryn on the upper valley slopes that present as an almost sculptural landscape element.
  
- 11.45 In terms of land use and vegetation cover, the wider setting of the valley is defined by large tracts of commercial forestry plantation, areas of cleared plantation; upland pastures; and low-lying deciduous woodland set on the steep lower valley slopes associated with the River Afan and its tributaries. To the north of the River Afan are extensive areas of working forestry plantation that comprise part of the Afan Forest Park, a local tourist attraction for mountain biking, leisure cycling, and walking. To the south of the River Afan the site and wider landscape setting that extends to Caerau and Brynheulog comprise a large tract of cleared forestry plantation associated with Foel Fawr. In contrast, the land to the east and west of the site comprises open pasture associated with Foel Trawsnant and Foel y Dyffryn to the west; and Mynydd y Gelli to the east. Much of this upland pastoral landscape correlates with the Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation; see Figure 11.3.

- 11.46 In terms of landform water features, the upland plateau is dissected by the deep valley setting of the River Afan to the north of the site. The valley floor rises from approximately 150m above ordnance datum (AOD) to the north of the site, towards the summits of Foel Fawr (347m AOD) at the southern boundary of the site; see Figure 11.4. The landform on the north side of the valley rises towards the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm at approximately 464m AOD. To the north-east the landform rises sharply towards the exposed crags at Tarren Rhiw-llech, beyond which the landform continues to rise towards Mynydd Ynyscorrwg at approximately 502m AOD.
- 11.47 To the east the valley setting of Nany y Fedw is defined by Coetgae Isaf to the north at approximately 450m AOD, and Llyndwr Fawr to the south at approximately 555m AOD. To the south-east Caerau Forest sits in the lower-lying land between Llyndwr Fawr and Mynydd Pwll yr Iwrch at approximately 433m AOD. To the south the landform falls into the valley setting of the River Llynfi. To the south-west Nant Tryfal falls between the pastoral common land associated with Foel y Dyffryn at approximately 366m AOD, and Foel Trawsnant at approximately 396m AOD.
- 11.48 In terms of access and recreation, this is a highly accessible landscape with an extensive network of public rights of way, large forest parks, and open access land more commonly associated with the upland pastures.
- 11.49 In terms of designations, the site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations. The site adjoins the Foel Trawsnant Special Landscape Area to the south-west; see Figures 11.1 and 11.3. The SLA comprises part of the eastern highlands complex retained as upland grazing, unaffected by conifer plantations. Further to the east of Croeserw is the Mynydd y Gelli SLA that forms part of the wider Western Uplands Bridgend SLA. This is again an area of predominantly upland pasture that is distinct from the surrounding coniferous forestry.
- 11.50 Beyond the SLA's, the only notable local designations are Listed Buildings that include the Cymmer Viaduct, Cymmer Bridge and Croeserw Viaduct. There are also a number of Grade II Listed Buildings associated with the local settlements; see Figures 11.1 and 11.3.

## Site Description

- 11.51 The site extends to approximately 132.5 hectares of commercial forestry land the majority of which was cleared between 2012 and 2015 following an outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum*. Similarly, large tracks of plantation associated within the Afan Forest to the north of the site have been cleared at the same time. This has resulted in a marked effect on the character of the site, and the wider setting of this part of the Afan Valley.
- 11.52 The site appears to have been planted as commercial forestry in the mid 1960's prior to which it was likely to have been maintained as upland pasture similar to the land to the south-west of the site.
- 11.53 The northern boundary of the site is generally open to the adjoining Brytwn Road, beyond which the landform drops steeply into the deciduous woodland setting of the River Afan. Towards its eastern extent the northern boundary cuts in behind the southern edge of Cymmer following the boundary of the Cymmer Afan Comprehensive School and adjoining sports pitches.
- 11.54 The eastern boundary of the site is generally open with the adjoining A4063 that includes Maesteg Road and Pen y Bryn at this boundary of the site. Beyond this boundary is the wider settlement of Croeserw.
- 11.55 The southern boundary of the site follows the County Borough boundary with neighbouring Bridgend. This is an arbitrary boundary that is not defined on the ground. However, a recent consent for a solar farm on the immediately adjoining land with associated boundary fencing will define this boundary if implemented; see Figures 11.1 and 11.2. Beyond the southern boundary the land comprises cleared commercial forestry similar to the site that extends towards the northern fringes of Brynheulog, and areas of unmanaged pasture that extend south towards Foel y Dyffryn.
- 11.56 The northern half of the site's western boundary is open with the adjoining Brytwn Road, beyond which the landform drops steeply into the deciduous woodland setting of the River Afan. The southern half of this boundary is defined by a post and wire fence and is open to the adjoining setting of farmed pasture that falls towards Nant Tryfal.

- 11.57 An area of coniferous plantation comprising Spruce and Pine has been retained towards the centre of the site. The main block of plantation extends to approximately 9.14 hectares. Around these stands there are areas of regenerative tree and shrub growth that comprise Oak, Birch and Goat Willow.
- 11.58 The former access tracks towards the middle and eastern fringes of the site have been maintained. To the west the tracks and pathways are littered with debris from the felling operations and have become overgrown with grass cover. The main vehicular access is from Pen y Bryn (A4063) at the eastern boundary of the site. This still provides access to the underground reservoir at the eastern boundary of the site, and the communications mast at the southern boundary the site.
- 11.59 Just to the west of the highway access is a pond that extends to approximately 1600m<sup>2</sup>. The pond sits set below the access track, bound by stands of Goat Willow.
- 11.60 In terms of landform, the northern and western boundaries of the site rise at a gradient of approximately 1:2 from the highway boundary with Brytwn Road. The northern boundary rises from a low-point of approximately 16m AOD, and the northern boundary from the low-point of approximately 180m AOD. The northern tip of the site rises towards Pen y Castell, a prominent landform with associated rock outcrops that overlooks the valley at approximately 245m AOD.
- 11.61 At between 230m AOD and 250m AOD the gradient is approximately 1:3. Beyond 280m AOD the landform eases towards the central plateau that rises more gently towards the summit of Foel Fawr (347m AOD) at the southern boundary of the site.
- 11.62 In terms of access, the site is crossed by 3no. bridleways and 1no. footpath; see Figure 11.2. Bridleway BR42 crosses the site between Brytwn Road to north and Foel y Dyffryn to the south. This is an historic drovers road known local as Heol y Moch. Bridleway BR43 crosses the western slopes of the site between Brytwn Road and bridleway BR42 that it connects with to the south of the site. Bridleway BR44 rises up the northern slopes of the site from Brytwn Road traversing to the south of Pen y Castell to connect with Bridleway BR43 at the south-west boundary of the site. Footpath FP66 extends from bridleway BR42 within the site crossing through the retained forestry plantation and the southern ridge to connect with Brynheulog and Caerau to the south of the site.

11.63 In terms of infrastructure, there is a communication mast at the southern boundary of the site set just to the north of the summit of Foel Fawr. At the eastern boundary of the site there is underground reservoir that sits just above Pen y Bryn. There are a number of small overhead cables that cross the site, the most notable being the cable following the southern boundary of the site. Although not a feature on the ground, the old Cymmer Tunnel runs beneath the site connecting the Cymmer Viaduct and the former South Wales Mineral Line to the north of the site with the Llynfi Branch of the Great Western Railway to the south.

11.64 The site is not covered by any landscape designation, and does not contained any designated heritage, wildlife, or nature conservation assets; see Figure 11.3.

## Planning Policy

### Planning Policy Wales – Edition 9 November 2016

11.65 Chapter 5 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is concerned with ‘Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast’. The Welsh Government’s objectives for the conservation and improvement of the natural heritage area to:

- “promote the conservation of landscape and biodiversity, in particular the conservation of native wildlife and habitats;
- ensure that action in Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for the natural environment;
- ensure that statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed;
- safeguard protected species, and to
- promote the functions and benefits of soils, and in particular their function as a carbon store.”

11.66 PPW identifies Statutory Landscape Designations as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Statutory Nature Conservation Designations are identified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), sites designated under the RAMSAR Convention, and those designated under EC Directives that include Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

11.67 The site does not contain or adjoin any Statutory Landscape Designations, or Statutory Nature Conservation Designations as identified in PPW.

11.68 PPW identifies Non-Statutory Designations as including Special Landscape Areas (SLA), and Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation. PPW states:

*“Local planning authorities should apply these designations to areas of substantive conservation value where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. Such designations should not unduly restrict acceptable development.”*

11.69 The site adjoins the Foel Trawsnant SLA to the west. To the east of the site beyond Croeserw is the Mynydd-y-Gelli SLA.

11.70 PPW notes the importance of the LANDMAP information system and promotes the publication of LANDMAP assessments. In 2004, NPTCBC published the Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment that has been used to inform the findings of this LVIA.

#### Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design 2016 (TAN 12)

11.71 PPW defines design as:

*“the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings.”*

11.72 In relation to the appraisal of the landscape TAN 11 again references LANDMAP stating:

*“Appraisal of the landscape should focus on its quality in terms of geology and geomorphology, vegetation and habitats, visual and sensory quality and historic and cultural quality. “LANDMAP” is one method of assessment which has the potential to provide a framework and information base from which good design and management can be developed. Similar assessments are available to measure the quality of the ‘seascape’. These identify what areas, characteristics and qualities are important to conserve at a*

*time when our coastal areas face many pressures from new developments. Historic Landscape Characterisation provides a more detailed level of assessment for the historic environment, and studies have been carried out for all of the areas included in the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales. Further detailed site appraisals may also provide information on local hydrology, microclimate, soils, plant communities and features, and all visual qualities including views and vistas.”*

### Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026) (20016) (NPTLDP)

11.73 In the NPTLDP the site is not covered by any environmental designation. The site is located beyond the defined settlement limits and development is therefore subject to Strategic Policy SP14 The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast.

11.74 In the NPTLDP the site is identified within the Valleys Strategy Area on the south side of Afan Valley that is identified as a Strategic Tourist Destination.

11.75 Policy SP14 states:

*“The countryside and undeveloped coast, including landscapes, seascapes and agricultural land, will be protected and where feasible enhanced through the following measures:*

1. The protection of the open countryside through the control of inappropriate development outside settlement limits;
2. The protection of the undeveloped coast through the control of inappropriate development;
3. The designation and protection of Special Landscape Areas; 4. The designation and protection of Green Wedges.”

11.76 Paragraph 5.3.2 of the NPTLDP states:

*“Neath Port Talbot has a variety of distinctive and contrasting landscapes and seascapes. The Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP landscape assessment evaluates approximately half of the County Borough area as ‘high’ or ‘outstanding’ for its geological landscapes, much of the visual and sensory aspect layer is evaluated as ‘moderate’ or of local importance*

*with 'high' values applied to plateau and coastal areas, there are 'high' and 'outstanding' values for landscape habitats and the majority of the County Borough is 'high' or 'outstanding' in terms of its cultural aspect layer*

11.77 Policy SP15 of the NPTLDP is concerned with biodiversity and geodiversity stating:

*"Important habitats, species and sites of geological interest will be protected, conserved, enhanced and managed through the following measures:*

- 1. The identification of the following Internationally and Nationally designated sites within the County Borough to enable their protection:*
  - (a) Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites;*
  - (b) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);*
  - (c) National Nature Reserves (NNRs).*
- 2. The identification and protection of sites of regional and local importance;*
- 3. The protection of important natural heritage features."*

11.78 The sub-policy to this strategic policy are generally concerned with the identification and protection of site of important biodiversity and geodiversity. This issue has been considered in detail in Chapter 8 of this Environmental Statement (ES). However, Policy EN7 is concerned with the protection of natural features and their visual importance. This policy states:

*"Development proposals that would adversely affect ecologically or visually important natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows / field boundaries, watercourses or ponds will only be permitted where:*

- 1. Full account has been taken of the relevant features in the design of the development, with measures put in place to ensure that they are retained and protected wherever possible; or*
- 2. The biodiversity value and role of the relevant feature has been taken into account and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation measures are agreed."*

11.79 Through consultation with NPTCBC a copy of the Neath Port Talbot Landmap Landscape Assessment (2004) has been provided as supplementary planning guidance.

## Baseline Assessment

### Landscape Character

- 11.80 The following section of this assessment considers the existing character of the site and study area. A number of published landscape character documents have been referenced alongside a more detailed consideration of the site and its local setting.

### LANDMAP

- 11.81 LANDMAP provided by Natural Resources Wales is the Welsh landscape baseline resource with quality assured spatial datasets relating to:

- Visual and sensory aspects;
- Cultural landscapes;
- Landscape habitats;
- Historic landscapes; and
- Geological landscapes

- 11.82 In terms of visual and sensory aspects, the site is located within an area of low value (Foel Fawr); see Figure 11.5. In the evaluation it is clear that the site was last assessed as an area of commercial forestry described as creating a harsh boundary where the forestry abuts open areas. This baseline has changed following the more recent clearance of forestry within the site.

- 11.83 Medium-term guidelines include an increase of deciduous woodland species to create visual interest, improve visual integration, and break up the solid edge against settlement and moorland. This reflects the objectives of the Afan Resource Plan published by Natural Resources Wales.

- 11.84 To the north is the Cwm Afan aspect area assessed as moderate value. The area is described as providing high levels of scenic quality as a recognised tourist attractive with detracting elements. Guidelines include the long-term replenishment of deciduous woodland cover; and medium-term retention/protection of woodland cover, features such as the viaducts, improve access and waymarking, and screen residential development/better integrate settlements.

