

APPENDIX 7.3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

The sensitivity of the landscape character areas which may receive significant landscape effects are assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed development. Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the proposed development, with additional comments regarding the Site where relevant. The table below is informed by guidance provided within GN 017 – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance for Wales.

Host Landscape: 18 Mynydd Resolfen, Craig-y-Llyn and Mynydd Ynyscorrwg

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or local designation	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Mostly plantation forestry, with some open areas, LANDMAP habitats layer indicates Moderate evaluation and Low connectivity/cohesion. Some area of geological value (SSSI), mostly to the north of the LCA.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	LANDMAP historic layer indicates mostly of Outstanding or High evaluation. There is a lengthy history of human use and settlement from the Mesolithic onwards. The area is not covered by historic landscape designations.	Regional
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	Forestry and wind turbines are extensive features of this area which would otherwise be open upland.	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	No specific associations are noted in the LANDMAP cultural layer.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	The forested upland is not particularly distinctive, but provides the skyline to villages in the valleys.	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	A number of long distance walking routes pass through this area and there are footpaths and Afan Bike Park also within the LCA.	Regional
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particularly visual.	Views from the open moorlands have enjoyable outlooks over the valleys and across to other uplands, but the landscape itself has no particular scenic value. LANDMAP Visual and Sensory aspect layer indicates a Moderate evaluation.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The uplands do not appear wild due to the presence of livestock, wind turbines and forestry. There is a greater level of tranquillity and darkness than the nearby settled valleys.	Regional
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	The uplands provide 'breathing space' between the busy, settled valleys.	Regional.
Overall Judgement of Value				Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Susceptibility				
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	Large scale upland landscape.	Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	Extensive, undulating plateau cut with steep valleys.	Medium/ low
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Mostly entirely open moorland, or entirely enclosed forestry.	Low
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	Simple mix of forestry and moorland	Low
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	Large scale irregular patterns	Medium
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	The most noticeable elements are forestry and turbines although smaller scale historic features are also present.	Medium
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	The narrower southern end of the upland is visible from the settled valleys and the coast; the internal area of the wider plateau has limited intervisibility.	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	The area forms the skyline for villages in the adjacent valleys; and is part of the more distant inland skyline in views from the coast.	High/ medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium/low
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium/low

Host Landscape: 11 Cwm Afan and Cwm Pelenna

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or local designation	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	The LANDMAP habitats layer indicates the valley sides and Mynydd Blaenafon have Moderate evaluation and the river has a High evaluation. The Geological layer indicates a similar pattern.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	The area is not covered by historic landscape designations. Most of the valley is indicated to be of High historic evaluation by LANDMAP, with Mynydd Blaenafon sharing the Outstanding evaluation of the adjacent LCA 18.	Regional/ Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	The condition is variable, with a mix of rural and urban areas. Field boundaries are sometimes in poor repair and telephone and electricity lines are notable features close to some of the villages.	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	Associations with former mining industry are very apparent in the villages.	Regional/ community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	The linear mining villages enclosed by smaller scale pasture and deciduous trees are a distinctive regional settlement pattern.	Regional
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a	The valley provides connectivity and points of access to recreational opportunities in the upland areas as well as local recreational opportunities close to the villages.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
	of the landscape is important	view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.		
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particularly visual.	LANDMAP indicates Moderate visual and sensory evaluation.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The small settlements and local roads mean that the area is rural but not entirely tranquil.	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	The valleys form key drainage and transport corridors and are closely associated with the settlements.	Regional
Overall Judgement of Value				Community
Susceptibility				
Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	Small scale valley landscape. *	High
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	Winding and steep sided valley land form. *	High
Openness/ enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Frequently enclosed by the built form of villages, deciduous trees and or valley sides with more open areas on upper valleys slopes. *	High/medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	A mix of landcover and uses. *	High
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	Irregular patterns responding to the valley landform and varying around the settlements. *	High
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Historic mining villages with some intrusive modern features with overhead lines being notably intrusive in some settlements. *	Medium
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	Visually contained with valleys sides often forming close skylines. Longer views are available along the valleys. *	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	The valleys form the immediate setting of settlements, but are not seen as skylines.	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	The valleys form the immediate setting of settlements, but are not seen as skylines.	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				High/medium
* Mynydd Blaenafon is an exception in relation to these criteria, sharing more in common with the adjacent LCA 18.				
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium

Adjacent Landscape: 17 Foel Ffynyddau

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or local landscape designation except for a small area within SLA2.	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	LANDMAP identifies the northern area as Moderate geological evaluation and the remainder as High. Habitats are predominantly identified as Moderate evaluation.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	LANDMAP historic layer indicates Outstanding evaluation. There is a multi-layered history of human use and settlement in particular focussed around Cefn Morfudd to the north of the area, but also throughout. The area is not covered by historic landscape designations.	Regional
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	An area of upland pastoral farming with some forestry and deciduous woodland. Historic mixed field boundaries often fenced or in poor repair. Communications mast are a notable feature of the higher ground.	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	No notable cultural associations.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	Relatively common place elements and features and lacks distinctive identity.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	Limited footpath network across most of the area, but with multiple paths towards the northern end near Tonna.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particularly visual.	LANDMAP indicates Moderate visual and sensory evaluation.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	A quiet rural landscape albeit less so around the edges which adjoin the towns to the west and south. The area would not be perceived as wild given the farming, masts, transmission lines and forestry.	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	This upland area provides part of the inland backdrop to the coastal settlements.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Community

Susceptibility

Scale	Large scale landscapes where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape are generally less sensitive.	Small scale intimate landscapes are generally more sensitive to large scale structures.	A medium scale landscape in the local context – larger scale than the valleys, but smaller scale than the uplands. Scale varies with lower slopes tending to smaller scale and the open hilltops being larger scale.	Medium
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	A group of smooth hills	Medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Higher Sensitivity to Wind Energy	Explanation	Judgement
Openness/enclosure	Open and exposed landscapes	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Enclosed on lower slopes by woodland and higher ground, open on the hilltops	Medium
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover (including intensive farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	Varied, hill tops have extensive open areas whilst slopes have a mix of pasture, woodland and forestry.	Medium
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	Variable – rectilinear in places, lacking pattern in others and irregular on lower slopes.	Medium
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Limited settlement within the area, masts power lines, minerals extraction and forestry are key land uses.	Medium/low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	Visible from coastal areas around Swansea Bay and has views out from open summits, less so from lower slopes.	High\ medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	Not applicable – this is not the host landscape.	N/A
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium/ low