



Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

R02

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Prepared on Behalf of REWE 11 Limited

Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 Tir Collective is instructed by REWE 11 Limited to prepare this Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVApp), which relates to the proposed battery storage development circa 1.7km to the west of Rhigos National Grid Substation on land west of Mount Road, Rhigos, see **Figure LA.01** for the site location. The site extends to 5.2 hectares with the proposed battery storage area located in the southwestern part of the site with underground cables located to the east which would extend east to connect the proposed battery storage area with the Rhigos National Grid substation. The proposed development would seek to operational for a temporary period of 40 years.

1.2 Scope of the Assessment

- 1.2.1 The proposed development would comprise the installation of battery energy storage system (BESS), together with high voltage substation compound, transformer stations, inverters, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. A new access would connect the battery storage area with Mount Road to the east via an existing track alignment, which heads south from the site, then heads east along existing filed boundaries, to the west and south of Cefn Farm.
- 1.2.2 A short underground cable route connects the proposed battery storage area with Rhigos substation some 1.7km to the east, via Rhigos Road to the east. The cable route would be trenched and bored underground at a suitable depth in key locations to avoid the removal of any trees or boundary vegetation, where possible.
- 1.2.3 This LVApp provides an assessment of the effects of the proposed development, on the landscape of the site and its context. The design of the proposed development and the identification of mitigation measures incorporated within the design to minimise adverse effects, is informed by the findings of the assessment process as it progressed. In this LVApp, effects on features identified as important to the scenic quality, or effects on the landscape character of the site and its setting are assessed. Effects on peoples' views of the site and its setting, or visual amenity, are also assessed.
- 1.2.4 For the purposes of assessing the landscape and visual effects of this proposal, study areas have been defined:
- The site extends to the redline boundary as shown on **Figure LA.01** (except for the cable route). References to the "site" in the remainder of this report excludes the east underground cable route.
 - The wider landscape context extends 3km from the site boundary.
 - The visual study area extends 3km from the site boundary.

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1.2.5 The objectives of the assessment are to:

- Describe and evaluate the landscape of the site and surrounding landscape context and the visual amenity of people in the surrounding area, which might be affected by the proposed development.
- Make recommendations for mitigation measures which can be incorporated into the development scheme.
- Examine the development proposals and analyse the potential effects on the landscape and visual amenity associated with the extension of the quarry.
- Provide an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development with integral mitigation measures in place.

1.2.6 The LVApp is presented with separate sections dealing with effects on landscape, and effects on visual amenity. The LVApp is illustrated by plans and photographs (see **Appendix 1**), as follows:

- **Figure LA.01** Site Location
- **Figures LA.02** Designations
- **Figure LA.03** Public Access
- **Figures LA.04** LANDMAP
- **Figure LA.05** Topography
- **Figure LA.06** Site context
- **Figures LA.07** Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) plans
- **Figures LA.08** Context photos
- **Figures LA.09** Viewpoints

1.2.7 Detailed information is presented in Appendices as follows:

- **Appendix 2** Assessment methodology
- **Appendix 3** Assessment of effects

1.3 Assessment Methodology

1.3.1 The methodology used for assessing the landscape and visual effects is based on the recommendations in **Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition**, published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in 2013 (GLVIA3), as set out in **Appendix 2**.

1.3.2 The Landscape Institute has advised in relation to Landscape & Visual Appraisals outside a formal EIA process in its “Statement of Clarification 1/13”¹:

“In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes. ... The emphasis on likely ‘significant effects’ in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle – focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA”.

1.3.3 The assessment process comprises a combination of desk studies and field surveys, with subsequent analyses, and involved:

- A review of landscape designations and planning policies for the landscape, and of other landscape studies relevant to the area, including national and local landscape character assessments;
- A survey of the site and landscape context study areas and inspection of views of the site from publicly accessible viewpoints, including a photographic survey. The surveys were carried out by a Chartered Landscape Architect on 6th February 2025 during dry weather with good visibility;
- Evaluation of the features and elements of the landscape and their contribution to the landscape character, context and setting, based on these studies;
- Analysis of the proposed development proposals and consideration of potential landscape and visual effects;
- Assessment of the susceptibility and sensitivity of the landscape to the changes likely to arise from the proposed development;
- Identification of the extent of theoretic visibility of the proposed development and viewers, their susceptibility and sensitivity, and view locations, supported by a viewpoint analysis; and
- Assessment of magnitude of change arising from the proposed development, the degree and nature of effects on the landscape and on visual amenity with the mitigation proposals in place.

¹ GLVIA Statement of Clarification 1/13 10-06-13 <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical/glvia3-panel/glvia3-clarifications/>

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Assessment and Mitigation

- 1.3.4 The effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or adverse, may vary in nature and degree through its lifecycle and, where feasible, mitigation measures are proposed to be incorporated in the design and operation of the development. The purpose of mitigation measures is first, to prevent or avoid the potentially adverse effects identified, and if that is not possible, to reduce the potential adverse effect. Where adverse effects are unavoidable, the purpose is to offset or compensate for the effect.
- 1.3.5 Details of the criteria for assessing landscape effects and visual effects are set out in those respective sections.

Guidance

- 1.3.6 In addition to GLVIA3, the following sources of guidance will be referred to:
- Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 **Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition** (GLVIA3), published August 2024.
 - Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 **Assessing landscape value outside national designations**²
 - Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note, **Visual Representation of Development Proposals**, September 2019³
 - NRW LANDMAP assessment information and Guidance Note 46: Using LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Assessments⁴
- 1.3.7 Relevant policy, landscape character assessments and other contextual information sources will be referred to, including:
- Policies relevant to the landscape and visual amenity in national and local policy including the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan, March 2011.

Photography

- 1.3.8 Photographs have a special role in describing landscape character and illustrating key views. In order for photographs to be representative and to create an image that is as similar as possible to that which is seen with the human eye, the Landscape Institute (LI) advises using a lens with a focal length equivalent to 50mm for a 35mm Single Lens Reflex (SLR) camera, and

² <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf>

³ <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/visualisation/>

⁴ <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/planning-and-development/evidence-to-inform-development-planning/using-landmap-in-landscape-and-visual-impact-assessments-gn46/?lang=en>

a horizontal field of view of a little under 40 degrees. The equipment used for the appraisal photography includes:

- A Canon EOS 400D digital SLR camera with an ASP-C sensor; and
- Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II lens.

1.3.9 Photographs were taken with a focal length of 31mm, which on a partial frame sensor camera is equivalent to a 50mm focal length on a conventional SLR camera.

1.3.10 Landscape photography includes wide angle or panoramic views requiring a sequence of photographs to be taken across the view. Where this approach is taken, a series of overlapping photographs are digitally spliced together in Photoshop CC using a cylindrical projection to provide a panorama approximating to the normal field of view in a landscape context. Where necessary, the contrast and brightness of individual photographs is slightly manipulated in order to create a consistent panorama without visible joins.

1.3.11 The viewpoint locations were established using a camera mounted GPS device and verified against Ordnance Survey grid reference and height above Ordnance Datum.

Weather

1.3.12 The weather is a factor affecting the assessment of, especially, visual impacts. The Met Office publish average statistics for weather patterns for the region, monthly and annual, for maximum and minimum temperatures, days of air frost, hours of sunshine, amount of rainfall - both generally and the number of days when rainfall is above 1mm. For Tredegar⁵, the nearest Climate station to where the site is located:

- Rainfall above 1mm per day, which limits visibility is unrecorded. The England SW & Wales S District average is 160.38 days, about 44% of the year.
- The average number of days when air frost occurs, which can produce hazy conditions limiting visibility is unrecorded. The England SW & Wales S District average is 37.13 days, about 10% of the year.
- There is an average of 1422.05 hours of sunshine per annum for the station, less than the England SW & Wales S District average of 1530.69 hours.

⁵ The data quoted are those for Tredegar, England SW and Wales S, obtained from The Met Office website: [Tredegar \(Blaenau Gwent\) UK climate averages - Met Office](#) [accessed November 2024]

2.0 Landscape Policies and Designations

2.1 National Planning policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

2.1.1 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, published 24 February 2021, sets out the development plan for Wales, influencing “all levels of the planning system in Wales and will help shape Strategic and Local Development Plans.”⁶ The plan promotes development that enhances our wellbeing and our quality of life”⁷ and embeds the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The plan sets out development policies for Wales, dividing it into 4 regions: The North, Mid Wales, The Southwest, and The Southeast, the site is located in the southeast region.

2.1.2 The key policies that are of relevance to the proposed development include:

- **Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure** aims “To ensure the... provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

[...]

identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.

... In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of... green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals.

- **Policy 17 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure** states “The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs...
New strategic grid infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of energy should be designed to minimise visual impact on nearby communities.”
- **Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance** states “Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects (including repowering) qualifying as Developments of National Significance will be permitted subject to policy 17 and the following criteria:

⁶ <https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040-0> (accessed February 2025)

⁷ Page 4, Future Wales The National Plan 2040

1. ...the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);

2. there are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings;

11. there are acceptable provisions relating to the decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime, including the removal of infrastructure and effective restoration.

The cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes should also be considered."

Planning Policy Wales

2.1.3 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 published 24 February 2024⁸ sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. Its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.

2.1.4 PPW translates The Welsh Government's commitment to sustainable development into the planning system, to be taken into account when preparing development plans, so that it can play an appropriate role in moving towards sustainability. The key policies that are of relevance to the development include:

- **Chapter 2 People and Places, paragraph 2.1** states that "Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking... in order to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities."

Paragraph 2.17 states ... the creation of sustainable places and in recognition of the need to contribute to the well-being of future generations in Wales through placemaking, development plans and development proposals must seek to deliver developments that address the national sustainable placemaking outcomes."

Paragraph 2.26 states "Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process... to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle." A key factor is environmental considerations, which are listed as:

⁸ [Planning policy Wales | GOV.WALES](#) (accessed February 2025)

- "will important features of the natural and built environment be protected and enhanced;
- are the environmental impacts of development on... amenity limited to acceptable levels...;
- is environmental protection for people and natural resources, property and infrastructure maximised and environmental risks prevented or appropriately managed;
- [...]
- will the causes and impacts of climate change be fully taken into account through location, design, build, operation...
- [...]"

- **Chapter 3 Strategic and Spatial Choices paragraph 3.9** states "The special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations."

Paragraph 3.10 goes on to state "In areas recognised for their particular landscape or historic character and value, it can be appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. In those areas, the impact of development on the existing character, the scale and siting of new development... will be particularly important."

Paragraph 3.60 addresses development in the countryside and states "All new development should be of a scale and design that respects the character of the surrounding area."

- **Chapter 5 Productive and Enterprising Places paragraph 5.7.1** states "Low carbon electricity must become the main source of energy in Wales."

Paragraph 5.9.1 states "Local authorities should facilitate all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development..."

Paragraph 5.9.20 states "Planning authorities should also identify and require suitable ways to avoid, mitigate or compensate adverse impacts of renewable and low carbon energy development. The construction, operation, decommissioning, remediation and aftercare of proposals should take into account:

- the need to minimise impacts on local communities, such as from noise and air pollution, to safeguard quality of life for existing and future generations;
- the impact on the natural and historic environment;
- cumulative impact;

[...]

- grid connection issues where renewable (electricity) energy developments are proposed; and
- the impacts of climate change on the location, design, build and operation of renewable and low carbon energy development. In doing so, consider whether measures to adapt climate change impacts give rise to additional impacts.

Paragraph 5.9.21 goes on to state that “Prior to an application being submitted, developers for renewable and low carbon energy development should, wherever possible, consider how to avoid, or otherwise minimise, adverse impacts through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures”

- **Chapter 6 Distinctive & Natural Places, paragraph 6.0.2** states “The special and unique characteristics and intrinsic qualities of the natural and built environment must be protected in their own right, for historic, scenic, aesthetic and nature conservation reasons.”

Section 6.2 Green infrastructure, paragraph 6.2.4 states “Green infrastructure plays a fundamental role in shaping places and our sense of well-being, and is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces we live, work and play in. The planning system must maximise its contribution to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets and networks...”

Further policy information on Green Infrastructure is referenced in the Green Infrastructure Statement, which is also produced by Tir Collective.

Section 6.3 Landscape, paragraph 6.3.3 states “All the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places.”

In relation to trees, woodland and hedgerows **paragraph 6.4.37** sets out their importance for biodiversity and “connecting habitats for resilient ecological networks and make an essential wider contribution to landscape character, culture, heritage and sense of place...” It goes on to state “Planning authorities must promote the planting of new trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland as part of new development.”