- 11.85 There are two areas of high value to the south (Mynydd Baedan) and east (Mynydd-y-Gelli) of the site. The value of both areas is found in the simpler open and elevated character of grassland and pasture that contrasts with the forestry plantation common to much of the surrounding Afan Valley.
- 11.86 In terms of cultural landscapes, the site forms part of the Eastern Highlands aspect area that is assessed as being high value; see Figure 11.6. The area is described as a landscape now given over to conifer forestry plantations that has subsumed extensive evidence of human occupation in prehistory and throughout the Medieval periods.
- 11.87 To the south is the Llynfi Garw and Ogmore Valleys area assessed as medium value. This area is defined by ribbon development extending along a series of valleys. The settlements themselves are in decline described as exuding a sense of dereliction.
- 11.88 To the south-west is the Margram Mountain aspect area, assessed as being of outstanding value. This area is described as an evolved landscape generally unaffected by development and industrial exploitation. There is extensive archaeological evidence and land husbandry.
- 11.89 In terms of habitats, the site forms part of a low value area of secondary semi-improved coniferous plantation with no known priority habitats or species; see Figure 11.7.
- 11.90 To the north the lower river valley forms part of a high value landscape with BAP and key species present. Further to the north the Afan Forest Park forms part of a medium value landscape. To the south is a small area of wet heathland associated with Foel-y-Dyffryn assessed as high value.
- 11.91 In terms of historic landscape, the site is located at the boundary of two aspect areas; see Figure 11.8. To the north is the Upper Afan area assessed as high value. This area displays a diverse multi-period landscape with prehistoric, Medieval and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Century industrial activity.
- 11.92 The southern half of the site forms a small area Foel Penycatell assessed as moderate value. This area comprises a large track of un-enclosed upland under modern forestry production.

- 11.93 To the south of the site the Llangywyd aspect area is assessed as outstanding value, comprising a rich multi-period landscape of national importance containing remains of settlement and enclosure dating from prehistoric, Medieval, and post war periods.
- 11.94 To the north the higher ground associated with the Afan Forest forms part of the Afan Wallia area again assessed as outstanding value with an exceptionally rich multi-period landscape.
- 11.95 In terms of geological landscapes, the site forms part of the Foel Fynyddau aspect area assessed as being of high value; see Figure 11.9. This area comprises Pennant sandstones with coals in dissected plateaus, glacial valleys with cwms at heads, and slips and mining.
- 11.96 To the southern is the U Llynfi Valley aspect area assessed as being moderate value. This area comprises typically widespread coal measures with industrialised glacial valleys with coal measures and Pennant sandstone.
- 11.97 The landscape directly associated with the site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations. In terms of the LANDMAP landscape baseline the site has not been assessed as outstanding value in any of the aspect criteria. The LANDMAP baseline can be summarised as:
- Visual and Sensory = Low Value;
  - Cultural landscapes = High Value;
  - Landscape Habitats = Low Value;
  - Historic landscapes = High/Moderate value; and
  - Geological landscapes = High value

[Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment \(2004\) \(NPTLCA\)](#)

- 11.98 NPTCBC has published a LANDMAP assessment specific to the Borough. The report identifies a number of landscape character areas (LCA); see Figure 11.10. The following fall within the study area:
- LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna;
  - LCA 12 – Mynydd Penhydd
  - LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant
  - LCA 14 – Foel Fawr (the site)

- LCA 15 – Mynydd y Gelli
- LCA 18 – Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg

11.99 LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna comprises the upland valleys of Afan and Pelenna and minor tributaries. The key characteristics of this LCA are identified as:

- *“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;*
- *Substantial recreational use within the valley, especially Afan Forest Park;*
- *Mosaic of habitats, river valley systems dominating the valley floor, higher ground significant fridd habitat.”*

11.100 This is a steep and deep valley that affords a dramatic setting. In locations away from settlement the valley has a remote character, contained by the surrounding uplands of commercial forestry, and farmed pastures. The valley is highly accessible with highways and recreation routes following the dismantled railway running alongside the river. The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Medium Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = High Value;
- Historic landscapes = High value; and
- Geological landscapes = High value

11.101 In overall terms the landscapes associated with LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna are considered to be of **high landscape value**.

11.102 LCA 12 – Mynydd Penhydd comprises afforested land rising to the south of the Afan Valley with minor valleys that run north in the River Afan. The key characteristics of this LCA area identified as:

- *“Large track of coniferous woodland running across high rolling plateau, and forming side of Afan Valley;*
- *Recreational use of area for biking and other activities from adjacent Afan Argoed Country Park centre;*
- *Area untrammelled by industrial exploitation.”*

11.103 Commercial forestry is a major influence on this LCA. The Afan Argoed Country Park provides high levels of access throughout the commercial woodland. There are abrupt edges with the adjoining pastures to the north and east. This is a relatively remote area where the contained setting of woodland provides a tranquil feel. The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Medium Value;
- Cultural landscapes = Outstanding Value;
- Landscape Habitats = Medium Value;
- Historic landscapes = High value; and
- Geological landscapes = High value

11.104 Whilst this LCA has historic and geological value and strong cultural associations, its setting of extensive commercial forestry has a marked effect on its character and associated value. This is also an undesignated landscape. In overall terms the landscapes associated with LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna are considered to be of medium value.

11.105 LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant comprises an area of upland grazing set between the Afan Valley to the north and Mynydd Penhydd to the south that provides a strong edge of commercial forestry. The key characteristics of this LCA are identified as:

- *“An area of unenclosed upland grazing ranges from 356m 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.”*

11.106 This LCA comprises a rolling landform with Nant Tryfal running between Foel Trawsant to the west and Foel y Dyffryn to the east (set just beyond the County Borough boundary. Access

into this area is confined to footpaths and bridleways. At the northern boundary of this LCA are the mining tips set just above Duffryn. A large tract of this LCA is identified as Access Land. The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Medium Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = Medium Value;
- Historic landscapes = High value; and
- Geological landscapes = High value

11.107 In overall terms the landscapes associated with LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna are considered to be of high landscape value.

11.108 LCA 14 Foel Fawr cover the site. The NPTLCA was completed prior to the clearance of the site. The landform remains as described in the report but the harsh edges created by the former commercial forestry are now gone. The extent of public access is now restricted to the bridleway and footpaths that cross the site. However, these have become more difficult to navigate becoming lost in timber debris and unmanaged grassland. The NPTLCA notes that this LCA was the proposed site for a £60 million leisure park complex linked to the wider recreational facilities in the valley. This scheme was consented but not implemented.

11.109 The key characteristics of this LCA area identified as:

- *“Tract of coniferous woodland on dominant topographical feature which develops enclosure in Afan Valley;*
- *Woodland creates and abrupt edge against open ground;*
- *Creates significant backdrop to the settlement of Croeserw.”*

11.110 This LCA remains a dominant landform that provides containment to this upper section of the Afan Valley. Features such as Pen y Castell make a significant contribution to the setting of the valley, as do the steep lower slopes of this LCA to the north and west. The removal of commercial forestry from the LCA has taken away the sharp contrast with the adjoining pastures, and whilst the site does not benefit from the more attractive setting of farmed pasture it now shares the open and exposed character of the adjoining LCA 13 – Foel Trawsnant. The loss of forestry has also reduced the degree to which the site provides a meaningful backdrop

to Croeserw to the east. The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Low Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = Low Value;
- Historic landscapes = Medium/High value; and
- Geological landscapes = High value

11.111 It is noted that in the NPTLCA this LCA is assessed as being of medium value for both visual and sensory, and habitats aspects. It is also assessed as being of medium value for geological aspects. Taking these variants into account, and based in the current condition of this LCA it is considered to be of medium landscape value.

11.112 LCA 15 – Mynydd y Gelli comprises and exposed area of rolling pasture, grasslands and mire at the head of the Afan Valley. The key characteristics of this LCA are identified as:

- “Dramatic topography and simple landcover creates and imposing presence;
- Exposed and open landscape distinct from closed and complex adjacent areas;
- The A4107 skirts the area.”

11.113 This LCA is open with an impressive landform that contrast with the complex and more enclosed setting of the adjoining valley. This LCA is access by a number of footpaths with significant tracts of land identified as Access Land.

11.114 This LCA has notable habitats, in particular its dry heath, and upland acid grassland and mire. The LCA has areas of ffridd habitat. This LCA also has significant historical characteristics and cultural associations. The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA are assessed as;

- Visual and Sensory = High Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = Medium Value;
- Historic landscapes = Outstanding value; and
- Geological landscapes = High value

11.115 It is noted that in the NPTLCA this LCA is assessed as being of outstanding value in relation to its Cultural aspect. Taking these variants into account, this LCA it is considered to be of very high landscape value.

11.116 LCA 18 – Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg comprises and extensive plateau between Neath and the Afan Valley. The key characteristics of this LCA are identified as:

- “Expansive upland plateau separating the Afan and Neath valleys, rising to 600m AOD;
- 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 designation contained primarily to the north;
- Sustrans National Cycle Network passes through this upland.”

11.117 This LCA is dominated by commercial forestry plantation interspersed with farmed pasture and moorland. Smaller valleys that descend to the north and south help to break up this LCA. There are no settlements or built-form that create a sense of isolation, and wilderness in the open pastures and moorland. In the context of the site the Ffynnon Oer wind farm extends across the upland plateau to the north. There are few roads within this LCA and those that exist are small rural lanes that provide access to features such as the Afan Forest mountain bike centre. This LCA provides high levels of access, in particular cycling. As noted under the key characteristics there are extensive tracks of designated landscapes in this LCA but primarily to the north. This includes SSSI’s and SLA. These designations and their associated value are not reflected to the south in the context of the Afan Valley and the site.

11.118 The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Medium Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = Medium Value;
- Historic landscapes = Outstanding/High value; and
- Geological landscapes = High/Moderate value

- 11.119 It should be noted that part of this value will reflect the qualities of the designated landscaped to the north of this LCA that are not reflect to the south in the context of the site. In overall terms the landscapes associated with southern extent of LCA 18 – Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg are considered to be of medium landscape value.

Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough (2013) (BLCA)

- 11.120 Within the adjoining Bridgend County Borough Council there are two LCA's identified within the study area:

- 1 – Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry; and
- – Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry.

- 11.121 A small part of the Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry LCA adjoins the southern boundary of the site, a part of which comprises land with planning approval for the development of a solar farm. This land is in part designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). This LCA adjoins the Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna, Mynydd Penhydd, and Foel Trawsant LCA's in NPTCBC.

- 11.122 To the south-east of the site, beyond Maesteg is the Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry LCA that extends south from the Mynydd Gelli LCA in NPTCBC.

- 11.123 The Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry LCA has a prescribed landscape strategy of protect/conservate with the following identified key landscape sensitivities:

- *"Open tracts of traditionally grazed uplands.*
- *Strong historic pattern of irregular fields enclosed by hedgerows, tree belts and stone walls.*
- *Important semi-natural habitats, including heathland, blanket bog, acid grassland, wetlands and broadleaved woodlands.*
- *Nationally important archaeological features within the Margam Mountain Landscape of Special Historic Interest.*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and small groups of dwellings.*

- *The Conservation Area of Llangynwyd, with its prominent church tower.*
- *High levels of tranquillity.*
- *Panoramic views from high ridgelines in the south across the County Borough."*

11.124 The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA in the context of the site are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Moderate Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = High/Medium Value;
- Historic landscapes = Outstanding value; and
- Geological landscapes = Moderate value

11.125 The Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry LCA is considered to be of high landscape value.

11.126 Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry LCA has been prescribed a landscape strategy of protect/conservate with the following identified key landscape sensitivities:

- *"Its function as a water catchment for the adjacent Garw and Llynfi valleys.*
- *Open landscape with extensive areas of traditionally grazed moorland and distinctive stunted oaks.*
- *Valued semi-natural habitats, including broadleaved semi-natural woodlands, marshy grassland, bog, acid grassland and heathland.*
- *Industrial heritage features, including spoil tips, mines and quarries.*
- *Nationally important archaeological features, such as prehistoric round cairns and medieval settlement remains.*
- *Strong sense of remoteness, with large parts unsettled.*
- *Expansive views across the County Borough and beyond."*

11.127 The most recent LANDMAP aspect areas for this LCA in the context of the site are assessed as:

- Visual and Sensory = Moderate Value;
- Cultural landscapes = High Value;
- Landscape Habitats = Medium with smaller pockets of High Value;

- Historic landscapes = High value; and
- Geological landscapes = Moderate value

11.128 In overall terms the landscapes associated with the Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry LCA are considered to be of high/medium landscape value.

11.129 The following table provides a summary of the baseline assessment of landscape character.

Table 11.5: Summary of Landscape Value

| Landscape Character Area                                      | Landscape Value |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Neath Port Talbot</i>                                      |                 |
| LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna                             | High            |
| LCA 12 – Mynydd Penhydd                                       | Medium          |
| LCA 13 – Foel Trawsnant                                       | High            |
| LCA 14 – Foel Fawr (the site)                                 | Medium          |
| LCA 15 – Mynydd y Gelli                                       | High            |
| LCA 18 – Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg | Medium          |
| <i>Bridgend</i>                                               |                 |
| LCA 1 - Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry               | High            |
| LCA 3 - Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry                     | High/Medium     |

### Visual Setting

11.130 The following section of this assessment considers the appearance of the site and wider setting of the site referencing a number of representative views. A summary of each view is set out with an assessment of value that is determined with reference to:

- Planning designations specific to each view;
- Views that are important to the special qualities of a designated landscape, or recorded in published documentation;

- Views recorded as being important to cultural heritage assets;
- Views recorded in guide books or on maps, and/or where special provision has been made in the landscape for the appreciation of a view; and
- Judgements made on site as to the specific quality of a view

- 11.131 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the development proposal has been identified through the production of a ZTV model; see Figure 11.12. The model has been generated using line of sight multi-point analysis to determine the extent of land within the study area from which there are likely to be views of the proposed development. This model has been generated using a bare earth strategy (i.e. only taking into account landform with no built or natural features) to demonstrate the worst-case scenario.
- 11.132 To the north of the site the ZTV extends across the steep south facing slopes of the Afan Valley, extending further north towards the Ffynnon Oer wind farm set on the ridgeline above Cwm Cregan. In reality the extent of visibility to the north is restricted in places by the extensive areas of commercial forestry. Similarly, the ZTV extends north along Cwn Corwg, and rises up onto the surround upland areas of Pencraig Isaf to the west and Mynydd Rhiw-Illech to the east. Again, visibility beyond these uplands becomes restricted by the setting of commercial forestry.
- 11.133 To the east the ZTV washes over Croeserw, extending along the Cwm Nant y fedw, rising up towards Coetgae Isaf on the north side of the valley, Mynydd y Gelli at the head of the valley, and Llyndwr Fawr to the south.
- 11.134 To the south-east the ZTV extends across the setting of the Caerau Forest rising up towards the uplands at Darren y Bannau and Mynydd Pwll tr Iwrch that define the visual horizon.
- 11.135 To the south the ZTV extends along the valley setting of the River Llynfi, washing over Caerau, Brynheulog and Maesteg, channelled between gar Wen to the west and Mynydd Pwll tr Iwrch to the east.
- 11.136 To the west the ZTV rises towards Foel y Dyffrn and Feol Trawsnant. The landform at Duffryn restricts visibility from the south side of the Afan Valley to the west. Along the north side of the valley the ZTV extends towards Mynydd Pen-rhys following the steep lower valley slopes.

11.137 The following table summarises each representative view and its associated value. View locations are shown on the ZTV plan; see Figure 11.12. Photographic views are set out in Figures 11.13 to 11.29.

Table 11.6: Summary of Representative Views and Value

| View | Distance | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Value  |
|------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1    | 460m     | Taken from the commercial forestry tracks within Afan Forest on the mid-slopes of the Afan Valley just below Mynnydd Rhiwgregh looking south-east across the site. Cymmer is set down on the valley just beyond Pen y Castell. Foel y Dyffryn defines the horizon to the south. This is an undesignated landscape but regularly used for leisure and recreation purposes.                                 | Medium |
| 2    | 1.93km   | Taken from the commercial forestry tracks within Afan Forest on the upper valley slopes west of Craig Nant y bar. Duffryn is visible set below on the valley floor with the tips to the north and Foel y Dyffryn beyond. There are views across the site towards the Llynfi Afan wind farm.                                                                                                               | Medium |
| 3    | 830m     | Taken from the Rheilffordd Trail that follows the disused railway along the floor of the Afan Valley. The site is viewed across the deciduous setting of the river that is deep in section. The site visibly contrast with adjoining pastures to the west. Further west id Duffffryn with excavations and tips to the north that are remnant of the valleys mining past. This is a popular leisure route. | Medium |
| 4    | 270m     | Taken from the Rheilffordd Trail that follows the disused railway along the floor of the Afan Valley. The site is viewed across the deciduous setting of the river that is deep in section. Pen y Castell is prominent in this view within the site. To the east properties at Prosser's Terrace are visible. There                                                                                       | Medium |

|   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |        |
|---|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|   |      | is a view along the valley towards the Llynfi Afan wind farm. This is a popular leisure route.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
| 5 | 300m | Taken from Prosser's Terrace at Abercregan looking south across the lower deciduous setting of the River Afan towards the site. Pen y Castell is notable towards the centre of this view. To the west there is a view along the valley towards Duffryn and the tips on the valley above the settlement. To the east the view along the valley is restricted by intervening landform and vegetation cover.                                                                                                                    | Medium |
| 6 | 430m | Taken from the commercial forestry tracks within Afan Forest on the mid-valley slopes above Abercregan looking south towards the site. To the east Cymmer is visible set lower in the valley with a view of Llyndwr Fawr beyond. To the west the River Afan can be seen meandering along the valley with a view of the tips above Duffryn beyond. This is an undesignated landscape but regularly used for leisure and recreation purposes.                                                                                  | Medium |
| 7 | 575m | This is taken from the same forest track as View 6 slightly further to the east at Cefn y fan looking south across the lower valley towards the site. Pen y Castell is notable within the site. To the east Cymmer is visible, as is Duffryn to the west with the Brytwn Road visible following the valley floor between both settlements. There of the River Afan in the lower valley, and Abercregan at the mouth of Cwm Cregan. This is an undesignated landscape but regularly used for leisure and recreation purposes. | Medium |
| 8 | 325m | Taken from the Rheilffordd Trail that follows the disused railway along the floor of the Afan Valley, looking south-east towards the site. The Grade II listed Cymmer Viaduct is visible in the foreground                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Medium |

|    |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |        |
|----|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|    |       | with the settlement beyond. The retained section of commercial forestry within the site defines the visual horizon above the settlement. To the east the Llynfi Afan wind farm is visible. This is a popular leisure route.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |        |
| 9  | 325m  | Taken from the Rheilffordd Trail that follows the disused railway along the floor of the Afan Valley, looking south-west towards the site (this is a continuation of View 9). The Grade II listed Cymmer Viaduct is visible in the foreground with the settlement beyond. The retained section of commercial forestry within the site defines the visual horizon above the settlement. Pen y Castell is visible but less prominent due to the landform within the site. This is a popular leisure route. | Medium |
| 10 | 440m  | Taken from the Rheilffordd Trail that follows the disused railway along the floor of the Afan Valley, looking south across the valley floor and Cymmer towards the site. The retained commercial forestry within the site defines the visual horizon above the settlement. Croeserw is visible to the east. This is a popular leisure route.                                                                                                                                                             | Medium |
| 11 | 1.4km | Taken from the Rheilffordd Trail that follows the disused railway along the floor of Cwm Corrwg looking south along the valley. The houses fronting Sunnyside Terrace are notable running along the valley floor. To the south there is a view of the site comprising commercial forestry with the open setting of Foel Fawr beyond defined by the communications mast. This is a popular leisure route.                                                                                                 | Medium |
| 12 | 465m  | Taken from the public bridleway at Rhiw llech looking south-west across Cymmer towards the site. The football pitch at adjoining the north-east corner of the site is visible above the settlement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Medium |

|    |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |
|----|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|    |      | The retained commercial forestry within the site sits above the settlement with a view towards Foel Fawr beyond defined by the communications mast. To the east Croeserw is visible, to the west there is a view along the valley towards Pen y Castell.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |
| 13 | 620m | Taken from the commercial forestry tracks set just below the exposed crags at Tarran Rhiw Illech looking south-west across Cymmer towards the site. This elevated location provides an open appreciation of the site with Cymmer to the north and Croeserw to the east. The retained commercial forestry is visible within the site, contrasting with the wider cleared site. Foel Fawr rises above the forestry defined by the communication tower. The viaduct and river are visible on the valley floor, with a view beyond to the west towards Duffryn. | Medium |
| 14 | 690m | Taken from the public bridleway at Rhiw Illech looking south-west towards the site. Croeserw is prominent in this view to the east. The Maesteg Road is visible at the sites eastern boundary climbing towards Croeserw. There are views across the eastern extent of the site looking towards the retained section of commercial forestry and the communications mast at Foel Fawr beyond. Section of housing at the eastern edge of Cymmer are visible.                                                                                                   | Medium |
| 15 | 135m | Taken from the Tudor Park recreation ground at Brynheulog Road in Croeserw. There are views of the site and Foel Fawr beyond the existing residential setting fronting Pen y Bryn. The landform and associated infrastructure of the underground reservoir at the eastern boundary of                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Medium |

|    |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |      |
|----|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
|    |      | the site is also visible. This is a well-used recreation ground.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |      |
| 16 | 460m | Taken from Blaencaerau Road, Caerau, looking north towards the site. Views of the site from this location are restricted by intervening landform. The upper section of the communications mast at Foel Fawr is visible, as is the communications mast and associated infrastructure just to the south of Brynheulog Road, Croeserw.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Low  |
| 17 | 1km  | Taken from Library Road, Caerau looking north towards the site across the intervening modern setting of settlement. From this location Foel Fawr and the communications mast at the southern boundary of the site are visible. To the west Brynheulog is a distinct enclave of modern housing set on higher ground.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Low  |
| 18 | 345m | Taken from the junction of the public bridleway and Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) to the south of the site and west of Brynheulog. This is a open view from within a designated SLA. From this location the open pastures and grassland sweep up towards the site. The extent of cleared forest within the western part of the site is appreciable. Further along the ridgeline that defines the southern edge of the site Foel Fawr and the communications mast is visible, as is the modern settlement at Brynheulog on lower ground to the south, and the Llynfi Afan wind farm on higher ground further to the east. | High |
| 19 | 915m | Taken from the public bridleway at Foel y Dyffryn looking north toward the southern boundary of the site that follows the ridgeline of Foel Fawr. The cleared area of commercial forestry at the south-west corner of the site is discernible from the wider pastures. Further to the east the communications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | High |

|    |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |      |
|----|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
|    |        | mast at Foel Fawr is visible. Beyond the site to the north the commercial forestry associated with the Afan Forest is visible rising towards the upland plateau. Ffynnon Oer wind farm is notable on the northern ridgeline set within an area of upland pasture. This is an open view from within a designated SLA.                                                                                                                                                                       |      |
| 20 | 1.5km  | Taken from a public bridleway between Foel y Dyffryn and Foel Trawsnant looking north towards Afan Forest and the Ffynnon Oer wind farm is notable on the northern ridgeline set within an area of upland pasture. Foel y Dyffryn at the centre of this view restricts any view towards the majority of the site. There may be possible views towards the eastern most extent of the site at Pen y Bryn (A4063). This is an open view from within a designated SLA.                        | High |
| 21 | 1.57km | From the BOAT south of Duffryn looking east. This is an open view from within the SLA looking out across open pasture towards the site. To the north the commercial forestry setting is notable with significant areas that have been felled following an outbreak of <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> . The site reads as part of this landscape with views across it towards the communications mast at Foel Fawr. Beyond there are views towards Coetgae Isaf and the Llynfi Afan wind farm. | High |
| 22 | 1.05km | From the BOAT south of Duffryn this view is similar to View 21. However, the wider setting of forestry has a greater influence, as do the tips in the foreground of this view. The site is viewed to the east with Pen y Castell visible at the northern boundary of the site, and the communications mast at Foel Fawr to the south. Beyond there is a view towards the Llynfi Afan wind farm.                                                                                            | High |

|    |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |        |
|----|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 23 | 605m   | From the BOAT just to the east of the tips north of Duffryn looking east across the valley setting of Nant Tryfal towards the site. The pastoral setting of the valley rises towards the western boundary of the site where the change in land use to cleared commercial forestry is clearly discernible. To the north houses at Abercregan are visible, as is Pen t Castell with the River Afan below. To the south there are views along the southern boundary of the site following the ridgeline towards the communications mast at Foel Fawr, with views of the Llynfi Afan wind farm beyond. In the valley to the south the modern housing at Brynheulog is visible. This view is taken from within a designated SLA | High   |
| 24 | 4.61km | From a forestry access track at Mynydd Pen-rhys looking east along the Afan Valley towards the site. Taken from the upper valley slopes there are views towards the site with Duffryn set in the valley floor in the foreground. To the south there are views across the extensive commercial forestry (including cleared forestry) associated with Afan Argoed Forest Park.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Medium |
| 25 | 1.84km | From a public footpath/access track at the Fffynnon Oer wind farm looking north along Cwm Cregan towards the site. This is an elevated view looking out across the commercial forestry setting of Afan. To the south of the site there is a view towards Foel y Dyffryn. To the south-east the Llynfi Afan wind farm is notable on the horizon. The communications mast at Foel Fawr within the site is visible. The recent felling operations within the site have left a marked pattern across the landform.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Medium |

|    |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |
|----|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 26 | 2.85km | Taken from the bridleway crossing Mynydd y Gelli set within the designated SLA. From this location there is an appreciation of the open upland pastoral setting and associated grasslands that characterise this SLA. The Llynfi Afan wind farm is notable on the ridgelines to the south and east. To the west there is a view along Cwm Nantfyfedw towards Croeserw, Cymmer and the site. The retained section of commercial forestry is visible, as is the communications mast at Foel Fawr. Pen y Castell is visible at the southern boundary of the site overlooking the River Afan. | High   |
| 27 | 960m   | Taken from the forestry track within Caerau Forest looking north-west across Caerau and Brynheulog towards the site. The site is central to the view with the settlement on lower ground to the south. To the east of the site Croeserw is visible. The communications mast at Foel Fawr is visible but the majority of the site is screened by intervening landform. Beyond the site the Ffynnon Oer wind farm is visible on the horizon. To the south-west of the site Foel y Dyffryn rises above Caerau and Dyffryn.                                                                   | Medium |
| 28 | 1.54km | Taken from an access track with Caerau Forest at Darren y Bannau looking north-west towards the site across the settled valley setting of Caerau and Brynheulog. The communications mast at Foel Fawr is visible but all but the southern ridgeline boundary of the site is screened from view by intervening land form. Foel y Dyffryn is visible to the south of the site and the Ffynnon Oer wind farm to the north. The site is viewed in the context of the settled valley foreground of Caerau, Brynheulog, and Croeserw.                                                           | Medium |