Paragraph 6.4.39 states “Planning authorities must protect trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland where they have ecological value, contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality, or perform a beneficial green infrastructure function.”

Paragraph 6.4.40 goes on to state “Where surveys identify trees, hedgerows, groups of

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trees and areas of woodland capable of making a significant contribution to the area, these trees should be retained and protected.” **Paragraph 6.4.42** states “Permanent removal of trees, woodland and hedgerows will only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined public benefits. Where individual or groups of trees and hedgerows are removed as part of a proposed scheme, planning authorities must first follow the step-wise approach. Where loss is unavoidable developers will be required to provide compensatory planting... Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must be preferably onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost.”

Section 6.6 Water and flood risk, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Development, paragraph 6.6.18 states “The provision of SuDS must be considered as an integral part of the design of new development and considered at the earliest possible stage when formulating proposals for new development.” **Paragraph 6.6.19** goes on to state “Design for multiple benefits and green infrastructure should be secured wherever possible...”

2.2 Local Planning policy

- 2.2.1 The site wholly lies within the boundaries of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Planning policy for the area consists of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP) adopted in March 2011⁹.
- 2.2.2 The northern portion of the study area falls within the boundaries of Powys and the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority, and the western portion of the study area falls within the boundaries of Neath Port Talbot.
- 2.2.3 Relevant policies relating to site and the proposed development are outlined below.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Local Development Plan

- **Policy AW 5 - New Development** states that “Development proposals will be supported where: -
 - 1) Amenity
 - (a). The scale, form and design of the development would have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area;
 - (b). Where appropriate, existing site features of built and natural environment value would be retained;
 - (c). There would be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers;

⁹ [Adopted LDP 2011](#) (accessed February 2025)

(d). The development would be compatible with other uses in the locality;
[...]

- **Policy AW 6 - Design and Placemaking** states that "Development Proposals will be supported where: -

[...]

2. They are appropriate to the local context in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing;

[...]

7. Landscaping and planting are integral to the scheme and enhance the site and the wider context;

[...]

14. The design protects and enhances the landscape and biodiversity;

15. The development promotes energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy; and

16. The design promotes good water management, including rainwater storage, sustainable urban drainage, porous paving etc.

[...]"

- **Policy AW 8 - Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment** aims to protect and enhance Rhondda Cynon Taf's distinctive natural heritage "by protecting it from inappropriate development.

Development proposals will only be permitted where: -

[...]

2. There would be no unacceptable impact upon features of importance to landscape or nature conservation, including ecological networks, the quality of natural resources such as air, water and soil, and the natural drainage of surface water.

[...]

- **Policy AW 12 - Renewable & Non-Renewable Energy** states that "Development proposals which promote the provision of renewable and non-renewable energy such as schemes... will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no unacceptable effect upon the interests of soil conservation, agriculture, nature conservation, wildlife, natural and cultural heritage, landscape importance, public health and residential amenity.

Development proposals should be designed to minimise resource use during construction, operation and maintenance."

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- **Policy NSA 23 - Cycle Network Improvements** states that “The existing network of cycle paths and community routes will be extended, improved and enhanced to include schemes at: -

[...]

3. The Heads of the Valley Cycleway & links to Hirwaun Industrial Estate;

[...]”

- **Policy NSA 25 - Special Landscape Areas** states that “Special Landscape Areas are identified at the following locations:

[...]

8. Hirwaun Common, Cwm Dare & Cwm Aman; and,

[...]

Development within the defined Special Landscape Areas will be expected to conform to the highest standards of design, siting, layout and materials appropriate to the character of the area.”

2.3 Designations

- 2.3.1 Designations provide an indication of landscape value. They are areas that have been recognised for the scenic beauty and recreational potential of the landscape. Designations are shown on **Figures LA.02-1 and LA.02-2**.

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park / National Landscapes

- 2.3.2 A part of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park extends into the northern portion of the 3km study area, approximately 770m to the northwest of the site at its nearest point.
- 2.3.3 There are no National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) within or close to the 3km study area. National Landscapes are therefore scoped out from further consideration in this LVApp.

Special Landscape Areas

- 2.3.4 SLAs are non-statutory designations applied by the local planning authority to define areas of high landscape importance within their administrative boundary.
- 2.3.5 Rhondda Cynon Taf contains nine SLAs and Neath Port Talbot contains six. The nearest SLA is the **Vale of Neath SLA** within NPT, circa 600m to the west of the site at its closest point, followed by **the Hirwaun Common, Cwm Dare & Cwm Aman SLA**, which sits within RCT and is circa 2km to the south of the site at its nearest point.

Ancient Woodland

- 2.3.6 The 3km study area contains a number of blocks of woodland, generally centred on watercourses. The closest group of ancient woodland is circa 150m to the northwest of the site at its nearest point. This is an area consisting of several small areas of ancient semi natural woodland, Restored Ancient Woodland and Plantation on Ancient Woodland. A further series of Ancient Woodland areas is spread along the A465 to the northeast, on the fringes of the National Park, comprising Restored Ancient Woodland and Ancient Semi Natural Woodland within distances of around 600m from the site boundary.
- 2.3.7 The nearest area of ancient woodland to the south is circa 1km from the site boundary at its nearest point. This is a group of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, restored ancient woodland and Plantation on Ancient Woodland spread along the Nant Gwrelych.

Historic and cultural landscape designations

- 2.3.8 The setting of historic and cultural designations is a consideration during the preparation of landscape and visual impact appraisals as these features inform the overall landscape character, quality and value of the area. The LVApp does not address the effects on heritage assets however it considers the contribution these features make to landscape value, character, and scenic quality.
- 2.3.9 Relevant historic and cultural designations are shown on **Figure LA.02-2**. There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens within the 3km study area. The nearest is Rheola which is located circa 6.7km to the southwest of the site. Registered Historic Parks and Gardens are therefore scoped out from further consideration in this LVApp.

Conservation areas and listed buildings

- 2.3.10 There are no conservation areas within the 3km study area, the nearest is Glynneath Woolen Mill, which is located circa 3.45km to the southwest of the site. Conservation areas are therefore scoped out from further consideration in this LVApp.
- 2.3.11 The nearest **listed building** to the site is the **Grade II Pontwalby Railway Viaduct**, which is located circa 1.9km to the southwest of the site.
- 2.3.12 Other listed buildings within the study area are located beyond 1km of the site.

Scheduled Monuments

- 2.3.13 **Dinas Silica Mine and Craig y Dinas Hillfort** are the closest scheduled monuments circa 900m to the north of the site at its nearest point. The latter site is a visitor attraction with public access and car parking, which is also identified on OS mapping, Glynneath Gunpowder Works are located slightly further north, circa 960m to the north of the site at its nearest point.

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Ecological designations

- 2.3.14 Ecological designations, although not specifically related to landscape amenity and not assessed within this report, are an indication of landscape value. Relevant ecological designations are shown on **Figure LA.02-2**.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 2.3.15 There are three SSSIs within the 3km study area. **Cwm Gwrelych and Nant Llyn Fach Streams** SSSI is located circa 1km to the southeast of the site at its nearest point. Dyffrynoedd Nedd a Mellte a Moel Penderyn SSSI is located circa 650m to the northeast of the site at its nearest point and extends northwards along the Afon Hepste valley. Dyffrynoedd Nedd a Mellte a Moel Penderyn SSSI extends north along the Afon Neath Vally, 1km west of the site at its nearest point.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

- 2.3.16 The northern part of the site forms part of **Coed Wernhir SINC¹⁰**, which is a "large mosaic SINC" that extends north, northeast and northwest from the site to include the wooded landscape to the north and also extensive areas of marshy grassland such as the northern part of the site.

Public access

- 2.3.17 Public rights of way are shown on **Figure LA.03**. There are no Long Distance Footpaths within or close to the 3km study area. Long Distance Footpaths are therefore scoped out of further consideration in this LVApp.

Public rights of way

- 2.3.18 The network of public rights of way within 3km study area are generally evenly distributed. There are no public rights of way within or immediately adjacent to the site. The closest public right of way is **RHI/22/1** which is circa 80m to the east of the site, passing through open fields between Mount Road and Rhigos Road in a northeast-southwest alignment.
- 2.3.19 To the northeast of the site, circa 200m from the site boundary lies public right of way **RHI/27/1**. This footpath broadly follows the A465 through open fields in an east-west alignment. Circa 170m to the west of the site lies footpath **RHI/6/2**. This footpath passes through an area of woodland between Rhigos Road and the A465, where it joins bridleway **RHI/1/1**.

¹⁰ [EB 44 - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in RCT - Site Descriptions 2008](#)

- 2.3.20 Footpath **RHI/4/1** lies circa 300m to the south of the site at its nearest point. This footpath heads broadly east-west from Mount Road in the east where it turns into footpath **RHIGOS.4/2**, which continues west until it reaches the settlement of Pontywalby in the west.

National Cycle Routes

- 2.3.21 National Cycle Routes (NCR) 46 runs through the 3km study area in an east-west alignment, running along Rhigos Road, immediately along the site's northern boundary. Route 46 is a 149km long route, connecting Bromsgrove, England to Neath, Wales.

Access land

- 2.3.22 Within 1km of the site there is one area of access land, circa 700m to the northeast of the site at its nearest point. This area of open access consists of public forest to the north of the A465 and along the edge of the National Park.
- 2.3.23 Beyond 700m, the closest area of open access is **Hirwaun Common**, some 2.3m to the southeast of the site at its closet point.

3.0 The proposed development

- 3.1.1 Details of the proposed development are provided within the planning submission including the Design and Access Statement. This section describes the main aspects of the proposed development which could potentially affect landscape and/or visual amenity. It also identifies features of the proposals which will assist in mitigating adverse landscape and visual impacts.
- 3.1.2 The proposed battery storage development of the site would comprise 168 battery units (also known as Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)) at 2.8m high, inverters, transformers and spare parts containers. To the east of the battery units a new HV substation with a maximum height of 12m is proposed with a 9.4m high HV transformer, 3.1m high containerised switchgears and a 5.9m high substation control room. Two 2.75m high water tanks are proposed: one to the south of the new substation and the other in to in the southwest of the battery units. The proposed development would be surrounded by 2.4m high security fencing and CCTV cameras. Between the rows of battery units, 3.3m high acoustic fencing is proposed in a north to south direction.
- 3.1.3 Access to the battery storage area would be provided by an existing access track to the south of the battery storage area.
- 3.1.4 The landscape proposals for the scheme include buffer planting to the north boundary of the site, strengthening the existing boundary vegetation along Rhigos Road. The buffer would comprise native species and would also include coniferous planting in the northeast section, where the existing boundary includes a line of coniferous trees. This buffer would function as a visual screen and filter for views from the north and would provide enhanced ecological

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connectivity. A further buffer is proposed at the southeast boundary of the site, where there is an existing belt of trees. This buffer would enhance the ecological function of the site boundary and strengthen the existing landscape features of the site at its sensitive boundary with the settlement Cefn Rhigos. The southern site boundary would be enhanced with hedgerow planting with individual trees, scattered along its length. Further screening to the BESS compound would be provided by tree planting to the north side, and buffer planting at the southwest site boundary.

Sources of Potential Effects on Landscape and Views

- 3.1.5 The main features of the proposed development which could potentially result in landscape and visual impacts are set out below.

Construction phase

- 3.1.6 The duration of the construction of the site is expected to be up to 12 months and would include the following:
- Temporary fencing/hoarding around the compound perimeter.
 - The removal of grassland within the compound area.
 - The installation of access tracks, battery storage units, transformers and storage containers on loose hardcore, perimeter fencing and CCTV cameras.
 - Activities in relation to the construction of the proposed development, including deliveries, the movement of vehicles on site.
 - The implementation of buffer planting, trees and scrub to assist in the integration of the proposals into its landscape context.
 - The boring of underground cabling along the cabling route.

Operation

- 3.1.7 Completion and operational activities would include the following:
- The change of use in the southwest of the site from grassland to a battery storage site with a substation and access tracks. Areas around the compound would include tree, hedgerow and scrub planting. Around the site perimeter, planting is also proposed but majority of valuable grassland habitats would be retained.
 - The introduction of battery storage and associated infrastructure, and substation within the landscape, in the context of existing pylons and operational solar farms.
 - Operational activities such as vehicle movement associated with routine inspections and maintenance of the proposed development.

- The establishment of landscape proposals such as newly planted buffers, trees and scrub planting.