|    |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |
|----|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 29 | 2.25km | <p>Taken from the public access land to the east of nantyffyllon at the picnic benches looking north towards the site. This view look up the Llynfi Valley towards the site at the head of the valley. From this location the southern boundary of the site across the ridgeline is visible with the majority of the site is screened from view by intervening landform. The communications mast at Foel Fawr is visible, as is the south-west corner of the site that falls over the ridgeline towards Brynheulog. To the west the valley is contained by Foel y Dyffryn and there are views beyond the site to the north towards the Ffynnon Oer wind farm.</p> | Medium |
| 30 | 630m   | <p>Taken from Duffryn at the junction of Heol y Tyla and Heol y Gadarn looking east across the settlement towards the site. The site extends across the visual horizon of this view. To the north Pen y Castell is visible within the valley, with views of the commercial forestry setting of Afan Forest to the north. To the south the site rises towards the ridgeline where the extent of cleared forestry contrasts with the wider setting of pasture to the west.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Medium |
| 31 | 1.2km  | <p>Taken from Duffryn at the bench at the junction of Heol y Castell and Stryd Duffryn looking east along the lower setting of the Afan Valley towards the site. The commercial forestry setting of the Afan Forest defines the northern valley slopes. The site extends across the valley, contrasting with the pastoral setting to the south-west.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Medium |
| 32 | 130m   | <p>Taken from Brytwn Road looking east towards the site. This view is taken from the highway setting below the southern valley slopes at the western boundary of the site. The sloping land form of the site falls down to the highway that marks the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Medium |

|    |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |        |
|----|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|    |      | transition between the cleared forestry setting of the site, and the lower deciduous woodland setting of the river. Pen y Castell is visible further along the valley with the cleared forestry slopes of Afan to the north rising above Abercregan.                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |
| 33 | 785  | Taken from the southern end of Sunnyside Terrace looking south along Cwm Corrwg towards the site. This view shows the more intimate setting of the lower valley. The site is viewed in the context of the garages associated with the housing that fronts this part of the highway. Beyond Cymmer is nestled below the site with a view over the retained section of commercial forestry towards the communications mast at Foel Fawr. | Medium |
| 34 | 200m | Taken from the public open space at Croeserw between Hillcroft Crescent and Dwfor road looking west towards the site. The communications mast at Foel Fawr is visible (although the land is screened). To the southern there are views towards the landform at the eastern boundary of the site with wider views to the north across the Afan Valley towards the Ffynnon Oer wind farm.                                                | medium |

### The Development Proposal

11.138 The baseline assessment has identified that the site, and correlating Foel Fawr LCA, provides a dominant landform which develops enclosure to the setting of the upper reaches of the Afan Valley. The immediate character of the site has changed significantly through its deforestation but it remains a prominent feature in the valley. Its landform has lost the accentuation provided by the height of plantation, and its boundaries are less abrupt but its landform that includes features such as Pen y Castell still make a notable contribution to the setting of the valley.

11.139 The landform of the site, and associated visual relationship with its surrounding area, is one of the key landscape constraints to development. The landform of the site is diverse, it has differing relationships with the surrounding landscape, and is of varying degrees of susceptibility to change; see Figure 11.30. The site analysis has identified:

- The land at the southern boundary of the site forms part the elevated ridgeline associated with Foel Fawr that is susceptible to change. The ridgeline is already compromised by the communications mast and is likely to be further compromised through the implementation of the consented solar farm to the south. Development should be set below the ridge and/or small in scale and capable of being absorbed within high levels of new landscaping;
- Pen y Castell is a prominent outlying landform that makes a notable contribution to the setting of the Afan Valley. Its location at a turn in the river, and its rock outcrops add to the upland character of this part of the valley. This landform is susceptible to change and should be retained as an undeveloped part of the site. New planting should accentuate the setting of the rock outcrop in accordance with the findings of the community consultation that formed part of the Natural Resource Wales – Afan Resource Plan;
- The steep lower slopes at the northern and western boundaries of the site are open to view and share an immediate open relationship with the valley and adjoining highway setting of Brytwn Road. These slopes also have potential Ancient Woodland seed stock as identified on the Afan Valley Forest Design Plan – Long Term Objectives Map (Natural Resource Wales – 2014). Development should be restricted from these lower slopes, and new planting measures should incorporate new mixed deciduous woodland, in line with the Afan Resource Plan;
- The settlement slopes are slightly less steep and do not share as immediate relationship with the valley. Development in these locations should be restricted to activity uses that can be successfully assimilated within mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland over time. To the west the settlement slopes should provide an effective buffer with the adjoining settlement of Croeserw;
- Middle and upper valley slopes are set at a slightly shallower gradient and are set further back on the landform. Development in these locations should be restricted to small-scale units, arranged at a low density, and capable of being absorbed in high levels of new landscaping. New planting will be mixed deciduous and coniferous but with a higher proportion of evergreen species to provide year-round cover;

- The upper slopes and plateau have a shallower gradient and are set back on the landform. These areas have a higher capacity to accommodate larger scale units. The landform also provides the opportunity to set new buildings into the landform. New planting will be bias towards coniferous planting to secure a more robust setting with year-round cover, capable of absorbing larger building units;
- The existing forestry plantation covers an area of middle to upper valley slopes at the centre of the site. Plantation woodland is a product of this working landscape and is ultimately a farmed timber resource. The plantation provides the opportunity to secure early cover to the development, subject to its suitable retention (windthrow etc). Where appropriate areas can be thinned to accommodate new small-scale buildings units, and associated access. Thinning should be limited to 50% of the total resource, subject to suitability; and
- In terms of access bridleways BR 43 and 44 to the west of the site have scope for diversion whilst maintaining their relationship with the valley and associated features, such as Pen y Castell. The central bridleway BR42 is less easily diverted and should be retained on its historic alignment. Footpath FP66 has the scope to be diverted onto an alignment with bridleway BR42 through the site.

11.140 The development proposal has sought to respond to this analysis and secure primary mitigation measures through a considered mass and scale of development within the site, and the creation of extensive new areas of landscaping, adopting species mixes that respond to the character of the site and its proposed use, and the setting of the adjoining landscapes.

### Built-form

11.141 The Parameters Plan shows the principal access arrangements, and the broad distribution of building types, activities, and maximum development heights (see Appendix 5.1 of ES Volume 2). The Concept Masterplan shows an illustrative arrange of the various buildings types and activities to provide a better understanding of their scale, layout, and distribution (see Appendix 5.2 of ES Volume 2). Development parameters have been separated into built-form and access parameters, and landscape parameters; see Figures 11.31 and 11.32.

11.142 Larger development comprising the Central Plaza with apartments, and a hotel have been located on the upper plateau central to the site. Development within the Central Plaza is restricted to a maximum building height of 15m above existing ground level. The main central

plaza building will be stepped into the landform to ensure that it sits below the ridgeline at the southern boundary of the site; see Section A-A on Figure 11.33.

- 11.143 The X-Sports Zone with associated buildings and water sports has also been located on the central plateau with development heights restricted to 12m above existing ground level; see Section B-B on Figure 11.33.
  
- 11.144 The Alpine Village with associated artificial ski slopes has been located on the north side of Foel Fawr to secure the required elevation, gradients, and length of slopes. The opportunity exists to retain some of the existing plantation at the boundary of the ski slopes. A ski lift will connect the central plaza with a hilltop restaurant. The lift will rise to a maximum of 15m above existing ground levels, returning to ground level at the top of the site where it will be received into a restaurant complex with a maximum height of 5m from existing ground level. It is proposed that a combination of subtle mounding and new tree planting measures can be used to screen this feature, as well as screen the existing kiosks and enclosures associated with the communications mast; see Section C-C on Figure 11.34.
  
- 11.145 Beyond these central features wider development on the upper to middle valley slopes has been restricted to lodges with a maximum height of 7.5m above existing ground level. The lodges and their access routes have been arranged to follow the existing landform, limiting the requirement for major engineering works. The lodges have been plotted at a low density with space to accommodate high levels of new structural landscaping. A small number of lodges have been plotted at the south-west corner of the site coming around the landform associated with the southern ridgeline. Again, these have been plotted at low density and arranged to follow the landform; see Section B-B on Figure 11.34.
  
- 11.146 There are 2no. hub buildings that have been set on the edge of the upper to middle slopes associated with the Trax n Trails and Forest Activity zones. These will be the resource centre for both activity zones with a maximum building height of 7.5m and 15m above existing ground level, respectively.
  
- 11.147 The activity zones will comprise tracks set into the hillside and surrounded by high levels of new woodland planting. The Forestry Zone will also incorporate timber apparatus and zip wire traversing the landform up to a maximum height of 15m above existing ground level.

11.148 There are 2no. proposed parking areas. The main visitors parking area is set on the middle valley slopes at the western boundary of the site next to the visitor access road that traverses the western slopes of the site from Brytwn Road. The design of the car park has been the subject of a detailed design study to secure a proposal that can be successfully integrated within the landform, and accommodated meaningful new areas of planting that over time will soften and screen views of the car park. The car park will accommodate up to 650no. vehicles along a series of lanes running along the landform and single sided parking. The lanes will be retained up to 1.5m in height with 1:3 embankments running between each parking lane that will be planted with mixed deciduous and coniferous tree and shrub species; see Section D-D on Figure 11.34 and further commentary included in the Design and Access Statement. The resort will be secured using a 2.1m high weldmesh fence, finished in an appropriately dark colour to aid short-term assimilation within the landscape setting.

### Access

- 11.149 In terms of highway access, the visitor entrance will traverse the western valley slopes of the site from Brytwn Road. The proposed highway has been designed to follow the landform, turning behind the summit of Pen y Castell to limit its effect on this feature and the wider setting of the valley.
- 11.150 The second highway access is taken from Pen y Bryn at the existing forestry access close to the junction with Brynheulog Road. This access will service the staff parking area that will have up to 200no. spaces.
- 11.151 In terms of public access, the proposal includes two scenarios that involve the diversion of the some of the public rights of way that cross the site.
- 11.152 Option 1 - bridleway BR42 is retrained on its alignment through the centre of the site. Footpath FP66 is to be diverted and realigned alongside the northern boundary of the site, a section of the Maesteg Road running alongside the eastern boundary of the site, returning into the site at the existing entrance, and along the southern boundary where it continues south towards Brynheulog. Bridleways BR43 and BR44 will be realigned in sections but will retain their setting on the western valley slopes of the site, overlooking Pen y Castell and the River Afan.
- 11.153 Option 2 – the only change from Option 1 is the diversion of bridleway BR42 to run alongside the proposed diversion of footpath FP66. The physical historic structure of the bridleway will

be retained within the Proposed Development but public access diverted outside the main body of the resort.

### Structural Landscaping

11.154 The strategy for new landscaping seeks to respond to the various features of the site, wider relationships with the adjoining landscapes, and the proposed development; see 11.32. The structural landscaping strategy can be summarised as:

- The extension of the deciduous woodland setting from the lower valley (below Brytwn Road) onto the lower valley slopes of the site. In particular, new areas of deciduous planting will be focused around the lower slopes at the west and north-west boundaries of the site. The ground will also be managed to encourage the natural regeneration of the ancient woodland seedstock in this part of the site;
- As a general principle the boundaries of the site will be planted as mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland to secure a more diverse woodland structure, and a softer transition with the surrounding areas of pasture and settlement;
- Towards the middle to upper slopes of the site (in line with the proposed boundary fence) new woodland planting will be mixed but with a higher percentage of coniferous species. This will secure increased year-round cover and screening at the edge of the development (and at the fence line), alongside faster and more robust establishment on the more exposed slopes;
- Moving into the development cells, and the central plateau new planting will be predominantly coniferous to secure faster establishment, year-round cover, and shelter to the proposed lodges and the various activity centres; and
- Only the lower slopes of Pen y Castell will be planted, with the upper slopes and crags remaining open to view from the wider valley setting.

11.155 Woodland planting species lists have been set out in Appendix 11.1 of ES Volume 2 of this LVIA. In terms of climate change and adaptation predicted variations are set out under set out under 'Adapting to climate change – UK Climate Projections' published by DEFRA in 2009. The projection findings for Wales confirmed the following results for 2050:

- Increased winter mean temp of 2.0 deg C
- Increased summer mean temp of 2.5 deg C
- Increased summer daily maximum temp of 3.4 deg C

- Increased summer daily minimum temp of 2.6 deg C
- 0% change in annual mean precipitation
- +14% change in winter mean precipitation
- -17% change in summer precipitation

11.156 landscape species selection has/will give consideration where possible and appropriate to these predicted changes.

## Assessment of Sensitivity

### Landscape Character

11.157 The following assessment considers the susceptibility of the site, and its wider landscape setting to the proposed change. Susceptibility is then combined with value to make an overall assessment of landscape sensitivity.

### Neath Port Talbot

11.158 The site, and correlating LCA 14 – Foel Fawr has been assessed as being medium landscape value. The site forms part of a wider area of commercial forestry set within the upper section of the Afan Valley. This area of commercial forestry was first planted with conifer crops in the 1950's and 1960's comprising mainly larch and pine on lower slopes and spruce on upper slopes. Commercial forestry has had a significant effect on this landscape that continues to change through felling, replanting operations, and the wider infrastructure associated with this industry. The site is typical of this landscape and its transient nature that has recently been reinforced through the felling works that have once again transformed its character and appearance. In its current state the site is of relatively poor condition. However, its land form and setting within the valley are key to its strength of character and associated scenic quality. The site is considered to be tolerant to change, experiencing extensive change under its commercial use, and of medium susceptibility to change. In overall terms, the site is considered to be of medium landscape sensitivity.