Mitigation measures

- 3.1.8 The potential for adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity have been recognised and mitigation measures incorporated in the scheme to avoid or reduce adverse effects or to offset or compensate for unavoidable adverse effects.
- 3.1.9 Mitigation measures incorporated into the scheme design include:
- The battery storage area is positioned inside an existing field boundary to avoid the removal of vegetation, where possible, and to ensure the existing field pattern is retained.
 - Some scrub planting and trees are proposed on the north boundary of the site to enhance the existing treeline whilst providing some additional screening towards the proposed development. Species selection would reflect the nature of the existing boundary vegetation on Rhigos Road.
 - Scrub planting, trees and hedgerow are proposed in the vicinity of the compound to provide some screening whilst providing wildlife corridors and connections to existing features.
 - Buffers from existing trees and ditches within the site are included to ensure existing features that contribute to the character of the landscape are retained and protected, including Root Protection Areas (RPAs).
 - Perimeter fencing is to be offset from existing hedgerows and tree canopy edges to ensure existing vegetation is not damaged or disturbed.
 - The battery storage units and perimeter fencing are to be painted a recessive colour to sit within the landscape.
 - Cabling is to be bored under hedgerows and trees to avoid disturbance to sensitive landscape elements and to prevent the inclusion of unsightly cabling bridges.

4.0 Effects on the Landscape

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section deals with the effects on the landscape of the site and its surrounding context due to the proposed development of the site.

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Assessment Criteria

- 4.1.2 The assessment process follows the methodology for assessing effects set out in **Appendix 2**. The degree of the likely landscape effects of the proposed development is determined by relating the sensitivity of the receptors to the changes arising from the proposals, and the degree and nature of the changes in the landscape arising from the proposed development.

Landscape Baseline

- 4.1.3 The landscape baseline is a description and analysis of the existing landscape, against which the effects of the proposed development are assessed, first, by reference to landscape character assessments for the area in which the site is located, at national and local levels and then, from site-specific surveys and analysis carried out for the purposes of this assessment.

4.2 LANDMAP

- 4.2.1 Landscape Assessment, following the LANDMAP methodology, has been undertaken for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The assessment uses the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) / Wales Landscape Partnership Group approach which separates the defining aspects of the landscape into five categories, or aspect layers: Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Historic Landscape, Cultural Landscape Services, and Visual & Sensory. It considers the relationship that exist between people and places; how people have given meaning to places through time and how the physical landscape has shaped their actions, or how their actions have shaped the landscape.
- 4.2.2 Summarised descriptions for the most relevant aspect areas to the study site and its context are outlined below for all five aspect layers. The findings of the LANDMAP studies have formed the basis of the landscape and visual baseline within this LVApp. **Table 1** below defines the criteria that LANDMAP uses for evaluating each aspect area.

Table 1 Criteria for evaluating LANDMAP Aspect Areas¹¹

LANDMAP Evaluation	Definition
Outstanding	of international or national importance
High	of regional or county importance
Moderate	of local importance
Low	of little or no importance
Unassessed	insufficient information exists to evaluate

¹¹ LANDMAP Methodology Overview, June 2017 <https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/681752/landmap-methodology-overview-2017-eng.pdf?mode=pad&rnd=131547814890000000>

- 4.2.3 Characteristics of particular relevance to the site and its context are highlighted in bold. LANDMAP aspect areas are illustrated on **Figures LA.04**.

Geological Landscape

- 4.2.4 The site is located within aspect area **Rhigos** (CYNONGL028) which is classified as **Upland plateau** (Level 3). The geographical and topographical character of the area is described as (question GL4) "South margin of the northeast to southwest Upper Neath valley, south of the Neath fault zone (including part of SSSI Dyffrynoedd Nedd a Mellte, a Moel Penderyn SSSI). **Steep scarp slope** in gently S-dipping Pennant sandstones (Upper Carboniferous), eroded into prominent cirque with landslips in Craig y Llyn SSSI. **Lower gentle slopes** in Productive Coal Fm (Upper Carboniferous), covered with extensive boulder clay & patches of peat, which fills a glacial lake at Hirwaun Ponds. NW-SE Hirwaun fault zone. **Coal Measures worked** in Tower colliery & **reclaimed opencast sites**."
- 4.2.5 The rarity/uniqueness (question GL31) of the area is evaluated as **outstanding** and the overall evaluation (question GL33) for the area is outstanding, due to the "southern area includes edge of plateau with well-developed cirques - includes Dyffrynoedd Nedd a Mellte, a Moel Penderyn and Craig y Llyn SSSIs with interests including Westphalian stratigraphy (Upper Carboniferous) and RIGS for glacial geomorphology and Carboniferous stratigraphy."

Landscape Habitat

- 4.2.6 The majority of the site is located in aspect area **CYNONLH051** (unnamed), which is classified as Mosaic (Level 3). The key features that define the areas biodiversity character (question LH24) are "**Lowland marshy grassland** with **transition to upland marshy grassland** including the largest area of **peat based valley mire** in Mid Glamorgan. Hirwaun ponds supports a rich dragonfly fauna."
- 4.2.7 The overall evaluation (question 45) for the area is **outstanding**, as the area is "A large area of a much declined, threatened **Priority habitat** as well as valuable areas of semi-improved grassland. area has both SSSI and SAC designations within it which show its great value. An important area for Marsh Fritillary."
- 4.2.8 The access road and land immediately to the south is located within **CYNONLH050** (unnamed), which is classified as Mosaic (Level 3). The key features that define the areas biodiversity character (question LH24) are "**Improved grassland** with frequent **rush vegetation**."
- 4.2.9 The overall evaluation (question 45) for the area is **moderate**, as the area is "Generally quite **low value habitat**, the habitat is getting better however, and some areas are high value and support Marsh Fritillary. Habitat is generally of limited value but is getting better and some areas are of high value and support Marsh Fritillary. **The area has potential**."

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Historic Landscape

- 4.2.10 The majority of the site is located in aspect area **Cwm Wyrfa** (CYNONHL772), which is classified as Regular Fieldsapes (Level 3). The aspect area is described as being (question HL4) "[...]characterised by a **regular fieldscape**, influenced heavily by **early industrial activities**. The aspect area is bounded to the north by the **Cynon Valley transport and communication corridor** (CynonHL117). The eastern boundary is defined by the extent of **industrial opencast encroachment** from Tower Colliery into this aspect area. The southern boundary is defined by the extent of the **Rhondda Uplands** (CynonHL687); the Unitary Authority boundary limits the western extent of this aspect area. A **tramroad** depicted as 'old' on the 1st Edition OS map (1885) divides the aspect area neatly in two; it ran from the Levels at Twyn Gelli-geibren to the tips at Hughes Patches. A **gliding club** represents modern **recreational activities** within the aspect area."
- 4.2.11 The overall evaluation (question HL40) for the area is **moderate**, as "An extensive tract of **enclosed upland common influenced by early industrial activities**; the pattern of rectilinear field enclosure has remained essentially unchanged from that shown on the OS 1st edition map of 1885. The moderate value assigned to this area reflects the limited nature of the archaeological record and the **encroachment on its eastern edge by opencast mining activity**."
- 4.2.12 The land immediately to the north of the site is located in aspect area **Cynon Valley Corridor** (CYNONHL117), which is classified as **Nucleated Settlement** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question HL4) "This aspect area is characterised as an **urban and industrial transport and communication corridor** stretching along the length of the Cynon Valley from Abercynon, north to Pontneddfechan. This aspect area includes the settlements of Mountain Ash, Cwmaman, Aberdare and Hirwaun. The aspect area has a **strong prehistoric presence** to the north of the valley corridor; many Bronze Age funerary cairns adorn the valley slopes. Abercynon was once a hamlet called Navigation before the main colliery and new town took the name in the 1880s. Aberdare was one of the county's **ancient upland parishes** (strictly, a chapelry of Llantrisant), as humble medieval St John's church indicates. Industrial growth began early in the 19th century with the Gadlys Ironworks opening in 1827, and the **first steam-coal mine** a decade later. During the middle decades of the century, the Cynon Valley, with Aberdare at its head, became the most prolific centre of steam-coal production. By 1856 Aberdare's output of coal exceeded one million tons. Industry retreated in the latter half of the 19th century, leaving Aberdare with the air of a market town. **What survives of Aberdare's early industry is of great historical importance**..."
- 4.2.13 The overall evaluation (question HL40) for the area is **Outstanding**, as its "An area of outstanding historic importance, based on the fact that it contains some of the **best preserved industrial monuments** surviving not only within the Caerphilly/RCT historic landscape, but **in South Wales generally**."

Cultural Landscape Services

- 4.2.14 Cultural Landscape Services (CLS) now supersedes the Cultural Landscape aspect layer, which was updated in 2020. CLS responds to "Recent environment and well-being legislation and developments in current thinking relating to culture suggest the dataset would benefit from a different approach to mapping if revisited..." The data for CLS uses data from the other four aspect layers and provide no overall evaluations for each aspect area.
- 4.2.15 The site is located within **Penderyn** (CYNONCLS104), which is classified as Hillside & Scarp Slopes Mosaic (Level 3).
- 4.2.16 Refer to the Visual and Sensory aspect areas below for further detail

Visual and Sensory

- 4.2.17 The site is located within aspect area **Penderyn** (CYNONVS833), which is classified as **Hillside & Scarp Slopes Mosaic** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question VS3) "**Upper valley sides with strong upland** feel-both from the **strong visual link** that exists and the **rough grazing** with some woodland/conifer elements. **slight urban feel on lower slopes** but dominant character is that of an upland area. **visual detractors include pylons and the sharply defined urban edge. noise and movement** from the A465. scattered farmsteads. Minor boundary change at monitoring, adjacent to Tower Colliery."
- 4.2.18 The scenic quality (question VS46) of the area is evaluated as **moderate**, character (question VS48) of the area is evaluated as **moderate**, and the overall evaluation (question VS50) for the area is also **moderate** as "**Valley sides** with pattern of **field boundaries/woodland**, but **detractive elements** e.g. **urban edge, pylons traffic noise, of local importance.**"

LANDMAP Summary

- 4.2.19 Table 2 below summarises the evaluations for each aspect area that the site is located in (overall evaluations are not provided for the Cultural Landscape Services Aspect Layer):

Table 2 Summary of LANDMAP

Aspect Layer	Aspect Area name and Unique ID	Classification (Level 3)	Overall Evaluations
Geological Landscape	Rhigos UID: CYNONGL028	Upland Plateau	Outstanding
Landscape Habitats	Unnamed UID: CYNONLH051	Mosaic	Outstanding
	Unnamed	Mosaic	Moderate

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Aspect Layer	Aspect Area name and Unique ID	Classification (Level 3)	Overall Evaluations
	UID: CYNONLH050		
Historic Landscape	Cwm Wyrfa UID: CYNONHL772	Regular Fieldsapes	Moderate
	Cynon Valleys Corridor UID: CYNOHL117	Nucleated Settlement	Outstanding
Cultural Landscape Services	Penderyn UID: CYNONCL104	Hillside & Scarp Slopes Mosaic	N/A
Visual and Sensory	Penderyn UID: CYNONVS833	Hillside & Scarp Slopes Mosaic	Moderate

4.3 Site-Specific Appraisal

- 4.3.1 The following paragraphs provide descriptions of the site and should be read alongside Topography **Figure LA.05** and Site context **Figure LA.06**.

The landscape of the site

- 4.3.2 The site is located to the west of the hamlet of Cefn Rhigos, circa 800m to the southeast of the village of Pontneddfechan and 1km to the northwest of the village of Rhigos.
- 4.3.3 The site comprises a large sized semi-improved grassland field with boundaries largely lined by mature trees and open boundaries with scattered trees.
- 4.3.4 The site field forms part of the regular fieldscape on the south side of the Neath valley. The landscape that contains the site is influenced by past industrial activity. The site field is large and regular in shape, with boundaries that follow the local field pattern and Rhigos Road immediately to the north. The east boundary is defined by a linear belt of woodland, including a line of coniferous trees. The southern and southwest boundary are defined by an open boundary with scattered mature trees and scrub. The northwest boundary is defined by scattered mature trees and a linear strip of mature trees.
- 4.3.5 The site is situated on a gentle north facing slope of the River Neath/ Sychryd valley and is influenced by several drainage features. The highest point of the site is along the southwest boundary with a high point of 229m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The site falls in a northerly direction with a low point of 207m AOD in the northwest corner.

- 4.3.6 A line of pylon towers and overhead cables crosses the landscape immediately to the south of the site.
- 4.3.7 Beyond the site, to the west at circa 700m is the River Neath, which gently meanders through the study area in a northeast to southwest direction with some small tributaries including the Sychryd in the central of the study area.
- 4.3.8 The landscape of the wider study area is defined by the Cynon valley corridor, which is a primary settlement and infrastructure corridor in the region, with a string of settlements, the A465, industry and communications infrastructure and woodland. The site is on the crest of the valley side, in a transition area to upland, which is heavily influenced by industrial activity. Beyond the site in the southern part of the study area, the landscape changes to plateau upland. The northern part of the study area also contains wooded upland, on the fringes of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Woodland cover spreads into the central part of the study area along watercourses.
- 4.3.9 The settlement Cefn Rhigos is located at close distance to east of the site. Elsewhere within the wider study area, settlement consists of the villages of Rhigos, Pontneddfechan, Pont Walby and the town of Glyn-neath. There are also a number of industrial estates and workings in the study area. Settlement beyond the river corridor is sparse and limited to scattered farmsteads and rural dwellings.
- 4.3.10 The primary regional route the A465 transects the centre of the 3km study area on an east-west alignment. To the west, the intervalley A4109 starts at Glyn-neath and heads broadly northwest before exiting the study area. The A4059 connects with the A465 at the southeast edge of the study area, running north to connect with Pendryn and the National Park beyond. A network of minor local roads connects villages, farmsteads and industrial estates.
- 4.3.11 To the southwest, circa 500m at its nearest point lies Hendrefawr Solar Farm. Further to the southwest, along the edge of the 3km study area is a restored opencast mine. Hirwaun Industrial Park is located circa 1.2km to the southeast at its closest point.

Features of the site

- 4.3.12 There are limited features on the site as it mainly functions as an agricultural field with partially vegetated boundaries. The most notable feature of the site is its linear wooded boundaries to the east, north and northwest. There are also several drainage features including wet ditches and a small area of standing water, along with a single mature tree in the centre of the site.

Characteristics and aesthetics of the site

- 4.3.13 The site is set within a semi-rural context, but the associated sound and near glimpse views of fast-moving traffic on the A645 and Rhigos Road a detracting feature. The local landscape is

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heavily influenced by historic industrial activity. To the east, some near views of Cefn Rhigos are available and close views of pylons in nearby fields to the south is also a detracting feature.

- 4.3.14 Trees along the north, east and northwest field boundaries limit some views out. Away from the above boundaries, there is a sense of openness within the site due to the grass margin field boundaries. Views out are generally limited to the short-distance with some mid-distance views available from higher areas in the north and south of the site.

4.4 Landscape Value

- 4.4.1 The characteristics, sensitivities, and guidelines in the existing character assessments at national and local level and the site-specific analyses carried out for the purposes of this LVApp were taken into account as indicators of the aspects of the landscape important to the character and evaluated according to the criteria in **Appendix 2, Table A2-1** in order to determine the value of the landscape receptors.
- 4.4.2 Overall, the landscape value of the site and study area is of 'local' value due to the following factors:
- Whilst parts of the wider study area are designated for their landscape value (Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, Vale of Neath Special Landscape Area), the site itself is not designated for landscape value.
 - The northern part of the site lies within Coed Wernhir SINC, which is designated for ecological value as marshy grassland.
 - Some features are noted within LANDMAP for their value (Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats) however there are contrasting features in the wider landscape such as the main road, industrial estates, pylon infrastructure and disturbed land.
 - Scenic / visual quality is generally confined to short to mid-distant views due to the gently rolling landscape that contains some woodland blocks and vegetation along some field boundaries. These features contribute to the visual quality but associated sound of the Rhigos Road and the A455 immediately adjacent to the site interrupts quietness with views of pylons and overhead cables also reducing the rural character.
 - The land within the site is representative of the surrounding land use.
 - No evidence of artistic or literary associations with the site or study area has been noted as part of this appraisal. There are historic associations with early industrial activity in the area.
 - There is no recreational access to the site; however, NCR 46 borders the northern site boundary which is well-treed. The study area has recreational uses both along public

rights of way and permissive routes, where users of the routes would appreciate some of the scenic qualities noted above.

4.4.3 The features/elements/characteristics identified as important or “key” to the landscape character of the site are:

- Gentle sloped topography on valley plateau
- Regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland.
- Mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries.
- Historic industrial influence and disturbed land
- Upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor.

4.5 Effects on the Landscape

4.5.1 This section examines the nature of the landscape effects arising as a result of the proposed development with reference to:

- effects on landscape fabric within the site, its features and qualities;
- effects on landscape character, including consideration of effects on designated landscapes; and
- effects on the landscape setting of settlements, public rights of way and roads.

4.5.2 Landscape character is derived from the combination and pattern of landscape elements. The effects of the proposed development on landscape character would arise from its relationship to these combinations and patterns, and thus the character of the landscape. Effects on the landscape features, qualities and character may occur where there are either direct or indirect physical changes to the landscape. Direct changes to landscape fabric would only occur within the application boundary.

4.5.3 The effect of the proposed development on landscape character will depend on key characteristics of the receiving landscape; the degree to which the proposed development is considered consistent with or at odds with them; and how the proposed development would be perceived within the setting, with perception being influenced by:

- the distance to the site;
- weather conditions; and
- the ‘fit’ of the proposed development within the landscape pattern and characteristics.

4.5.4 The LVApp assessments cover the following scenarios:

- Construction phase - this includes all clearance works and of the construction of the proposed battery storage. Construction is expected to be up to 12 months.

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- Operation at year 1 – the fully constructed and completed proposed battery storage development, including mitigation planting.
- Operation at year 10 – the operational battery storage development with established and maturing proposed mitigation planting.

Sensitivity

- 4.5.5 Landscape sensitivity is a product of consideration of the value associated with the landscape receptor and its susceptibility to the changes likely to arise from the proposed development. Criteria for determining the landscape value and landscape susceptibility are set out in **Appendix 2**. The assessment of sensitivity is based on bringing value and susceptibility considerations together in one combined step, in accordance with the criteria set out in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.5.6 The receptors, their value and susceptibility are set out in the following table, with the resultant judgement of their sensitivity to the proposed development:

Table 3 Susceptibility and Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Gentle sloped topography on valley plateau	High value: a feature representative of typical character, not designated but outstanding LANDMAP geological landscape overall value.	Moderate susceptibility to change and disturbance with the introduction of the proposed BESS in part of the site	Moderate-high sensitivity
Regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland.	High value: a feature representative of typical character; part of site designated as SINC (rough grassland), outstanding LANDMAP landscape habitats overall value.	Low susceptibility as the development would be accommodated in the defining field pattern and on a part of the site only	Moderate sensitivity
Mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries.	Low value: not highlighted within LANDMAP as representative feature of the character of the area; boundaries not noted for their value	Low susceptibility as field boundaries are generally to be retained	Low sensitivity
Historic industrial	Moderate value: representative of the typical character of the area, a non-	Low susceptibility to change and disturbance with the	Moderate-low sensitivity

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
influence and disturbed land	designated historic landscape with moderate LANDMAP historic landscape overall evaluation.	introduction of the proposed BESS in part of the site	
Upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor.	Medium value: a local characteristic typical of the area with some detractors	Low susceptibility to change and disturbance with the introduction of the proposed BESS in part of the site	Moderate-low sensitivity

Magnitude of change

- 4.5.7 The magnitude of change considers the key features of the proposed development, as described in **section 3.0**, and the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered by these changes or by the structures associated with the proposed development. The magnitude of change is described and set out in **Appendix 3, Table Appendix 3.1. Table 4** below provides a summary of the assessments:

Table 4 Landscape receptors and magnitude of change summary

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change
Gentle sloped topography on valley plateau	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small
Regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland.	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Medium-small Operation at year 10: Medium-small
Mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries.	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Medium-small Operation at year 10: Medium
Historic industrial influence and disturbed land	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small
Upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor.	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small

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Assessment of effects on the landscape

- 4.5.8 Consideration of the magnitude of the changes due to the proposed development is combined with consideration of the sensitivity of landscape receptors affected by the proposed development to assess the degree and nature of the effect at each stage of the proposed development including construction, Operation at year 1, and Operation after year 10.
- 4.5.9 Final conclusions about the degree of landscape effect, whether adverse or beneficial, relate the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes, as illustrated in the indicative criteria shown in **Table A2-11**. The assessment is provided in **Appendix 3, Table Appendix 3.2** and a summary of the effects is provided below in **Table 5** below:

Table 5 Effects on Landscape Receptors

Landscape receptors and sensitivity	Effects during construction	Effects at operation: Year 1	Effects at operation: Year 10
Gentle sloped topography on valley plateau: Moderate-high sensitivity	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, adverse
Regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland: Moderate sensitivity.	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, beneficial
Mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries: Low sensitivity.	Minor, adverse	Minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, neutral
Historic industrial influence and disturbed land: Moderate-low sensitivity	Minor, adverse	Minor, adverse	Minor, adverse
Upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor: Moderate-low sensitivity.	Minor, adverse	Minor, adverse	Minor, adverse

5.0 Effects on Visual Amenity

5.1 Scope and Assessment Criteria

- 5.1.1 This section deals with the effects on visual amenity, arising from changes in the views available to people in the surrounding area. The general methodology for assessing the effects in this report is set out in **Appendix 2**.
- 5.1.2 The degree of the likely visual effects of the proposed development is determined by relating the sensitivity of the receptors to the changes arising from the proposed development, and the degree and nature of the changes in the views available to people and in their visual amenity arising from the development.

5.2 Visual Baseline

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 5.2.1 Zone of Theoretic Visibility (ZTV) plans have been generated by computer to identify the geographic extents within which views may be available of the proposed battery storage development and substation within the 3km visual study area. Figure LA.07-1 ZTV is calculated 3.5m high to represent the maximum height of the proposed BESS units and surrounding fencing with the control room taken into account and calculated at 6m high. Figure LA.07-2 ZTV is calculated to 12m for the proposed substation. The viewer eye-height for the ZTVs have been set at 2m above ground level. Each of these heights represent the 'worst case scenario.'
- 5.2.2 The computer generated ZTVs were based on a digital terrain model generated from the 5m grid interval OS Terrain 5® dataset. The ZTV was based upon "bare earth scenario," i.e., no allowance has been made for the potential screening by existing buildings, woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- 5.2.3 **Figure LA.07-1** shows the predicted extent of the ZTV for the proposed battery storage and control room. It illustrates that the surrounding topography influences the potential visibility of the proposed structures, particularly in lower elevation valley locations at in the southwest of the study area.
- 5.2.4 The river Neath shapes valley topography that cuts west-east through the study area and contains the A645, the settlement of Glyn-neath and Pontneddfechan. They less elevated valley topography results in no views of the scheme being available from these parts of the study area. Similarly, the converging watercourses Cwm Gwrelych, Cwm Ceffyl and Nant Gwrelych to the south of the site shape sunken landforms, where no views of the site would be available. In the north of the study area, incised valley landform shaped by watercourses feeding into the river Neath also result in no views being available.

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- 5.2.5 The southwest part of the study area is also excluded from the ZTV because of topography. Landform peaks close to the southwest of the site and beyond this, slopes are generally southwest and south facing, with no views toward the site even at relatively close distance – such as from the Rhigos airfield and opencast workings.
- 5.2.6 Where views are available, they are generally limited to upland areas, which face toward the site and the river Neath from the north and south. The ZTV illustrates the theoretical ‘bare earth’ scenario and as such it is likely that on-the-ground visibility would be greatly less. The screening effect of surface features such as trees and buildings are not considered. In reality, it is likely that woodland and field boundary vegetation would greatly reduce the footprint of visibility. For example, the forestry on Rhigos mountain/ Craig y Llyn would likely exclude large parts of the southern study area from visibility.
- 5.2.7 **Figure LA.07-2** shows the predicted extent of the ZTV for the proposed battery substation to the east of the battery storage area. It illustrates that potential visibility of the substation would be very similar to the battery storage area and control room. There is a slight extension in potential visibility.

Viewpoint study

- 5.2.8 A photographic survey was undertaken to identify the potential extent of the visibility of the proposed development by locating viewpoints available to sensitive receptors. To inform the initial viewpoint selection, a visual study area from the site was mapped showing the surrounding landscape designations, public access, landscape character, and the predicted ZTV for the proposed development. Potentially sensitive visual receptors within the study area include residents, users of public rights of way and road users.
- 5.2.9 Based on the collated data, initial representative viewpoint locations were selected that relate to the “receptors,” that is, residents and users of the landscape, and locations from which they may have views towards or of the site. For each of the viewpoints, the precise location was chosen during the field studies to represent the most open view available subject to local features such as vegetation, buildings or localised topographic variation are identified.
- 5.2.10 A total of 10 views were photographed to illustrate the site and its appearance in publicly available locations. Of the 10 views that were taken, six views were carried forward as representative viewpoints for the visual amenity assessment. The viewpoint figures are presented on **Figures LA.09** and the locations are shown on **Figures LA.07**.
- 5.2.11 Context photographs (non-assessment views) are shown on **Figures LA.08** and the location also shown on **Figures LA.07**. Context photographs illustrate views where the site and/or the proposed development would be entirely or mostly screened from view or difficult to perceive.