11.159 LCA 11 – Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna comprises the lower valley setting of deciduous woodland and open pastoral farmland, some of which is designated SLA. This landscape has a defined character of good scenic quality. The valley is often enclosed creating an intimate setting with a limited tolerance for change. Likewise, the wider pastures have a defined pattern

and use that is visible recognisable and less tolerant to change. This LCA is considered to be of high landscape susceptibility, and in overall terms high landscape sensitivity.

11.160 LCA 12 – Mynydd Penhydd comprises extensive areas of commercial forestry, large tracts of which have been cleared in a similar way to the site and wider Afan Forest to the north. This is a transient commercial landscape under change through its forestry and recreational use. This LCA has a defined character that is best represented by its landform but is of varied condition. This LCA is considered to be of moderate landscape susceptibility, and in overall terms medium landscape sensitivity.

11.161 LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant comprises an open area of farmed pasture that is a designated SLA. This landscape possesses a defined and visibly recognisable character of grazed uplands. Its open character and rolling landform create a landscape with a limited tolerance for change. Its condition is varied with few detracting elements. This LCA is considered to be of high susceptibility to change, and in overall terms high landscape sensitivity.

11.162 LCA 15 – Mynydd y Gelli comprises an area of farmed pasture and upland grasslands that similarly to LCA13 possesses a defined and recognisable character. This is again a designated landscape with a striking landform with an open character. The Llynfi Afan wind farm is a detracting element that demonstrates the LCA's reduced tolerance to change. This LCA is considered to be of high susceptibility to change, and in overall terms high landscape sensitivity.

11.163 LCA 18 - Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Tnyscorrwg comprises a large tract of commercial forestry land associated with the Afan Forest, with significant areas of open pasture and moorland. As established the majority of designated landscapes are associated with the northern half of this LCA, and are not reflected to the south in the context of the site. The setting of commercial forest associated with the Afan Valley is not dissimilar to the site and wider tract of forestry associated with LCA 12. Likewise, this LCA is considered to be of medium susceptibility to change, and in overall terms medium landscape susceptibility.

#### [Bridgend](#)

11.164 LCA 1 - Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry comprise and extension to the upland grazing landscapes associated with LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant in the adjoining Neath Port

Talbot County Borough. The SLA also extends into this LCA following the western slopes of the River Llynfi to the south. In its wider context this landscape is considered to be of high susceptibility to change, and in overall terms high landscape sensitivity. However, the land adjoining the southern boundary of the site is distinct, comprising an extension of the recently cleared commercial forestry that characterises the site. This is also the subject of a planning approval for solar farm development that extends between the site and Brynheulog, and is clearly of reduced landscape sensitivity.

- 11.165 LCA 3 – Lynfi and Garw Uplands and Forestry – This LCA correlates with the western half of the Northern Uplands SLA, comprising an exposed upland landscape of traditionally grazed moorland. This part of the LCA has a well-defined and recognisable character, with a limited tolerance for change. Wider tracts of commercial forestry have a weaker strength of character and are less susceptible to change. This LCA is considered to be of high susceptibility to change, and in overall terms high landscape sensitivity.

Table 11.7: Summary of Landscape Sensitivity

| Landscape Character Area                                      | Landscape Sensitivity                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Neath Port Talbot</i>                                      |                                                                                                                                        |
| LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna                             | High                                                                                                                                   |
| LCA 12 – Mynydd Penhydd                                       | Medium                                                                                                                                 |
| LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant                                        | High                                                                                                                                   |
| LCA 14 – Foel Fawr (the site)                                 | Medium                                                                                                                                 |
| LCA 15 – Mynydd y Gelli                                       | High                                                                                                                                   |
| LCA 18 – Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg | Medium                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Bridgend</i>                                               |                                                                                                                                        |
| LCA 1 - Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry               | High (except for land between southern boundary of site and Brynheulog that is subject to planning consent for solar farm development) |
| LCA 3 - Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry                     | High                                                                                                                                   |

## Visual Setting

- 11.166 The following assessment considers the visual susceptibility of the receptor groups local to the representative views considered in the baseline assessment. Susceptibility is then combined with value to make an overall assessment of visual sensitivity.

Table 11.8: Summary of Visual Setting Sensitivity

| View | Receptor Groups                                               | Susceptibility                                                                                                                    | Sensitivity |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 2    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 3    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 4    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 5    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders<br>Residents<br>Car users | High – Primary views from residential properties and – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High        |
| 6    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 7    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 8    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 9    | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |
| 10   | Walkers<br>Cyclists                                           | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views                                                 | High        |

|    |                                                   |                                                                                          |           |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
|    | Horse Riders                                      |                                                                                          |           |
| 11 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views        | High      |
| 12 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views        | High      |
| 13 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views        | High      |
| 14 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views        | High      |
| 15 | Residents<br>Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users | Medium – from the settlement and associated highways, open space, and recreation grounds | Medium    |
| 16 | Residents<br>Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users | Medium – from the settlement and associated highways, open space, and recreation grounds | Medium    |
| 17 | Residents<br>Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users | Medium – from the settlement and associated highways, open space, and recreation grounds | Medium    |
| 18 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views        | High      |
| 19 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | Very High – elevated view within SLA providing wider appreciation of landscape           | Very High |
| 20 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | Very High – elevated view within SLA providing wider appreciation of landscape           | Very High |

|    |                                                   |                                                                                   |           |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 21 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 22 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 23 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 24 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 25 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 26 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | Very High – elevated view within SLA providing wider appreciation of landscape    | Very High |
| 27 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 28 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | Very High – elevated view within SLA providing wider appreciation of landscape    | Very High |
| 29 | Walkers<br>Cyclists<br>Horse Riders               | High – recreational users with interest primarily focussed on landscape and views | High      |
| 30 | Residents<br>Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users | Medium – from the settlement and associated highways, and open space              | Medium    |
| 31 | Residents<br>Pedestrians<br>Cyclists              | Medium – from the settlement and associated highways, and open space              | Medium    |

|    |                                                   |                                                                                             |        |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|    | Car users                                         |                                                                                             |        |
| 32 | Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users              | Medium – from the highway where attention is not primarily focussed the landscape and views | Medium |
| 33 | Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users<br>Residents | Medium – Views from the public highway and secondary views from properties                  | Medium |
| 34 | Residents<br>Pedestrians<br>Cyclists<br>Car users | Medium – from the settlement and associated highways, open space, and recreation grounds    | Medium |

### Construction Phase

11.167 The construction phase is likely to extend over a 2-year period. The construction phase is likely to result in a number of short-term, permanent and temporary adverse effects to both the character and appearance of the site and landscape setting that will be appreciable from the surrounding landscape. The level of likely effects would constantly change depending on the nature and location of works but can be categorised as:

- Excavation works, bare earth and stockpiled soils;
- Site hoarding/perimeter fencing;
- Signage;
- Construction traffic with flashing hazard lights;
- Temporary site infrastructure including porta-cabins, haulage routes, material stockpiling;
- The gradual erection of built-form; and
- Site plant/large scale machinery that might include the use of tower cranes and pilling rigs.

11.168 Some of these operations will not be uncommon to this commercial forestry setting. However, the intensity of operations will not. To mitigate the effects of the construction phase elements such as the lodges will be prefabricated off-site. There are also opportunities for advanced

planting measures, in particular the lower slopes of the site around the northern and western boundaries, that includes the lower slopes of Pen y Castell. Other areas include the eastern boundary of the site adjoining Croeserw.

### Landscape Character

- 11.169 The construction phase will lead to the gradual transformation of the commercial forestry land within the site to the proposed leisure resort with associated highways, lighting, green space, and structural landscaping. The change in land use will be permanent but other changes remaining temporary and only fully realised at the operational phase of the development.
- 11.170 The effect of development on landscape character is therefore assessed as part of the completed scheme (year 1). Whilst temporary effects may occur through the construction process these will be limited and controlled through the agreement and implementation of a construction management plan that will include measures to control operations likely to result in temporary changes to character; such as the location and scale of soil storage mounds; removal and replacement of existing landscape features; implementation of advanced planting measures; the use of particular construction machinery such as piling rigs.
- 11.171 The effect of the construction process to landscape character is unlikely to be substantially different to that experienced at the operational phase. The only exception to this being the pre-longed use of tall construction machinery and the effect this may have on sensitive landscapes, such as the surrounding SLA's.
- 11.172 It will be important that the use of intrusive construction machinery is avoided where it is safe and economically viable to do so. Where the use of machinery, such as tower cranes and piling rigs, is unavoidable their height, location and duration of use should be included within the construction management plan and agreed with all relevant parties (including NPTCBC).

### Visual Setting

- 11.173 The views of the site during construction will be constantly changing. In the absence of a landscape mitigation strategy, there will be a gradual alteration in the character/composition/extent of views through this period. The nature of receptors (and associated sensitivity to change) will be varied. The magnitude of change will also vary in

accordance with the progress and location of the construction works, and the distance/openness to view/focus of attention of the receptor. All visual effects during construction would be constantly evolving. In short distance in views at the immediate site boundaries various construction works will be visible throughout this period and are likely to result in significant adverse effects. However, measures will be taken to include the careful siting and storage of machinery and plant and the routing of haulage tracks, as well as the considered on-site storage of materials and spoil mounds. Over distance immediate construction works are less likely to affect visual amenity, and less likely to result in significant adverse effects. However, the use of tall machinery and plant, such as tower cranes and pilling rigs, should be carefully considered (see above).

- 11.174 The landform of the site and surrounding area will provide an open appreciation of the construction works. However, the ability to view heavy machinery and associated commercial operations is not uncommon in this landscape setting.

### **Operational Phase**

- 11.175 The operational phase considers the completed scheme (year 1) with all landscape measures in place; and the long-term effects (year 15) with structural planting in place with tree cover reaching an assumed height of approximately 8m above existing ground level.

### Landscape Character – Short-term Effects

- 11.176 In terms of the site and corresponding LCA 14 – Foel Fawr, the construction phase and operational phase will have transformed it from an area of hillside commercial forestry (that has been substantially cleared) to a leisure resorts development comprising lodges, a central plaza and associated apartments and hotel, leisure/recreation activities zones, car parking and highway access.
- 11.177 The area of existing coniferous plantation will be selectively thinned with circa 50% of the resource retained (subject to suitability). In addition, the pond and associated tree cover at the eastern boundary of the site will be retained as a landscape feature connected to the wider areas of structural landscaping.
- 11.178 The loss of commercial forestry land will be permanent, being replaced with built development, highways, car parking, and extensive new areas of permanent managed

woodland. Approximately xx% of the site will be allocated as new structural landscaping and woodland cover. At a site level this is likely to result in a high magnitude of change, leading to a permanent and direct adverse effect of major-moderate significance.

- 11.179 The short-term operational effect of the development will extend beyond the immediate Foel Fawr LCA associated with the site, leading to indirect effects on the surrounding LCA's.
- 11.180 In terms of the LCA11 – Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna and LCA 18 - Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg, the development will be experienced from the immediate setting of the Afan Valley and adjoining pastures where the developed slopes and upland plateau of the site are open to view. Whilst not having a direct and material effect on the features of these LCA's, the development will introduce new and discordant elements that will impart a change on their character. This effect will be limited to the sections of the Afan Valley and associated forest park that are local to the site that generally comprise only a small part of these LCA's. The level of effect to these LCA's is likely to result in a medium magnitude of change, leading to a permanent and indirect adverse effect of major-moderate significance to LCA 11 - Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna, and permanent and indirect adverse effect of moderate significance to LCA 18 - Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg.
- 11.181 In terms of LCA 12 Mynydd Penhydd, this LCA is remote from the site and does not share a high degree of inter-visibility. Any short-term effect would be restricted to its northern edge. This is likely to result in a negligible magnitude of change leading to a permanent and indirect adverse effect of negligible significance.
- 11.182 In terms of LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant, the scheme is likely to affect the north-east extent of this LCA where lodge development and new parking will introduce discordant elements onto the ridgeline at the southern boundary of the site, and onto its western slopes facing out towards this LCA. This is likely to result in a medium magnitude of change, leading to a permanent and indirect adverse effect of major-moderate significance.
- 11.183 In terms of LCA 15 – Mynydd Gelli, there will be a clear appreciation of the development within the site from this LCA. However, it will be experienced in the surrounding context of the settled valley floor that wraps around the site to the north and east. The proposal will extend the setting of built-development across the slopes of Foel Fawr but from this LCA these elements will not be seen as entirely uncharacteristic to those that already define the valley setting at

its western boundary. This is likely to result in a medium magnitude of change, leading to a permanent and indirect adverse effect of moderate significance.

11.184 In terms of LCA1 - Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry (Bridgend), this LCA is defined to the north by the southern edge of the Foel Fawr LCA and the southern ridgeline of the site. Development on this ridgeline has been restricted to relatively small elements that include a small section of new lodge development (maximum height of 7.5m above existing ground level). The proposed summit restaurant in the Alpine Village (maximum height 5m above existing ground level) will also be partially visible with the majority of the structure, and the kiosks and compounds associated with the existing communications mast, screened by new mounding and structural planting measures. These elements will have an effect on the character of the ridgeline and will introduce new elements but these will not be entirely uncharacteristic when viewed in the context of the modern housing of Brynheoulog set just below the ridgeline, and the wider settled valley. It should also be noted that the site southern ridgeline, and wider ridgelines are not free from development, with a notable communications mast on the site, and wind turbines in other locations. The development is likely to result in a low magnitude of change, leading to a permanent and indirect adverse effect of moderate significance.

11.185 LCA 3 - Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry (Bridgend) shares a similar relationship with the wider settled valley and the site. In the same way development is likely to result in a low magnitude of change, leading to a permanent and indirect adverse effect of moderate significance.

#### Landscape Character – Long-term Effect

11.186 In terms of the site and corresponding LCA 14 – Foel Fawr, structural planting measures will have matured to provide a wooded setting to the lower/middle slopes of the site. New planting will also have matured within the areas of lodge development, and at the wider boundaries of the site. These planting measures will soften the appearance of the scheme and filter views towards it. They will have also secured the afforestation of large tracks of the site (approximately 36 hectares) with mixed coniferous and deciduous cover. This will have helped to restore the character of the site, assist in its assimilation in the wider landscape context, and secured new managed woodland habitats. However, the changes to the site will remain material and whilst structural landscaping measures will have assisted to integrate the

development with wider landscape setting, the adverse effect on its immediate character is likely to remain major-moderate significance. This level of effect is restricted to the site level and extent of the Foel Fawr LCA.

- 11.187 In terms of the LCA11 – Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna and LCA 18 - Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg, the site will have begun to present as wooded valley slopes and upland. The nature of the planting combining mixed deciduous and coniferous planting will secure a more diffuse edge, whilst maintaining year-round cover to the upper slopes to absorb the, new car park, lodges and access road. The mitigation provided by the new landscaping will have a greater effect on the lower lying valley floor and LCA 11- LCA11 – Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna. From the more elevated slopes of LCA 18 - Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg a more open appreciation of the site will remain. In the long-term the permanent and indirect adverse effect of development on these LCA's is likely to be of moderate significance.
- 11.188 In terms of LCA 12 - Mynydd Penhydd, the long-term effect of development will remain a permanent and indirect adverse effect of negligible significance.
- 11.189 In terms of LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant, the structural planting measures will have matured to provide a treed setting to development. New planting measures will have developed to a height (maximum 8m) capable of providing effective cover to the proposed lodges (maximum height 7.5m above existing ground level) at the south-west corner of the site. Structural planting will have also matured around and within the site access road and new parking area on the western slopes of the site to soften these features. The long-term effect of development on this LCA is likely to be a permanent and indirect adverse effect of moderate significance.
- 11.190 In terms of LCA 15 - Mynydd Gelli, this LCA affords a relatively elevated with an appreciation of the main body of the site, rather than more restricted view of its boundary slopes and ridges. New structural planting will have developed to soften the scheme but there is likely to still be a wider appreciation of the built-form within the site. The long-term effect of development on this LCA is likely to remain a permanent and indirect adverse effect of moderate significance.
- 11.191 In terms of LCA -1 Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry (Bridgend), and LCA 3 - Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry (Bridgend), new structural planting will have matured to soften the appearance of the new built-form on the southern ridgeline. The new planting will have

developed to a height (8m maximum) capable of providing effective cover to these features. The long-term effect of development on this LCA is likely to be a permanent and indirect adverse effect of minor significance.

Table 11.9: Summary of Landscape Effects

| Landscape Character Area                                      | Nature of Effect | Short-term Effect | Long-term Effect |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>Neath Port Talbot</i>                                      |                  |                   |                  |
| LCA 11 – Cwn Afan and Cwm Pelenna                             | Adverse          | Major-moderate    | Moderate         |
| LCA 12 – Mynydd Penhydd                                       | Adverse          | Negligible        | Negligible       |
| LCA 13 – Foel Trawsnant                                       | Adverse          | Major-moderate    | Moderate         |
| LCA 14 – Foel Fawr (the site)                                 | Adverse          | Major-moderate    | Major-moderate   |
| LCA 15 – Mynydd y Gelli                                       | Adverse          | Moderate          | Moderate         |
| LCA 18 – Mynydd Resolfen, Craig y Llyn, and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg | Adverse          | Moderate          | Moderate         |
| <i>Bridgend</i>                                               |                  |                   |                  |
| LCA 1 - Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry               | Adverse          | Moderate          | Minor            |
| LCA 3 - Lynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry                     | Adverse          | Moderate          | Minor            |

Significant effects have been highlighted in blue

#### Visual Setting – Short-term Effects

11.192 The short-term effects of the development on the visual setting of the site are considered at Year 1 when the scheme has been completed with all built development and structural landscaping measures implemented to aid the assessment of likely effects of the proposed development on the visual setting of the site a digital terrain model (DTM) has been prepared mapping the development parameters. The DTM has been used as a reference in the

assessment of visual effects for each representative view. DTM views have been included in this assessment for key views; see Figures 11.35 to 11.43.

Table 11.10: Short-Term Visual Effects

| View | Description of effect                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Magnitude | Nature of Effect | Short-term Effect |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1    | Open appreciation of development within the site, seen over a short distance and effecting change to a larger proportion of the view. Views towards access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site, and X-Sports Village. Views beyond towards Central Plaza and Alpine Village. X-Trails Village and Forest Village notable on lower slopes with view to Alpine Lodges beyond | High      | Adverse          | Major             |
| 2    | Open appreciation of development within the site, seen over middle-distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site, and X-Sports Village. Views of the Central Plaza will be quite limited but there will be views of the ski slopes in the Alpine Village beyond.                        | Medium    | Adverse          | Major-moderate    |
| 3    | Appreciation of development coming over the western ridge of the site, seen over a relatively short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site.                                                                                                                                      | Medium    | Adverse          | Major-moderate    |
| 4    | Appreciation of development on the northern and western upper slopes of the site, seen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | High      | Adverse          | Major             |

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |      |         |       |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|-------|
|       | over a short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site. Possible views of the proposed centre at the Trax n Trails Village.                                                                                                                                                         |      |         |       |
| 5     | Appreciation of development on the northern and western upper slopes of the site, seen over a short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site. Views towards the Forest Village, western part of the Central Plaza and Alpine Village and Lodges beyond.                            | High | Adverse | Major |
| 6 & 7 | Open appreciation of development within the site, seen over a short distance and effecting change to a larger proportion of the view. Views towards access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site, and X-Sports Village. Views beyond towards Central Plaza and Alpine Village. X-Trails Village and Forest Village notable on lower slopes with view to Alpine Lodges beyond | High | Adverse | Major |
| 8 & 9 | Open appreciation of development within the site above Cymmer, seen over a short distance and effecting change to a large proportion of the view. Views towards the Forest Village and Trax n Trails Village in the foreground with associated activity structures and resource buildings set on upper valley slopes. Views beyond towards Trax n Trails and Forest lodges, with views of the upper                                | High | Adverse | Major |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |      |         |                |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|----------------|
|                   | extent of the central plaza and summit of Alpine Village beyond. Possible views of the Alpine lodges to the east.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |      |         |                |
| 10                | Open appreciation of development within the site, seen over a short distance and effecting change to large proportion of the view.<br>Views across the Forest and Trax n Trials Villages towards the correlating lodge developments. Central Plaza and Alpine Village viewed beyond. View of the tops of lodges in Alpine area to the east.                | High | Adverse | Major          |
| 11                | View along valley toward the development within the site, seen over middle-distance and affecting change to a small proportion of the view. Views towards the Aline Lodges and Aline Village at the summit of Foel Fawr with Central Plaza and Forest Lodges set below.                                                                                    | Low  | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 12,<br>13 &<br>14 | Open appreciation of development within the site, seen over a short distance and effecting change to large proportion of the view.<br>Views of the Alpine Lodge and Aline Village beyond, Central Plaza at centre of site with Forest Lodges, Forest Village and Trax n Trails Village below. Views beyond to X Sports Village and X Sports Lodges beyond. | High | Adverse | Major          |
| 15                | Appreciation of development set on the ridgeline to the west, seen over a short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. Open views towards the Alpine Lodges at the eastern edge of the site, with Alpine Village extending towards the summit of Foel Fawr to the south.                                                      | High | Adverse | Major-moderate |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |         |                |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|----------------|
| 16 | The DTM has confirmed that the proposed development will not be visible from this location                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |            |         | No change      |
| 17 | Appreciation of development at the southern boundary of the site. This is likely to comprise a view of the proposed summit restaurant (maximum height 5m above ground level) that will be partially screened by earth mounding and new structural landscaping, and a view of the edge of the X-Sports Lodges at the south-west corner of the site (maximum height 7.5m above ground level)                                                                                                                                             | Negligible | Adverse | Minimal        |
| 18 | Appreciation of development at the southern boundary of the site, see over a short distance and effecting change to a small part of the view. This is likely to comprise a view of the proposed summit restaurant (maximum height 5m above ground level) that will be partially screened by earth mounding and new structural landscaping, and a view of the edge of the X-Sports Lodges at the south-west corner of the site (maximum height 7.5m above ground level). The security fence will be visible at the boundary of the site | Low        | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 19 | Appreciation of development at the southern boundary of the site, see over at middle-distance and effecting change to a moderate part of the view. This is likely to comprise a view of the proposed summit restaurant (maximum height 5m above ground level) that will be partially screened by earth mounding and new structural landscaping. There may also be views of the chairlift                                                                                                                                               | Medium     | Adverse | Major-moderate |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |            |         |                |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|----------------|
|         | stands and cables. As small section of the X-Sports Lodges at the south-west corner of the site (maximum height 7.5m above ground level) will be in view. The security fence will be visible at the boundary of the site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |            |         |                |
| 20      | Appreciation of development at the very eastern boundary of the site, seen over distance and effecting change to a very small proportion of these view. View of the very eastern extent of the Alpine Lodges seen in the immediate context of Croeserw.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Negligible | Adverse | Minor          |
| 21 & 22 | Open appreciation of development within the site, seen over middle-distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of these views. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges to western extent of site, and X-Sports Village. Views of the Central Plaza will be quite limited but there will be views of the ski slopes in the Alpine Village beyond.                                                                | Medium     | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 23      | Appreciation of development on the southern and western slopes of the site, seen over relatively short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. The access road is will be visible traversing the western slopes of the site. Views towards the X-Sports Lodges, a small section of the car park, and the Trax n Trails Lodges beyond. View towards the uppermost extent of the Alpine village that includes the summit restaurant and chairlifts. | Medium     | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 24      | Appreciation of development within the site, seen over a long-distance effecting change to a small proportion of the view. Distant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Negligible | Adverse | Minor          |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |         |                |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|----------------|
|         | view of development that will be visible but difficult to distinguish between the various building types.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |         |                |
| 25      | Appreciation of the development across the site, seen over a long-distance effecting change to a moderate proportion of this view. Although a distant view the site is viewed at its widest section with the landform and development angled towards the viewer. This provided an open appreciation of the site and views across all proposed development.                                                                                                                                  | High   | Adverse | Major          |
| 26      | Appreciation of development across the site, seen over a long-distance effecting change to a moderate/small proportion of this view. From this elevated location there will be a channelled view looking across all part of the development proposal. The development will be viewed in the context of Cymmer and Croeserw in the lower valley but will extent development across the higher ground associated with Foel Fawr.                                                              | Medium | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 27 & 28 | Appreciation of the southern and eastern edge of development, seen over middle-distance and effecting change over a small proportion of these views. From both locations there will be views towards the southern edge of the Alpine Village, and the Alpine Lodges at the eastern boundary of the site. Development will be seen as a relatively thin band of built-form not indistinct from the exiting settlement that strikes across the landform in the immediate context of the site. | Low    | Adverse | Moderate       |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |            |         |                |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|----------------|
| 29 | Distant appreciation of development at the southern boundary of the site. This is likely to comprise a view of the proposed summit restaurant (maximum height 5m above ground level) that will be partially screened by earth mounding and new structural landscaping, and a view of the edge of the X-Sports Lodges at the south-west corner of the site (maximum height 7.5m above ground level)                                                                           | Negligible | Adverse | Minimal        |
| 30 | Appreciation of development on the western slopes of the site, seen over relatively short distance and effecting change across a large proportion of the visual horizon to the east. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges, and a small part of the X-Sports Village.                                                                                                                                                   | High       | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 31 | A slightly more distant view compared to View 30 where the site makes a more limited contribution to the setting of the valley. There will be an appreciation of development on the western slopes of the site, seen over relatively middle-distance and effecting change across a large proportion of the visual horizon to the east. Views towards the access road, visitors car park, X-Sports Lodges and Trax n Trails Lodges, and a small part of the X-Sports Village. | Medium     | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 32 | Appreciation of the site access road with development set higher up on the western slopes of the site, effecting a change to a relatively small proportion of this view. There will be a view of the access road with                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Medium     | Adverse | Moderate       |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |        |         |                  |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|------------------|
|    | associated signage and other ornamentation visible at such close proximity. The Tax n Trails resource centre may just be visible on the skyline above Pen y Castell. The western edge of the Trax n Trails lodges will be visible but the car park and X-Sports Lodges will be screened from view by intervening landform.                                                                                                                                                     |        |         |                  |
| 33 | Appreciation of development within the site viewed at the end of the valley across the visual horizon, effecting change to a moderate proportion of this view. View towards the Alpine Village and artificial ski slopes with the Alpine Lodges visible to the east. The Central Plaza will be visible below the ski slopes as will the Forest Lodges. A proportion of the existing plantation woodland will be retained to provide some cover and screening in the short-term | Medium | Adverse | Moderate         |
| 34 | Appreciation of development at the eastern edge of the site, viewed over a relatively short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. View towards the Alpine Lodges extending across the eastern edge of the site, viewed in the immediate context of the modern settlement.                                                                                                                                                                        | High   | Adverse | Major - moderate |

Significant effects have been highlighted in blue

#### Visual Setting – Long-term Effects

- 11.193 The assessment of long-term effects on the visual setting of the site are considered at Year 15 allowing time for the structural landscaping measures to have matured. It is assumed for this assessment that new tree planting measures will have mature to a maximum height of 8m, and will be under effective management.