5.2.12 **Table 6** below lists the six viewpoints, the location details, the receptors represented, and the reasons for selection.

Table 6 Viewpoint details

Viewpoint reference	Location	Distance and direction from site	Receptors represented and reasons for selection
01	Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	13m north	Local road users, cyclists on National Cycle Route • Close distance view toward the site from the northern boundary • Representative of road users on a well frequented local route • Representative of users on designated National Cycle Route • The ZTV indicates that a moderate part of the proposed development would be potentially visible
02	Permissive path at Tyle-morgrug, looking southwest toward the site	1.4km northeast	Walkers on permissive footpath • Medium-long distance from view toward the site from northeast • Located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park • The ZTV indicates that the majority of the proposed development would be potentially visible
03	Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site	2.2km northeast	Local road users, walkers on public footpath • Long distance view from elevated ground to the northeast • Located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park • The ZTV indicates that the majority of the proposed development would be potentially visible
04	Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site	1.6k north	Local road users, nearby residents • Medium-long distance view from north • Located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park • Represents several key receptors, including sensitive nearby residents. • The ZTV indicates that the majority of the proposed development would be potentially visible

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Viewpoint reference	Location	Distance and direction from site	Receptors represented and reasons for selection
05	Minor road at Comin y Rhos, looking south toward the site	2.3km north	Local road users - Long distance view from upland landscape to the north - Located adjacent to open access land and several footpath starting points nearby - Located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park - The ZTV indicates that the majority of the development would be potentially visible
06	Public parking area, Craig y llyn, looking northwest toward the site	3.99km southeast	Local road users, walkers, recreational users - Long distance view from upland pass to the north - Located at a recognised viewpoint on OS mapping; open access land, recreational/ picnic area; Special Landscape Area - Located at the outer limit of the ZTV. The ZTV indicates that the majority of the proposed development would be potentially visible

5.2.13 **Table 7 below** provides a description of the landscape context at each of the six viewpoint locations and description of the existing view towards the site.

Table 7 Descriptions of viewpoint context and existing views

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards the site
01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	The viewpoint is located on the verge of the local road Rhigos Road, immediately adjacent to the north boundary of the site. The road is well vegetated on both sides with the viewpoint taken at a gap in vegetation. During the times of the year when vegetation is foliate, views may be further restricted.	The view looks over Rhigos Road, looking toward the north boundary of the site that is formed by a post-and-wire fence and a belt of trees. A view into the sloping site field is available at a gap in the trees. The site field rises above eye-level, containing rough grass. A single tree is visible on the skyline, at the crest of the site landform. A pylon tower that is located beyond the southern boundary of the site is partially visible behind the foreground trees and cables cross overhead above the site field.
02 - Permissive path at Tyle-morgrug, looking	The viewpoint is located on a permissive footpath to the northeast of the site, within Bannau Brycheiniog National	The view looks across the valley formed by the Sychryd river, which is well-treed and forms the middle ground to the view, below eye-level. The south side of the valley is

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards the site
southwest toward the site	Park. The footpath follows the route of a private access track that zigzags north.	formed by rising landform that contains regularly shaped fields. The settlement of Cefn Rhigos is visible at the crest of the landform, next to a belt of mixed woodland. A line of coniferous trees marks the northeast corner of the site, beyond which lies the site field. The curved track that crosses the northwest part of the site is visible and a loose linear group of trees marks the north boundary of the site. Several scattered trees mark the south boundary of the site. A pylon tower is located beyond the south boundary of the site and cables cross over the site field. Craig y Llyn forms a prominent backdrop to the view to the south. To the west Maesgwyn windfarm is visible.
03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site	The viewpoint is located on a minor local road that connects with Hirwaun Industrial Estate to the south and the settlement of Penderyn to the north. The minor road is also a designated Public Right of Way that is a footpath. There is woodland on the east side of the route, screening disused workings from view. Penderyn Reservoir is nearby to the south. The viewpoint is located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.	The view is directed toward the site along the minor local road that is lined by a post-and-wire fence on its west side and woodland on the west side. To the west of the route is an open grassland landscape, marked with scattered, small mature trees. The grassland slopes south toward the Sychryd river valley, which shapes sunken landform, dipped out of view. The south side of the valley is formed by rising land containing Hirwaun Industrial Estate and is well-tree around Cwm Wyrfa to the south. To the west of Cwm Wyrfa, the valley side contains regular fields on sloping land, including the site field. The site field is discernible adjacent to the settlement of Cefn Rhigos, with a line of coniferous trees marking its northeast corner. Several scattered trees mark the south boundary of the site. A loose linear group of trees marks the north boundary of the site. A pylon tower is located beyond the south boundary of the site, forming one of a string of towers that crosses the view with cables overhead. Craig y Llyn forms a prominent backdrop to the view to the south. To the west Maesgwyn windfarm is visible.
04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking	The viewpoint is located on a minor local road that connects Pontneddfechan with a	The view is framed by vegetation along the road, looking over stockproof fencing into a flat field in the foreground. Beyond the field,

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Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards the site
south toward the site	number of scattered farm dwellings before continuing north. The viewpoint is located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. The route is lined by hedgerow with scattered trees along its length and the view is available looking through a gap, over the hedgerow and stockproof fence. During the times of the year when vegetation is foliate, views may be further restricted. At close distance to the northwest lies the farm property Hendrefydd.	the landform drops to the river valley. The south side of the valley is formed by a steeply rising slope with deciduous woodland. Several properties including a large, white-rendered building are visible at Pen-cae-drain. On the crest of the valley slope, landcover changes to a regular fieldscape, formed by hedgerow and trees. The belt of coniferous trees that forms the southeast corner of the site is visible, along with the single tree in the centre of the site. To the south of the site are two pylon towers, prominent on the ridgeline. Craig y Llyn forms a prominent backdrop to the view further to the south.
05 - Minor road at Comin y Rhos, looking south toward the site	The viewpoint is located on the minor route that connects Pontneddfechan with the Beacons to the north. The viewpoint is located in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and crosses open access land. Several footpaths connect with the route along its length.	The view overlooks the foreground of Comin y Rhos, which is a level area of rough grassland. Beyond the common, landform dips to the wooded valley below. The south side of the valley is formed by rising land with trees on its lower slopes and regularly enclosed fields on the valley crest. The settlement of Cefn Rhigos is visible next to the site, adjacent to woodland including the coniferous belt of trees at the southeast corner boundary of the site. The track in the northwest corner of the site is visible, along with a line of several scattered trees that mark the southern site boundary. Pylon towers and overhead cables cross the valley crest. The backdrop to the view is formed by the imposing upland ridge at Craig y Llyn and Mynydd Pen-y-cae where a windfarm punctuates the skyline above eye-level.
06 - Public parking area, Craig y Llyn, looking northwest toward the site	The viewpoint is located at a public viewpoint where there is a picnic area, at the edge of Mynydd Beili-glas. The viewpoint and surrounding land is open access land. The picnic area where the viewpoint is located is at the high point of the snaking A4061 pass. To the rear of the	The view looks along the dramatic scarp edge of Craig y Llyn, which rises sharply above Llyn Farm. The upland foreground to the view drops steeply to the fieldscape plateau and valley landscape below, containing regularly enclosed fields bound by hedgerow and trees. Development is scattered across the plateau, including Zipworld and disused mining infrastructure and Tower Colliery at the base of the slope to

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards the site
	viewer is coniferous woodland on Mynydd Ystradffernol.	the north, the settlement of Rhigos and nearby Hirwaun Industrial Estate. The smaller settlement of Cefn Rhigos and nearby large solar farm are visible further to the northwest. To the south of Cefn Rhigos, Mount Road crosses the plateau, lined by hedgerow. Cefn Farm is located immediately to the south of the site, next to the scattered line of small trees that marks the southern boundary of the site. The open, sloping site field is partly visible on the crest of the plateau landform. The northwest corner of the site is obscured from view by a belt of boundary trees and woodland next to Cefn Rhigos.

5.3 Visual receptors

- 5.3.1 The assessment of visual effects is described by considering how the different groups of “visual receptors” may be affected. The following is a review of the viewers (the visual receptors) and the views available to them at the selected representative locations:

People in settlements and residential properties

- 5.3.2 The main settlement areas within the 2km study area are the hamlet of Cefn Rhigos close to the site boundary, the villages of Rhigos, Pontneddfechan and Pont Walby within 1-1.5km of the site and the town Glyn-neath within 2-3km of the site. There are also a number of industrial estates and workings within the study area. Settlement beyond the river corridor is sparse and limited elsewhere to scattered farmsteads and rural dwellings. Settlement is largely absent in upland areas.
- 5.3.3 The hamlet **Cefn Rhigos** lies within the ZTV; however, it is likely that surface screening from woodland, trees and other surface features would mean that views toward the site from the settlement Cefn Rhigos are limited. Similarly, the village **Rhigos** lies within the ZTV, however surface screening from field boundary vegetation and other intervening surface features would likely obscure views.
- 5.3.4 The villages Pontneddfechan and Pont Walby lie outside of the ZTV and would have no views of the development as a result of topography. The town Glyn-neath is also outside of the ZTV as a result of the river Neath topography and would also have no views of the development.
- 5.3.5 There are also scattered farmsteads and rural dwellings throughout the study area, including on the valley plateau that contains the site and also in the valley landscape in the north part of

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the study area. **Viewpoint 04** has been selected to illustrate a view from close to the farm dwelling Hendrefydd, available at a minor local road that serves the property, at a gap in road boundary vegetation. **Context view D** illustrates the view from further along the same route, close to the property Lletty-Dreffydd and shows that vegetation screening would further obscure views from elsewhere.

Users of public rights of way and areas of public access

5.3.6 There are no public rights of way within or immediately adjacent to the site; however, there are several crossing through the fieldscape within 500m of the site and others spread through the valley sides in the wider landscape. The National Cycle Route (NCR) 46 runs along Rhigos Road, immediately along the site's northern boundary. There are also significant areas of open access land within the study area, including along the edge of the National Park to the north and at Hirwaun Common to the southeast. A representative sample of views from the public rights of way network and areas of public access have been taken forward to the assessment and include:

- Users of the **National Cycle Route 46** at the northern boundary of the site, represented by **Viewpoint 01**
- Walkers on a **permissive footpath** inside the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park at medium-long distance from the site, represented by **Viewpoint 02**
- **Walkers on a public right of way** at the minor road north of Penderyn Reservoir, inside the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, at long distance from the site, represented by **Viewpoint 03**
- **Walkers and recreational users** at the trailheads at **Craig y Llyn**, represented by **Viewpoint 06**

5.3.7 There is a network of several public rights of way within the immediate setting of the site. **Context view A** is taken from a public right of way at close distance to the northeast of the site. The context view shows the extent of screening between the viewpoint and the site, which would likely obscure most of the site from view when foliate.

5.3.8 The ZTV indicates a pocket of visibility to the southwest of the site, and **Context view B** is located in this area, on a footpath to the south of the site close to the Rhigos Gliding Club. The canopies of coniferous trees at the treebelt that forms the southeast corner of the site is visible, along with Cefn Farm; however, as a result of landform and tree cover, views into the site field are not available.

Road users

5.3.9 The primary road within the 3km study area is the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road, which is a major regional route, running east-west through the study area. The inter-valley A-road A4109 connects with the A465 at Glyn-neath and runs northwest toward the Tawe valley. The A4059 connects with the A465 at the southeast edge of the study area, running north to connect with Pendryn and the National Park beyond. The remaining local road network within the study area comprises minor local roads connecting settlements and industrial estates, as well as residential streets in urban areas. A representative sample of views for users of roads have been taken forward to the assessment and include:

- **Rhigos Road**, at the northern boundary of the site, represented by Viewpoint 01
- Local road users on the **minor road north of Penderyn Reservoir**, inside the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, at long distance from the site, represented by **Viewpoint 03**
- **Local road users** at medium-long distance from the site, on the minor road north of Pontneddfechan, represented by **Viewpoint 04**
- **Local road users** at Comin y Rhos, at long distance from the site to the north, represented by **Viewpoint 05**
- **Local roads users** at the A4061 pass that crosses Mynydd Beili-glas and Mynydd Ystradfermol, at long distance from the site to the south, represented by **Viewpoint 06**

Rhigos Road the A4061 cuts through the southern part of the study area, forming a link between Hirwaun Industrial Estate and crossing over Mynydd Beili-glas and Mynydd Ystradfermol before dropping into the neighbouring Rhondda valley. Viewpoint 06 illustrates an elevated from the high point of the A4061. **Context view C** is located lower down on the route, closer to Zipworld and shows that from less elevated locations, tree screening from the belt of confers at the southeast corner of the site would obscure views of the site field.