Table 11.11: Long-Term Visual Effects (Year 15)

| View  | Description of effect                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Nature of Effect | Long-term Effect |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1     | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development. However, the this is an elevated view looking across the site where there is still likely to be an open appreciation of the development built-form. | Adverse          | Major-moderate   |
| 2     | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development. However, the this is an elevated view looking across the site where there is still likely to be an open appreciation of the development built-form. | Adverse          | Moderate         |
| 3     | Planting measures will have matured softening and partially screening the development from this lower setting of the valley.                                                                                                         | Adverse          | Moderate         |
| 4     | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development, but the built-form will still be a noticeable element across the horizon.                                                                           | Adverse          | Major-moderate   |
| 5     | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development, but the built-form will still be a noticeable element across the horizon.                                                                           | Adverse          | Major-moderate   |
| 6 & 7 | Planting measures will have mature to soften the appearance of the development. However, the this is an elevated view looking across the site where there is still likely to be an open appreciation of the development built-form.  | Adverse          | Major-moderate   |
| 8 & 9 | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development, but the built-form will still be a noticeable element across the horizon.                                                                           | Adverse          | Major-moderate   |
| 10    | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development, but the built-form will still be a noticeable element across the horizon.                                                                           | Adverse          | Major-moderate   |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |         |                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| 11                | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development with only small section of the horizon effect by development.                                                                                                                                                         | Adverse | Minor          |
| 12,<br>13 &<br>14 | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development, but the built-form will still be a noticeable element with the site from more elevated locations and across the horizon from lower lying land.                                                                       | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 15                | Appreciation of development set on the ridgeline to the west, seen over a short distance and effecting change to a moderate proportion of the view. Open views towards the Alpine Lodges at the eastern edge of the site, with Alpine Village extending towards the summit of Foel Fawr to the south. | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 16                | The DTM has confirmed that the proposed development will not be visible from this location                                                                                                                                                                                                            |         | No change      |
| 17                | Planting measures at the southern boundary of the site will soften and screen views of the summit restaurant, and provide a structured landscape setting to the X-Sports Lodges.                                                                                                                      | Adverse | Minimal        |
| 18                | Planting measures at the southern boundary of the site will soften and screen views of the summit restaurant, and provide a structured landscape setting to the X-Sports Lodges. View of the security fence will have been substantially screened                                                     | Adverse | Minor          |
| 19                | Planting measures at the southern boundary of the site will soften and screen views of the summit restaurant, and provide a structured landscape setting to the X-Sports Lodges. View of the security fence will have been substantially screened                                                     | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 20                | Planting measures at the eastern boundary of the site will have matured to soften and filter the restricted view of the Alpine Lodges                                                                                                                                                                 | Adverse | Minimal        |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |         |                |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| 21 & 22 | Planting measures at the western boundary of the site will have mature to soften and screen views towards the edge of the lodge development. The access road will have assimilated into the young woodland setting of the valley side.                                                                                                                       | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 23      | Planting measures at the southern and western boundaries of the site will have mature to soften and screen views towards the edge of the lodge development. The access road will have assimilated into the young woodland setting of the valley side. Views along the southern ridge towards the Alpine village will become filtered and partially screened. | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 24      | Over such distance there may be some appreciable change with the maturing structural planting helping the site to read as part of the wider commercial woodland setting.                                                                                                                                                                                     | Adverse | Minimal        |
| 25      | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development. However, the this is an elevated view looking across the site where there is still likely to be an open appreciation of the development built-form.                                                                                                                         | Adverse | Major-moderate |
| 26      | Planting measures will have matured to soften the appearance of the development. However, the this is an elevated view looking across the site where there is still likely to be an open appreciation of the development built-form.                                                                                                                         | Adverse | Moderate       |
| 27 & 28 | Planting measures will have matured across the southern boundary of the site softening and filtering views of the development and providing partial screening.                                                                                                                                                                                               | Adverse | Minor          |
| 29      | Planting measures will have matured across the southern boundary of the site softening and filtering views of the development and providing partial screening.                                                                                                                                                                                               | Adverse | Minimal        |
| 30      | Planting measures at the western and southern boundaries of the site will have mature to soften and screen views towards the edge of the lodge development.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Adverse | Moderate       |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |         |          |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
|    | The access road and car park will have assimilated into the young woodland setting of the valley side.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |         |          |
| 31 | Planting measures at the western and southern boundaries of the site will have matured to soften and screen views towards the edge of the lodge development. The access road and car park will have assimilated into the young woodland setting of the valley side.                                                          | Adverse | Minor    |
| 32 | Planting measures will have matured on the lower western valley slopes. The density and layering of new planting looking up the slopes will substantially filter and screen views of the development. The site access and associated signage will still be visible from the highway.                                         | Adverse | Minor    |
| 33 | Planting measures at the northern boundary of the site and within the development areas (in particular the lodge development) will have matured to soften and screen views of the development. Views of the upper Alpine slopes will remain, but this will be viewed in the wider context of settlement on the lower slopes. | Adverse | Minor    |
| 34 | Planting measures at the eastern boundary of the site and within the development areas (in particular the lodge development) will have matured to soften and screen views towards the edge of the Alpine Lodges.                                                                                                             | Adverse | Moderate |

Significant effects have been highlighted in blue

### Lighting Strategy

11.194 The lighting strategy has been carried out by BWB and is included under Appendix 11.1 of this chapter. The strategy considers the key potential lighting effects that include light spill, sky glow, and glare. Due to the private nature of the development proposal the scheme will not be required to achieve adoptable standards allowing greater flexibility in achieving a more considered approach to lighting.

11.195 The strategy identifies the site and much of its wider landscape setting as being located within an intrinsically dark landscape. Exception is made for the tracts of settlement and wider lit

highways and outlying individual properties that are classified as an area of low district brightness.

11.196 The strategy identifies the following key lighting sources:

- Primary site routes and internal access roads
- External car parks
- Exterior courtyards, activity areas and Central Plaza.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes
- Landscape, aesthetic (optional)
- Building, perimeter for safe access and egress
- Building, aesthetic(optional)
- Visitor Lodges

11.197 The strategy considers the temporary lighting setting of the construction phase. Operational hours will generally be restricted to daylight hours. Where lighting is required during winter months (morning/evening) it will be kept to a minimum whilst achieving safe working conditions. Likewise, security lighting will be kept to a minimum.

11.198 The specification of luminaires will include directional fitting with restricted (or baffled) designs that restrict light emission to the below the horizontal plane. Lighting layouts will be optimised to ensure the least number of lanterns as possible. Lighting will be directed towards trafficked areas and baffled to avoid lights-spill. Where possible lighting control measures will be adopted to dim or switch off inactive areas.

11.199 On roads and within parking areas standalone lighting columns will be used with a low mounting height not exceeding 6m. In less trafficked areas low level lit bollards will be used.

11.200 On footpaths and cycleways lighting will be provided during hours of low-light and darkness to aid navigation. Luminaires will be mounted on the lowest columns possible whilst achieving safe and efficient lighting standards.

11.201 Within the lodge environment lighting standards will be maintained to achieve safe navigation and access. The layout of the lodges will be used as a primary mitigation measure to light spill, using the fabric of the buildings as a baffle to the wider landscape. Lighting in these areas will be provided through lit bollards. At the edge of the development, and alongside dark corridors lighting will be baffled.

11.202 The ski slope has the potential to be one of the primary night time light sources within the development. Flood lighting will be a requirement for skiing in low light levels, and possibly at night. Lighting control measures will be the most effective form of mitigation turning lighting off in inactive areas. Lighting will adopt overspill baffles and double symmetric beams to control lighting direction and avoid light spill.

11.203 The central plaza is also a primary night time light source. The lighting strategy considers a number of issues:

- Lighting to provide safety for pedestrians from moving vehicles and to deter antisocial behaviour;
- Lighting commensurate with the character and volume of vehicular traffic, including cyclists;
- Lighting design and choice of equipment in relation to the architectural scene and urban landscape;
- Control of illuminated advertisements in the interests of amenity;
- Control and integration of permanent floodlighting installations into the visual master plan;
- Control of temporary special lighting effects, such as floodlighting and festive decorations;
- Control of road and other direction signs and their relationship with other illuminated material;
- Protection of the environment and property from light pollution;
- Protection of installations from accidental or deliberate damage;
- Maintenance of installations

11.204 The strategy recommends the use of the built-form to contain lighting within the Central Plaza, and the use of lighting that integral to the buildings, recessed under canopies and other parts of the building to better contain and direct light spill. In wider areas illuminated bollards and directional lighting will be used to limit light spill.

11.205 The strategy sets out the following recommendations:

- Lowest practical mounting heights;
- Use of light spill shields to block unwanted light;
- Use of LED lighting units which have sharp light cut-off,

- Use of dedicated optics design for the area of use,
- Use of planting / landscape to form a physical barrier or screen against unwanted light spill,
- Use of buildings / structures to form a physical barrier or screen against unwanted light spill,
- Careful planning / positioning of lighting to aim into the development wherever possible.

11.206 Integral to the development strategy is the transition of development density from the centre of the site towards its outer edges. The highest concentrations of development that include the Central Plaza are set well within the site, with lodges beyond that are often surrounded by activity zones. This transitional arrangement is also central to the lighting strategy with the primary light sources contained within the site and end uses with the least artificial lighting at its edges. This coordinates with the need to retain a dark corridor, or edge along the northern boundary of the site that overlooks the Afan river.

## Mitigation and Residual Effects

### Mitigation

11.207 Primary mitigation has been secured by design. The scale, mass, and location of development has, where feasible, been guided by the sites constraints. Larger scale development has been located to avoid areas more susceptible to change, and where possible integrated within the landform. Smaller scale development with a low density, capable of being absorbed in high levels of new structural planting has been located in areas of increased susceptibility to change.

11.208 Landform has been of key consideration, both in terms of the location and scale of development. Various access proposals have been considered to secure a solution that works with the overarching access strategy for the leisure resort, whilst minimising its effect on the landform and visual setting. The design of parking arrangements has been reviewed in detail to secure a solution that works with the landform and minimises the requirement for engineered retaining features and is capable of integrating meaningful areas of structural planting that over time will secure a wooded setting to the new areas of parking.

11.209 Secondary mitigation will also be secured through the design of the built-form, highway, and associated signage. The following measures will be adopted:

- High quality design and detailing of the proposed built-form, in particular materials selection to avoid particularly obtrusive colours and highly reflective material that will create solar glare on the hillside;
- The sensitive layout/location of buildings to screen the highway environment and vehicles from view;
- The plotting of buildings to allow space for new planting measures in between, and set on the outer face so that cover can be provided that will over time soften and filters view of development from the wider valley setting;
- The sensitive detailing of the highway environment to avoid obtrusive elements, unnecessary ornamentation, and lit signage (lighting effect are dealt with separately);
- The adoption of a long-term landscape and ecological management plan to secure the correct development and prosperity of both the existing and proposed landscape habitats within the site;
- The identification of the greenspace network and landscape features to be managed and maintained in perpetuity, and in accordance with the adopted management plan.

### Residual Effects

11.210 Through the construction phase the implementation of good site management, maintenance and housekeeping would ensure that temporary alteration to the landscape resources, character and visual amenity will be kept to a practicable minimum. Despite these best practice measures, there would remain inevitable adverse effects during the construction phase. Adverse effect will result from;

- The general intensity of construction work across the site;
- Ground preparation work, the manipulation of landform and materials storage;
- Removal/thinning of the exiting tree resource; and
- The ongoing transformation of cleared forestry land to the proposed leisure development

11.211 At a site level this is likely to result in permanent and direct significant adverse effects that have been recorded through the assessment of the completed scheme. These effects will be

felt across the site and local landscape setting affect both its character and visual resource. The only temporary effect that will require more detailed consideration will be the use of tall machinery such as tower cranes and pilling rigs. However, their use can be strictly controlled through the adoption of a construction management plan.

11.212 In terms of short-term operational landscape effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the character of the site (LCA 14 – Foel Fawr). The assessment has also identified permanent and indirect significant adverse effects to the parts of high sensitivity landscape that share and open relationship with the site:

- LCA 11 – Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna; and
- LCA 13 – Foel Trawsant

11.213 In terms of long-term operational landscape effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the character of the site (LCA 14 Foel Fawr).

11.214 In terms of short-term operational visual effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the visual resource of the immediate valley setting that affords an open appreciation of the site as a major landform component, and wider views from more elevated landform that provides an open appreciation of the entire landform of the site, and views from high sensitivity landscapes that will experience moderate changes to the visual resource.

11.215 In terms of long-term operational visual effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the most immediate visual resource within the valley setting that affords an open appreciation of the site, and wider locations that will afford an elevated and open appreciation of the development extending across the site within the valley.

11.216 Short and long-term operational effects assessed as significant have been identified in blue in the assessment tables.