Other areas with a specific landscape interest

5.3.10 The **Bannau Brycheiniog National Park** extends over the northern part of the study area, located approximately 770m to the northwest of the site at its nearest point. The ZTV illustrates that elevated, south-facing areas of the National Park have potential theoretic visibility of the proposed development, and a number of viewpoints and context views have been selected to illustrate the varied extent of visibility from the National Park and the dynamic nature of the landscape that contains the site. This includes Viewpoint 02, viewpoint 03 viewpoint 04 and viewpoint 05.

5.3.11 Special Landscape Areas **Vale of Neath SLA** and **Hirwaun Common, Cwm Dare & Cwm Aman SLA** are located to the west and south of the site. The greater part of the Vale of Neath

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SLA lies outside of the ZTV and would therefore have no views of the development. The footprint of theoretical visibility indicated in the ZTV extends over the north/ northwestern edge of the Hirwaun Common, Cwm Dare & Cwm Aman SLA; however, it is likely that on-the-ground visibility would be further reduced as a result of screening from forestry and other surface elements. **Viewpoint 06** illustrates a view from within the Special Landscape Area.

5.4 Effects on visual amenity

5.4.1 The visual assessment covers the assessment scenarios described in paragraph 5.4.4.

Sensitivity

5.4.2 The susceptibility of viewers is affected by factors such as the distance to the viewer, the relative number of viewers affected and the importance of the site in the overall view. The context of the viewpoint may also contribute to the ability to accommodate change, for example, people viewing from residential properties or from a valued landscape might be regarded as less able to accommodate change, than those viewing from an industrial context. Table A2-8 in Appendix 2 provides examples of High, Moderate and Lesser sensitivity, demonstrating how the contributing factors are interpreted.

5.4.3 The sensitivity of the visual receptors is assessed as follows:

- **People in settlements and residential properties:** high susceptibility to changes in their visual amenity; open unobstructed views including the site assessed as of high value: **high sensitivity**, and filtered, oblique or partial views of medium value: **moderate sensitivity**.
- **Users of public rights of way:** moderate susceptibility to change in their visual amenity; open views towards the site with some indicators of value attached to the view assessed as medium value: **moderate sensitivity** and filtered, oblique or partial views of low value: **lesser sensitivity**.
- **Users of public roads:** low susceptibility to change in their visual amenity: filtered, oblique or partial views of low value: **lesser sensitivity**.

Magnitude of Change

5.4.4 The existing views for each representative viewpoint are described in **Appendix 3, Table Appendix 3.3**. Descriptions of the proposed development within each view is described and an analysis of the degree and nature of changes is presented in **Appendix 3, Table Appendix 3.4**. A summary of the magnitude of change is provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Viewpoint and magnitude of change summary

Reference viewpoints	Magnitude of change
01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	During Construction: Medium Operation at year 1: Medium-small Operation at year 10: Small
02 - Permissive path at Tyle-morgrug, looking southwest toward the site	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small
03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small
04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site	During Construction: Medium-small Operation at year 1: Medium-small Operation at year 10: Small
05 - Minor road at Comin y Rhos, looking south toward the site	During Construction: Medium-small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small
06 - Public parking area, Craig y llyn, looking northeast toward the site	During Construction: Small Operation at year 1: Small Operation at year 10: Small

Effects on visual receptors

- 5.4.5 Final conclusions about the degree of visual effects, whether adverse or beneficial, relate the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes, as illustrated in the indicative criteria shown in **Table A2-11**. Visual receptors are grouped based on their sensitivity and the nature of the view available. For each group of receptors, representative viewpoints are listed. Detailed assessments are provided in **Appendix 3, Table Appendix 3.5** and a summary of the effects is provided below in **Table 9**:

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Table 9 Effects on Visual Receptors

Visual receptors and sensitivity	Reference viewpoints	Effects during construction	Effects at operation: Year 1	Effects at operation: Year 10
Residents in scattered farmsteads at medium-long distance with oblique views of the site: moderate sensitivity	04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site	Moderate, adverse	Moderate, adverse	Moderate-minor, adverse
Users of the National Cycle Route at the northern boundary of the site, with partial, filtered and oblique views of the site: moderate sensitivity	01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate-minor, neutral
Users of PRoW and permissive paths at medium-long or long distance to the northeast, within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, with filtered and oblique views of the site: moderate sensitivity	02 - Permissive path at Tyle-morgrug, looking southwest toward the site 03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor, adverse
Walkers and recreational users at long distance to the southeast at Craig y Llyn, at recognised viewpoint and within the Special Landscape Area: high sensitivity	06 - Public parking area, Craig y Llyn, looking northeast toward the site	Moderate-minor, neutral	Moderate-minor, neutral	Moderate-minor, neutral
Users of the local road network at close distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: lesser sensitivity	01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	Moderate-minor, adverse	Moderate-minor adverse	Minor, neutral

Visual receptors and sensitivity	Reference viewpoints	Effects during construction	Effects at operation: Year 1	Effects at operation: Year 10
Local road users at medium-long or long distance from the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: lesser sensitivity	03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site 04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site 05 - Minor road at Comin y Rhos, looking south toward the site 06 - Public parking area, Craig y llyn, looking northeast toward the site	Minor or moderate-minor, adverse	Minor, adverse	Minor, adverse

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Baseline

- 6.1.1 Tir Collective is instructed by REWE 11 Limited to prepare this Landscape and Visual Appraisal which relates to the proposed battery storage development circa 1.7km to the west of Rhigos National Grid Substation. The site extends to 5.2 hectares with the proposed battery storage and associated infrastructure located in the southwest of the site. Underground cables are located to the east and would follow Rhigos Road to connect the proposed battery storage area with the Rhigos National Grid substation. The proposed development would be operational for a temporary period of 40 years.
- 6.1.2 The proposed development would comprise the installation of battery energy storage system (BESS), together with high voltage substation compound, transformer stations, inverters, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. A new access would connect the battery storage area with Mount Road to the east via an existing track, which heads south from the site, then heads east along existing filed boundaries, to the west and south of Cefn Farm. A wider 3km study area has been considered as the area where potential landscape and visual effects may arise from the proposed development.

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- 6.1.3 The methodology used for assessing the potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity were based on the recommendations in GLIVA3. The application of this guidance document established an appropriate scope for the assessments to be undertaken.

6.2 Summary of findings

Landscape assessment

- 6.2.1 Desk studies reviewed landscape designations, public access, and referred to national and local landscape character assessments, and relevant national and local policy information. The studies confirmed that the north part of the site lies within Coed Wernhir SINC. The site is not within or adjacent to any other designated areas. The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park extends to 770m to the north of the site.
- 6.2.2 In relation to LANDMAP assessment, Geological landscape identifies the site's location in an **Upland Plateau** of **outstanding** overall value. The Landscape Habitat Aspect Layer notes that the entirety of the site is located in a **Mosaic** with "lowland marshy grassland with transition to upland marshy grassland..." of **outstanding** overall value as a "much declined, threatened Priority habitat." In the Historic Landscape Layer, the majority of the site is located in Cwm Wyfra **regular fieldscape**. The Historic Landscape overall evaluation is **moderate**.
- 6.2.3 The Visual and Sensory Aspect Layer indicates that the entirety of the site is located in aspect area Penderyn, which is classified as Hillside & Scarp Slopes Mosaic and is described as "**Upper valley sides with strong upland** feel-both from the **strong visual link** that exists and the **rough grazing** with some woodland/conifer elements. **slight urban feel on lower slopes** but dominant character is that of an upland area. **visual detractors include pylons and the sharply defined urban edge. noise and movement** from the A465. scattered farmsteads. Minor boundary change at monitoring, adjacent to Tower Colliery.". Visual and Sensory evaluations are **moderate**.
- 6.2.4 A site-specific appraisal was also carried out identifying the landscape features, characteristics, and aesthetics. The site appraisal confirmed the site's location to the west of the hamlet of Cefn Rhigos, circa 800m to the southeast of the village of Pontneddfechan and 1km to the northwest of the village of Rhigos.
- 6.2.5 The site comprises part of a **large sized, regularly shaped, semi-improved grassland field** with boundaries largely lined by **mature trees** and **open boundaries** with **scattered trees**. The site field forms part of the regular fieldscape on the south side of the Neath valley. The landscape of the wider study area is defined by the river Cynon valley corridor, which is a primary settlement and infrastructure corridor in the region. Associated **sound** and near **glimpses of fast-moving traffic** are **detracting features**.

- 6.2.6 The site is situated on a gentle north facing slope of the River Neath and is influenced by several **drainage features**. Topography ranges from 229m AOD at the southwest boundary to 207m AOD in the northwest corner.
- 6.2.7 A string of **pylon towers and overhead cables** crosses the landscape immediately to the south of the site. The landscape that contains the site is influenced by **past industrial activity**. Hendrefawr Solar Farm is located circa 500m southwest of the site.
- 6.2.8 The features/elements/characteristics identified as important or “key” to the landscape character of the site are the gentle sloped topography on valley plateau; regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland; mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries; historic industrial influence and disturbed land; upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor.
- 6.2.9 The potential for adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity have been recognised and mitigation measures incorporated in the scheme. These include the positioning of the battery storage area and substation to avoid the removal of vegetation and protect the field pattern; the planting of some buffers with trees, where there are existing gaps on the northern boundary, comprising native species and also including coniferous planting to reflect the character of the existing boundary. A further buffer is proposed at the southeast boundary of the site, where there is an existing belt of trees. The southern boundary would be enhanced with the planting of a hedgerow with trees. Further screening to the BESS compound would be provided by tree planting to its north side, and buffer planting at the southwest boundary. These proposed landscape treatments would function as visual screen and filters from key view directions while also providing some enhanced ecological connectivity. Boundary features would therefore be enhanced by the development.
- 6.2.10 The landscape assessment has considered the potential impacts of the proposed development on landscape features, qualities, and characteristics within the site and wider surrounding landscape context during construction, at year 1 of operation, and at year 10 of operation. The findings of the assessment concluded that **during construction**, effects would be **adverse** ranging from **minor** to **moderate-minor effects**. Landform change because of construction would be limited. Construction activity would create movement and sound but would be in context to the existing nearby road traffic and agricultural activity in the landscape. Landscape features such as trees and other boundary vegetation would be protected during construction. A part of the site’s semi-improved grassland outside of the SINC would accommodate the development. Construction activity would be accommodated within the diverse landscape that is heavily influenced by human activity.
- 6.2.11 **At year 1 of operation**, effects on the immediate landscape would also be **adverse**, ranging from **minor** to **moderate-minor effects**. The defining topography would remain largely unaltered. BESS infrastructure would be contained to a part of the site only, preserving field pattern. Rough grassland in the remainder of the site would remain in place. Mitigation

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proposals would enhance field pattern. Infrastructure and human influences are characteristic of the local landscape and the development would therefore not conflict with critical elements of landscape character.

- 6.2.12 **At year 10**, mitigation proposals would be established. Planting along boundaries would be mature, forming an established component of the wider landscape pattern and further embedding the scheme into the landscape. Effects would range from **minor** to **moderate-minor** and would be **beneficial** for regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland; and **neutral** for mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries. Effects would be **adverse** for the other landscape receptors.
- 6.2.13 Overall, the proposed development would be contained within the southwest part of the rough grass field. Part of the site would be removed from grassland and planting proposals would strengthen the boundaries of the site and provide visual screening and filtering, as well as improved ecological value. Whilst the site and context have some rural qualities, the associated movement and sound of fast-moving vehicles on Rhigos Road and in the Cynon valley corridor, and nearby pylons and overhead cables are detracting features. The proposed development would be in context and subservient to these elements. Proposed planting would help to integrate the proposed development into the landscape over time, whilst also enhancing key characteristics.

Visual assessment

- 6.2.14 To confirm the baseline studies of designations, landscape character, and ZTV mapping, and site visit, 10no. views were photographed of which six were carried forward for assessment that represent key receptors including nearby residents, users of public rights of way, and road users.
- 6.2.15 The visual assessment concluded that for **residents** in scattered farmsteads and medium-long distance with oblique views of the site, effects would be **moderate, adverse** during construction and at operation, reducing to **moderate-minor** after ten years of operation. Planting proposals would increasingly help to mitigate visual impacts, filtering and breaking up views as they mature.
- 6.2.16 For **users of the National Cycle Route** at the northern boundary of the site, with partial filtered and oblique views of the site, effects would be **moderate, adverse** during construction and operation, reducing to **moderate-minor, neutral** after ten years of operation. Trees along the northern boundary of the site with Rhigos Road would largely obscure the development from view once established.
- 6.2.17 For **users of the PRow** and permissive paths at medium-long or long distance to the northeast, within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, with filtered and oblique views of the site,

effects would be **moderate-minor, adverse** throughout the lifespan of the development. The screening provided by existing boundary tree belts would be further strengthened.

- 6.2.18 For **walkers and recreational users at long distance** to the southeast at Craig y Llyn, at a recognised viewpoint on OS mapping and within the Special Landscape Area, effects would be **moderate-minor, neutral** throughout the lifespan of the development. Distance and the expansive nature of views limit changes resulting from the development. Effects are considered neutral as the quality of visual experience would continue to be broadly similar.
- 6.2.19 For **lesser sensitivity users of the road network** with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site, effects would range from **minor** to **moderate-minor, adverse** during construction and operation and **minor, adverse** after ten years of operation.
- 6.2.20 Overall, the visual effects would be contained to within close proximity to the site. The landscape of the study area is often well-vegetated and has woodland cover, which screens views toward the site. The large and dominant backdrop of Craig Y Llyn in the south of the study area means that in south-facing views, such as from the National Park, the skyline would generally not be broken by the development. The valley crest that contains the site is punctuated by existing electricity infrastructure, pylons and cables, which the development would be experienced in context to. As the proposed planting establishes, views of the proposed development would become more limited, particularly for residents to the south and road users/ cyclist on Rhigos Road.
- 6.2.21 Weather conditions, as described in paragraph 1.3.11 above would limit visibility for receptors as conditions that limit visibility occur due to rainfall (160 days on average in the year) and air frost (37 days on average in the year).

6.3 Conclusions

- 6.3.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVApp) has examined the landscape and visual impacts in relation to the proposed development. The potential impacts have been thoroughly assessed through a combination of desk studies and field surveys of the surrounding landscape.
- 6.3.2 The proposed development would be in context to Rhigos Road, settlement and infrastructure in the Cynon valley, and close to pylons and overhead cables. The proposals would be sited within part an existing field, requiring only a small area of rough grassland being removed. More sensitive areas of the wider site, which forms part of a locally designated SINCC, would be retained and protected.
- 6.3.3 Visual impacts of the proposed development would be limited by the existing tree belts on site boundaries, that screen parts of the site from view from some locations. The wider landscape also contains trees and vegetation, which also often screen and filter views towards the site. Any views of the proposals would be small and viewed in context to nearby existing

Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

energy infrastructure, including views from Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Proposals for the site include the planting of native trees and scrub, which would help to integrate the proposed development into the landscape over time, whilst reflecting the existing landscape character and providing some enhancement of key features. As the proposed planting establishes, views of the proposed development would also become more limited.

- 6.3.4 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal concludes that the site would be able to accommodate the proposed battery storage development in the southwest part of the site, and proposed planting within the wider site, without unacceptable impacts to landscape character and visual amenity experienced within the surrounding landscape.

Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Figures

Appendix 2 – Assessment Methodology

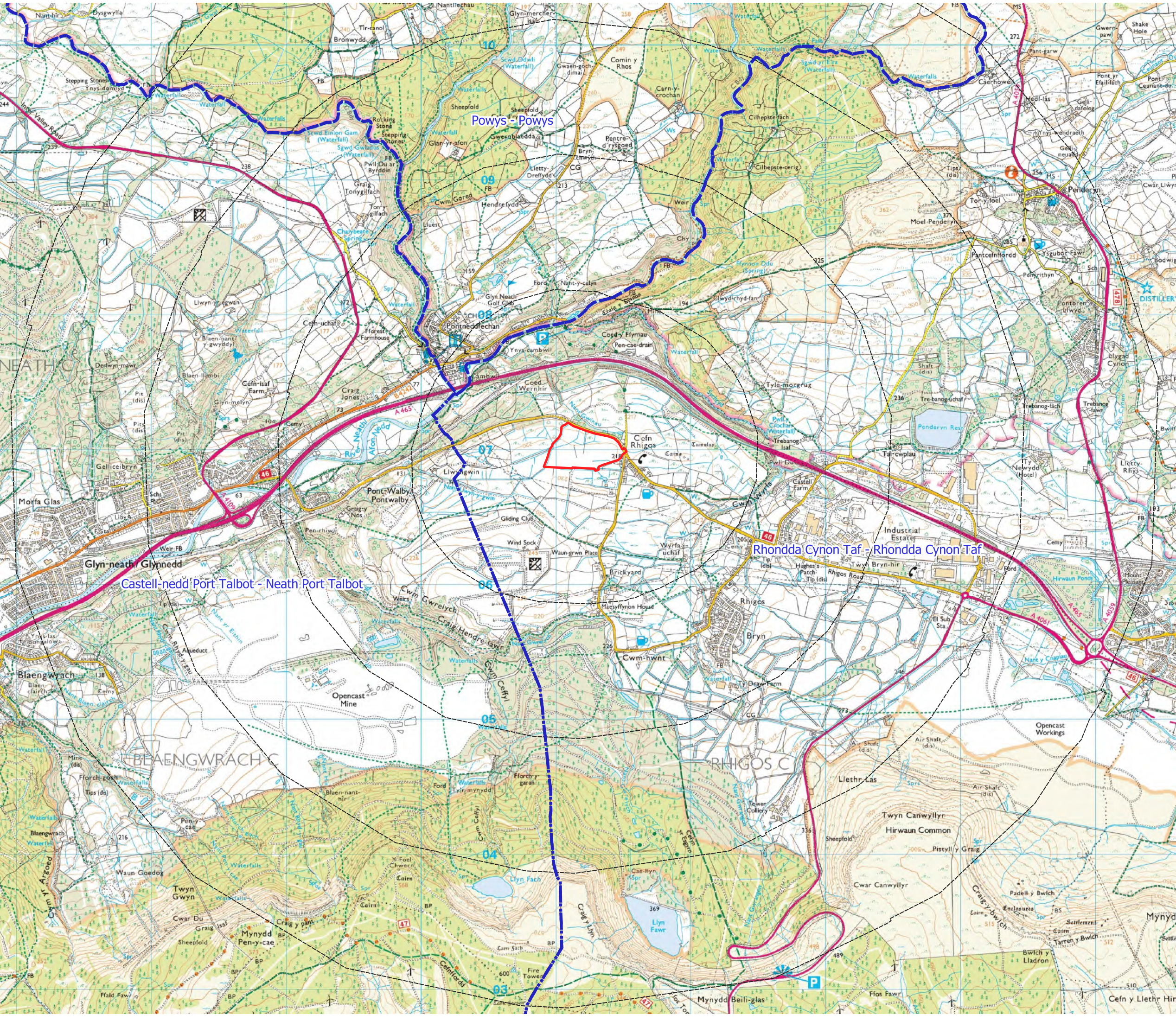
Appendix 3 – Assessment of Effects

Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Appendix 1 - Figures

Figure LA.01	Site Location
Figures LA.02	Designations
Figure LA.03	Public Access
Figures LA.04	LANDMAP
Figure LA.05	Topography
Figure LA.06	Site Context
Figure LA.07	Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)
Figures LA.08	Context photographs
Figures LA.09	Viewpoints



REWE 11

Land west of Mount Road

Site location

LA.01

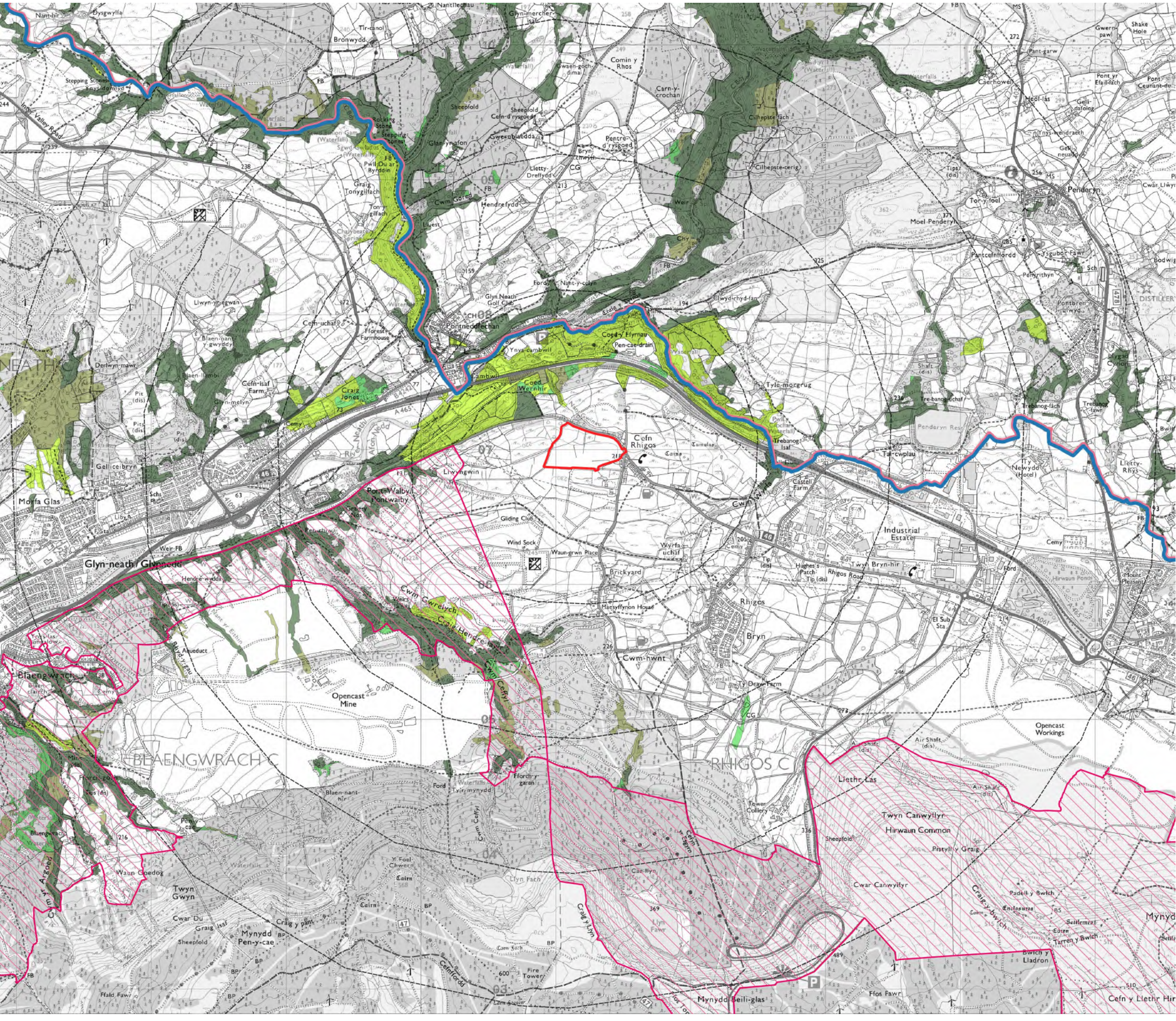
Key

- Site boundary (excluding cable route)
- 1km buffers from site boundary
- Unitary Authorities

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 km
Scale 1:26,000@ A3

North

TC24283 LA.01. qgz February 2025



Land west of Mount Road

Designations

LA.02-1

Key

- Site boundary (excluding cable route)
- 1km buffers from site boundary
- Bannau Brycheiniog National Park
- Special Landscape Areas

Ancient Woodland

- Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
- Ancient Woodland Site of Unknown Category
- Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site
- Restored Ancient Woodland Site