### Cumulative and In-Combined Effects

11.217 NPTCBC has confirmed the following schemes to be considered as part of a cumulative assessment of landscape and visual effects:

- The consented solar farm at Caerau (BCBC);
- Existing wind farm developments at Pen y Cymoedd, Llŷni Afan, and Ffynon Oer;
- The proposed wind farm development at Foel Trawsnant (NPTCBC application: P2014/0825); and
- The Caerau Mine Water Project (BCBC).

11.218 The assessment methodology, study area and baseline assessment established in the LVIA will be used to inform the assessment of cumulative effects. The assessment of effects focuses on the likely significant effects, and those likely to influence the planning decision making process.

11.219 Of these schemes the solar farm at Caerau (BCBC), and wind farm developments at Llŷni Afan and Ffynon Oer formed part of the baseline and assessment of the proposed adventure park and have already been considered in the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

11.220 The Caerau Water Mine Project (BCBC) appears to be at an earlier stage with an exhibition planned for spring 2018 when the findings of the feasibility investigations will be shared with the public. The project intends to pump heated water from redundant mine works that will be used as part of a local heating scheme for around 150 homes. The scale and location of structures and wider infrastructure is unknown and therefore cannot be assessed.

11.221 The proposed windfarm development at Foel Trawsnant (NPTCBC) comprises 13 wind turbines with a maximum tip height of 120m with ancillary features that include a substation, control building, underground cabling, stone access tracks, temporary construction compound, and temporary crane pads. The application was validated in October 2014.

11.222 This application includes a landscape and visual impact assessment, and an assessment of LANDMAP character areas. The findings of this assessment concluded that the proposal will result in a moderate/substantial effect to the character of the Foel Trawsnant character area (this is the host area), and effect considered to be significant to the planning decision making process.

11.223 In terms of landscape effects, the assessment confirms that the wind farm proposal is likely to result in a moderate/substantial effect to the adjoining Mynydd Baedan character area to the east that includes Foel y Dyffryn, a moderate adverse effect to the character of the Cwm Afan

and Cwm Palenna farmed side to the north, and moderate/substantial effect to the Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna character area associated with the base of the valley.

- 11.224 These findings when read together with the findings for the Afan Adventure Report confirm that the combined effects of both developments are likely to result in significant adverse effects to the character of the Foel Trawsant character area (the host character area to the proposed Foel Trwasnant wind farm), and the Foel Fawr character area (the host area to the proposed Afan Valley Adventure Resort).
- 11.225 In terms of visual effects, the wind farm proposal would result in an apparent change to the open upland setting of Foel Trawsant and Foel Dyffryn and associated access land and public rights of way. The assessment for the wind farm proposal confirms significant adverse visual effects to receptor groups associated with this area of open upland pasture, and significant adverse visual effects to receptor groups associated with the wider setting of the upper Afan valley to the north and the surround upland areas to the east and west.
- 11.226 Significant adverse visual effects are also recorded for local settlements including Brynheulog, Caerau, Abercregan, and Cynonville. This includes a number of local individual properties and farmsteads.
- 11.227 From a number of these locations the wind farm and adventure resort will be viewed in combination to varying degrees, and this is likely to result in the appreciation of wider change to the receptor groups associated with the landscapes with associated adverse visual effects that will be of significance to the planning decision making process.
- 11.228 It is important to recognise the differences between these proposals. The assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects is normally concerned with other similar developments, or the combined effect of a set of developments. The Foel Trawsant wind farmer proposal and the adventure resort are different in a number of ways, the most apparent being that the wind farm is a temporary and fully reversible change, whereas the adventure resort is a permanent and irreversible change. Scale is also another key consideration. The wind farm is tall (120m) comprising a number of vertical structures that will be prominent and difficult to mitigate. The adventure resort in comparison is low, and whilst being prominent in terms of its coverage can be mitigated through the adoption of recognised landscape measures (planting/material selection/colour).

11.229 Both applications have been the subject of LVIA that identify the landscape and visual effects considered significant to the planning decision making process. This cumulative assessment has concluded that both developments will result in effects to their immediate landscapes and associated character areas that are considered to be significant and will have a similar level of effect on immediately adjoining character areas. Unlike the wind farm application, the adventure resort is capable of mitigating this level of effect in the long-term to limit any significant adverse landscape effect to the site and its associated character area Foel Fawr. The adverse landscape effects associated with the wind farm are temporary but will remain throughout the life of the development.

11.230 In terms of visual effects, both applications will result in significant effects to receptor groups within the immediate vicinity of the site. There are also a number of receptors groups associated with the wider upper section of the Afan Valley, and the surrounding upland areas to the east and west that will view both developments in combination resulting in significant adverse visual effects. Again, the adventure resort proposal has adopted recognised landscape mitigation measures that over time will assist in assimilating the proposal within its landscape setting, reducing the significance of any related adverse visual effects. The wind farm cannot be mitigated in the same with the identified adverse visual effects remaining unchanged for the duration of the development.

## Summary and Conclusions

### Introduction

11.231 This assessment considers the likely effect of the development proposals on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape within the study area in order to identify the impacts that are likely to arise from the proposed development on the character of the site and local landscape and associated visual resource. This assessment has summarised the development strategy and mitigation measures that have been adopted to limit the adverse effects arising from this proposal. The level of landscape and visual effects of the development have then been assessed and significant effects have been recorded.

## The Site

- 11.232 The site extends to approximately 128.5 hectares comprising an area of cleared commercial forestry that covers the land associated with Foel Fawr set within the Afan Valley.
- 11.233 The landform of the site provides enclosure to this part of the upper valley rising from the valley floor to a high-point of 347m above ordnance datum (AOD). To the north the site is bound by the Brytwn Road (A4107), beyond which is the settlement of Cymmer and the wider valley setting of the River Afan rising to the north towards Blaen Cregan (464m AOD) and the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm. To the east the site is bound by Maesteg Road and Pen y Bryn (A4063), beyond which is the settlement of Croeserw and the Cwm Nantfyfedw that rises towards the pastoral uplands associated with Mynydd y Gelli and the Llynfi Afan wind farm. To the south the sites boundary follows the Borough County boundary with the neighbouring Bridgend, beyond which the land falls from Foel Fawr towards Brynheulog, Caerau and the wider settled valley setting of the River Llynfi. To the west the site has an open boundary with the wider pastoral setting of the southern slopes of the Afan Valley. The settlement of Duffryn and Cynonville are located on the valley floor with the landform rising to the south towards Foel Trawsnant (371m AOD), and the commercial forestry setting of Afan Agroed Forest Park beyond.
- 11.234 The site is not covered by any landscape designations, and does not contain any statutory, or non-statutory designations that would prohibit its development. The landscape adjoining the south-west boundary of the site forms part of the Foel Trawsnant Special Landscape Area (SLA). To the east of the site, beyond Croeserw, the Mynydd y Gelli SLA extends across this broad area of upland pasture.

## The Development Proposal

- 11.235 The development proposal has sought to secure a considered scale of development in combination with the creation of extensive new areas of landscaping, adopting species mixes that respond to the character of the site and its proposed use, and the setting of the adjoining landscapes.
- 11.236 In terms of built-form, larger development comprising the Central Plaza with apartments, and a hotel have been located on the upper plateau central to the site. Development within the

Central Plaza is restricted to a maximum building height of 15m above existing ground level. The main central plaza building will be stepped into the landform to ensure that it sits below the ridgeline at the southern boundary of the site.

- 11.237 The X-Sports Zone with associated buildings and water sports has also been located on the upper plateau of the site with development heights restricted to 12m above existing ground level.
- 11.238 The Alpine Village with associated artificial ski slopes has been located on the north side of Foel Fawr to secure the required elevation, gradients, and length of slopes. The opportunity exists to retain some of the existing plantation at the boundary of the ski slopes. A ski lift will connect the central plaza with a hilltop restaurant. The lift will rise to a maximum of 15m above existing ground levels, returning to ground level at the top of the site where it will be received into a summit restaurant complex with a maximum height of 5m from existing ground level. It is proposed that a combination of subtle mounding and new tree planting measures will screen this feature, as well as screen the existing kiosks and enclosures associated with the communications mast.
- 11.239 Beyond these central features wider development on the upper to middle valley slopes has been restricted to lodges with a maximum height of 7.5m above existing ground level. The lodges and their access routes have been arranged to follow the existing landform, limiting the requirement for major engineering works. The lodges have been plotted at a low density with space to accommodate high levels of new structural landscaping.
- 11.240 There are 2no. hub buildings that have been set on the edge of the upper to middle slopes associated with the Trax n Trails and Forest Activity zones on the northern side of the site. These will be the resource centres for both activity zones with a maximum building height of 7.5m and 15m above existing ground level, respectively.
- 11.241 The activity zones will comprise tracks set into the hillside and surrounded by high levels of new woodland planting. The Forestry Zone will also incorporate timber apparatus and zip wires traversing the landform up to a maximum height of 15m above existing ground level.
- 11.242 There are 2no. proposed parking areas. The main visitors parking area is set on the middle valley slopes at the western boundary of the site next to the visitor access road that traverses

the western slopes of the site from Brytwn Road. The design of the car park has been the subject of a detailed design study to secure a proposal that can be successfully integrated into the landform, and accommodated meaningful intermediate planting belts that, over time will provide effective woodland cover. The car park will accommodate up to 650no. vehicles along a series of lanes running along the landform and single sided parking.

- 11.243 The resort will be secured using a 2.1m high weldmesh fence, finished in an appropriately dark colour.

### Access

- 11.244 In terms of highway access, the visitor entrance will traverse the western valley slopes of the site from Brytwn Road. The proposed highway has been designed to follow the landform, turning behind the summit of Pen y Castell, limiting its visual effect on the wider setting of the valley.
- 11.245 The second highway access is taken from Pen y Bryn (A4063) at the existing forestry access close to the junction with Brynheulog Road. This access will service the staff parking area that will have up to 150no. spaces.
- 11.246 In terms of public access, bridleway BR42 has been retrained on its alignment through the centre of the site. Footpath FP66 is to be diverted and realigned with bridleway BR42. At the southern boundary of the site the footpath will connect back to its original alignment. Bridleways BR43 and BR44 will be realigned in sections but will retain their setting on the western valley slopes of the site, overlooking Pen y Castell and the River Afan.

### Structural Landscaping

- 11.247 The strategy for new landscaping seeks to respond to the various features of the site, wider relationships with the adjoining landscapes, and the proposed development. The structural landscaping strategy can be summarised as:

- The extension of the deciduous woodland setting from the lower valley (below Brytwn Road) onto the lower valley slopes of the site. In particular, new areas of deciduous planting will be focussed around the lower slopes at the west and north-west

boundaries of the site. The ground will also be managed to encourage the natural regeneration of the ancient woodland seedstock in this part of the site;

- As a general principle the boundaries of the site will be planted as mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland to secure a more diverse woodland structure, and a softer transition with the surrounding areas of pasture and settlement;
- Towards the middle to upper slopes of the site (in line with the proposed boundary fence) new woodland planting will be mixed but with a higher percentage of coniferous species. This will secure increased year-round cover and screening at the edge of the development (and at the fence line), alongside faster and more robust establishment on the more exposed slopes;
- Moving into the development cells, and the central plateau new planting will be predominantly coniferous to secure faster establishment, year-round cover, and shelter to the proposed lodges and the various activity centres; and
- Only the lower slopes of Pen y Castell will be planted, with the upper slopes and crags remaining open to view from the wider valley setting.

11.248 The proposed built development and access will extend to approximately 73% of the site, much of which will be set out as low-density lodge development capable of accommodate high levels of new tree and woodland planting. The remaining 27% of the site represents approximately 36 hectares of land set-aside as new structural landscaping comprising mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland.

### Likely Significant Effects

11.249 Through the construction phase the implementation of good site management, maintenance and housekeeping would ensure that temporary alteration to the landscape resources, character and visual amenity will be kept to a practicable minimum. Despite these best practice measures, there would remain inevitable adverse effects during the construction phase. Adverse effect will result from;

- The general intensity of construction work across the site;
- Ground preparation work, the manipulation of landform and materials storage;
- Removal/thinning of the existing tree resource; and
- The ongoing transformation of cleared forestry land to the proposed leisure development

11.250 At a site level this is likely to result in permanent and direct significant adverse effects that have been recorded through the assessment of the completed scheme. These effects will be felt across the site and local landscape setting affect both its character and visual resource. The only temporary effect that will require more detailed consideration will be the use of tall machinery such as tower cranes and piling rigs. However, their use can be strictly controlled through the adoption of a construction management plan.

11.251 In terms of short-term operational landscape effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the character of the site (LCA 14 – Foel Fawr). The assessment has also identified permanent and indirect significant adverse effects to the parts of high sensitivity landscape that share an open relationship with the site:

- LCA 11 – Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna; and
- LCA 13 – Foel Trawsnant

11.252 In terms of long-term operational landscape effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the character of the site (LCA 14 Foel Fawr).

11.253 In terms of short-term operational visual effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the visual resource of the immediate valley setting that affords an open appreciation of the site as a major landform component, and wider views from more elevated landform that provides an open appreciation of the entire landform of the site, and views from high sensitivity landscapes that will experience moderate changes to the visual resource.

11.254 In terms of long-term operational visual effects this assessment has identified permanent and direct significant adverse effects to the most immediate visual resource within the valley setting that affords an open appreciation of the site, and wider locations that will afford an elevated and open appreciation of the development extending across the site within the valley.