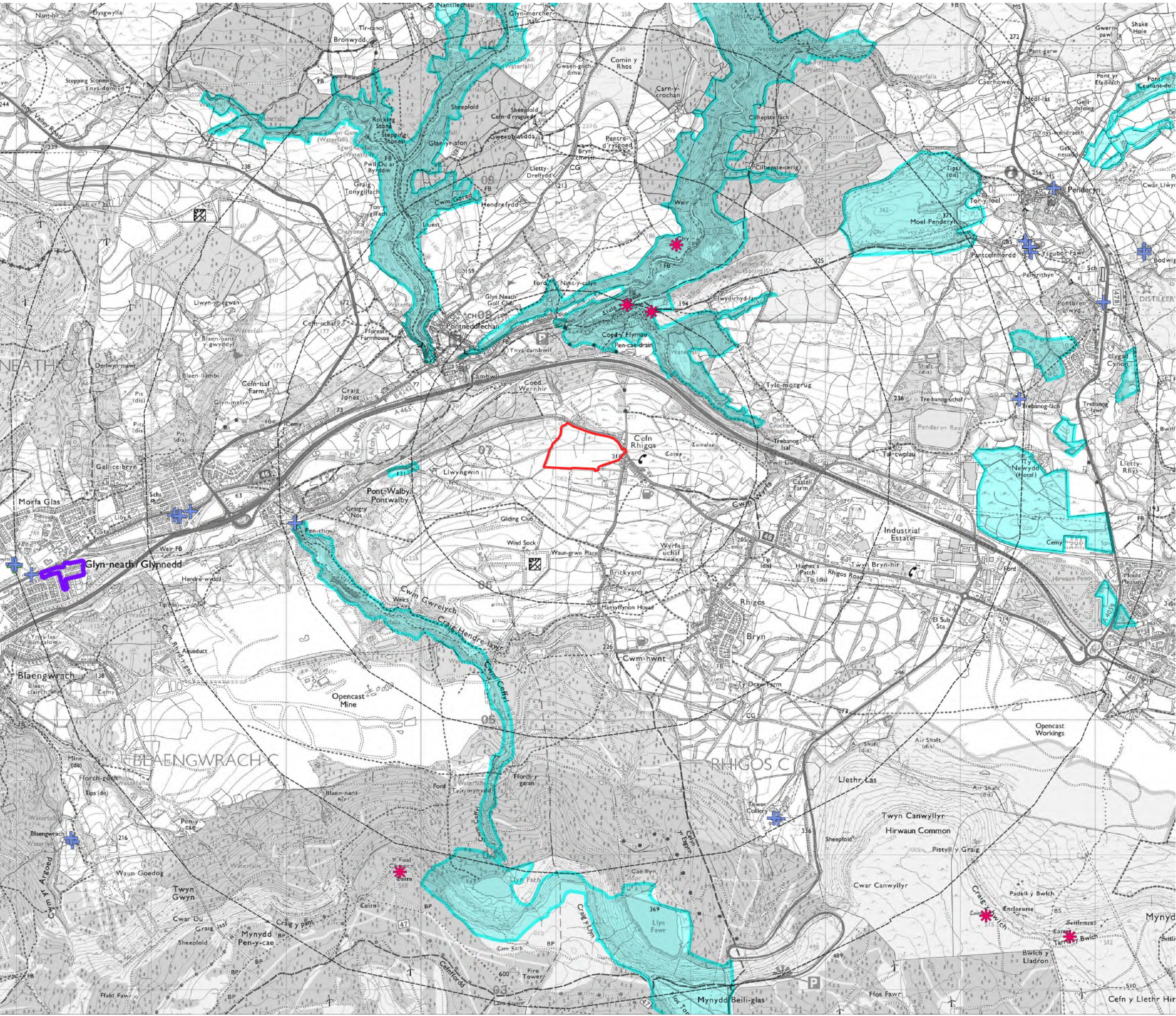
00.20.40.60.81 km

Scale 1:26,000@ A3

North

TC24283 LA.02-1. qgz

February 2025





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Land west of Mount Road

Designations: Historic and Ecology

LA.02-2

Key

 Site boundary (excluding cable route)

 1km buffers from site boundary

Historic and Cultural designations:

Listed Buildings:

 Grade I

 Grade II

 Grade II*

 Scheduled Monuments

 Conservation Area

Ecology Designations

 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 km

Scale 1:26,000@ A3



North

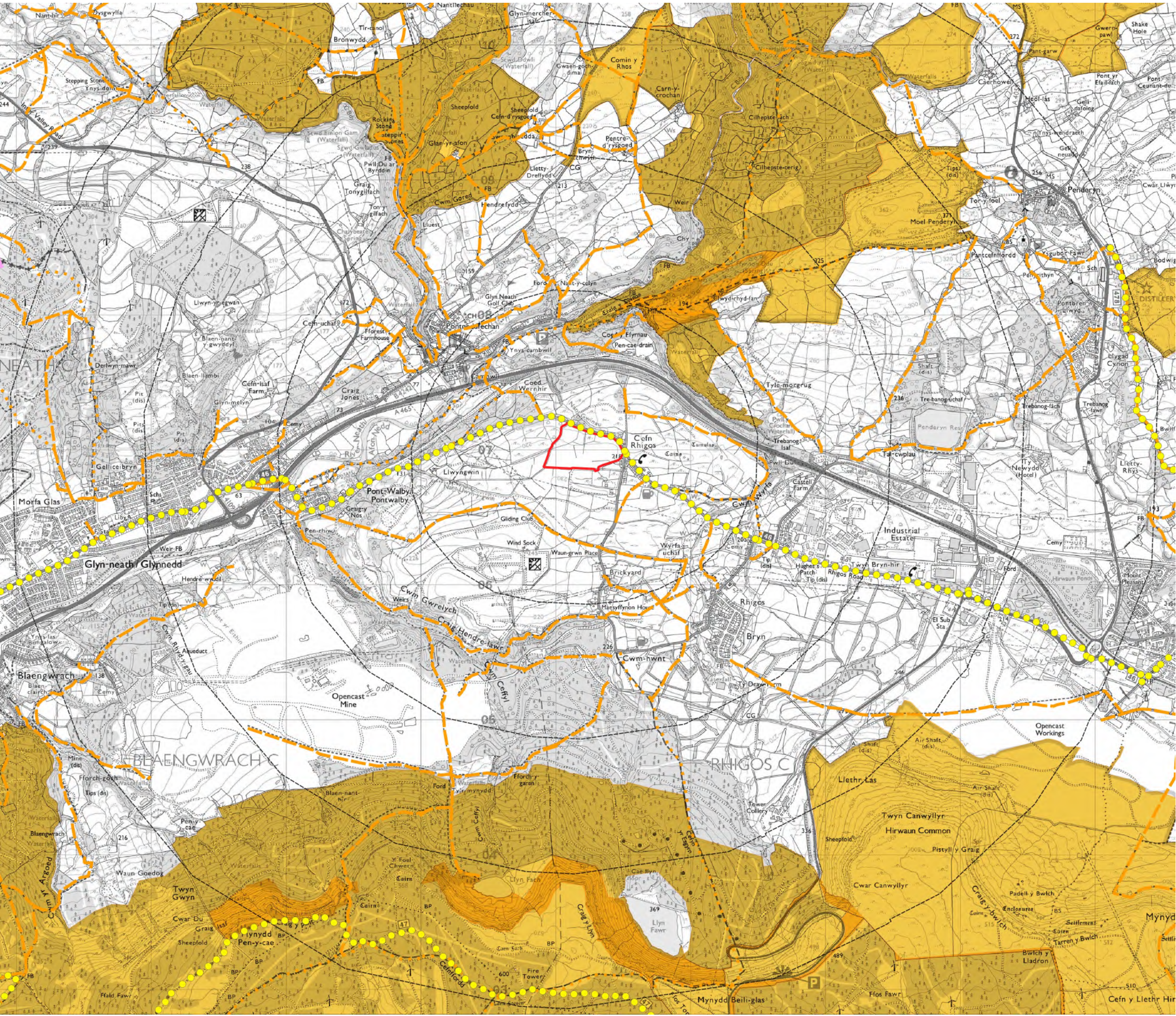
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Land west of Mount Road

Public Access

LA.03

Key

- Site boundary (excluding cable route)
- 1km buffers from site boundary
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Road Used as Puplic Path (RUPP)
- National Cycle Network
- CROW Access Land

Public Rights of Way



Key

 Site boundary
(excluding cable route)

 1km buffers from site boundary

Geological Landscape overall evaluations
(question GL33)

 Outstanding

 High

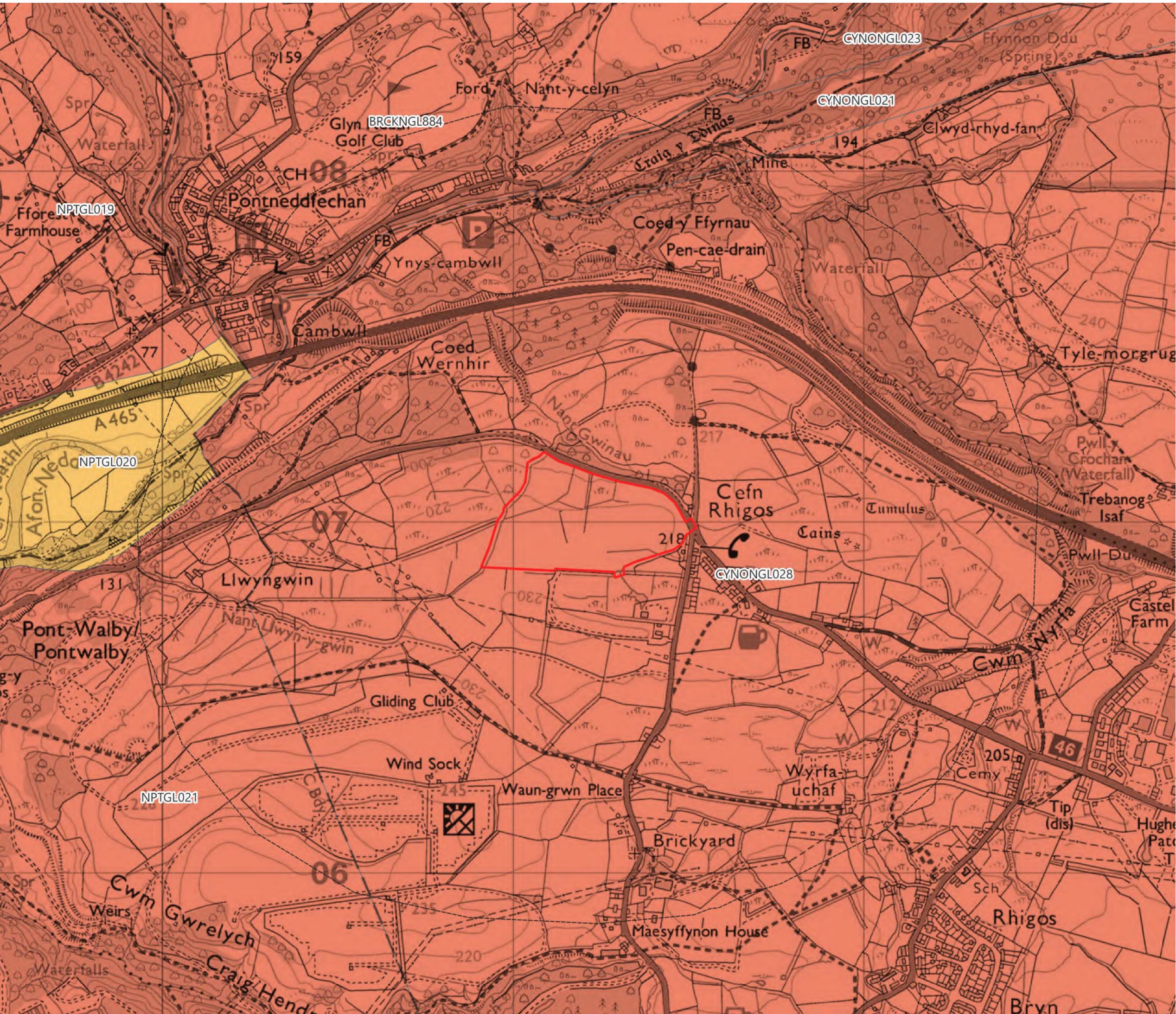
0 100 200 300 400 500 m

Scale 1:10,000@ A3



TC24283 LA.04-1. qgz

February 2025





Land west of Mount Road

LANDMAP: Landscape Habitat LA.04-2
Overall Evaluation

Key

Site boundary
(excluding cable route)

1km buffers from site boundary

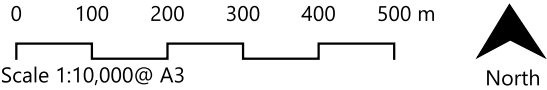
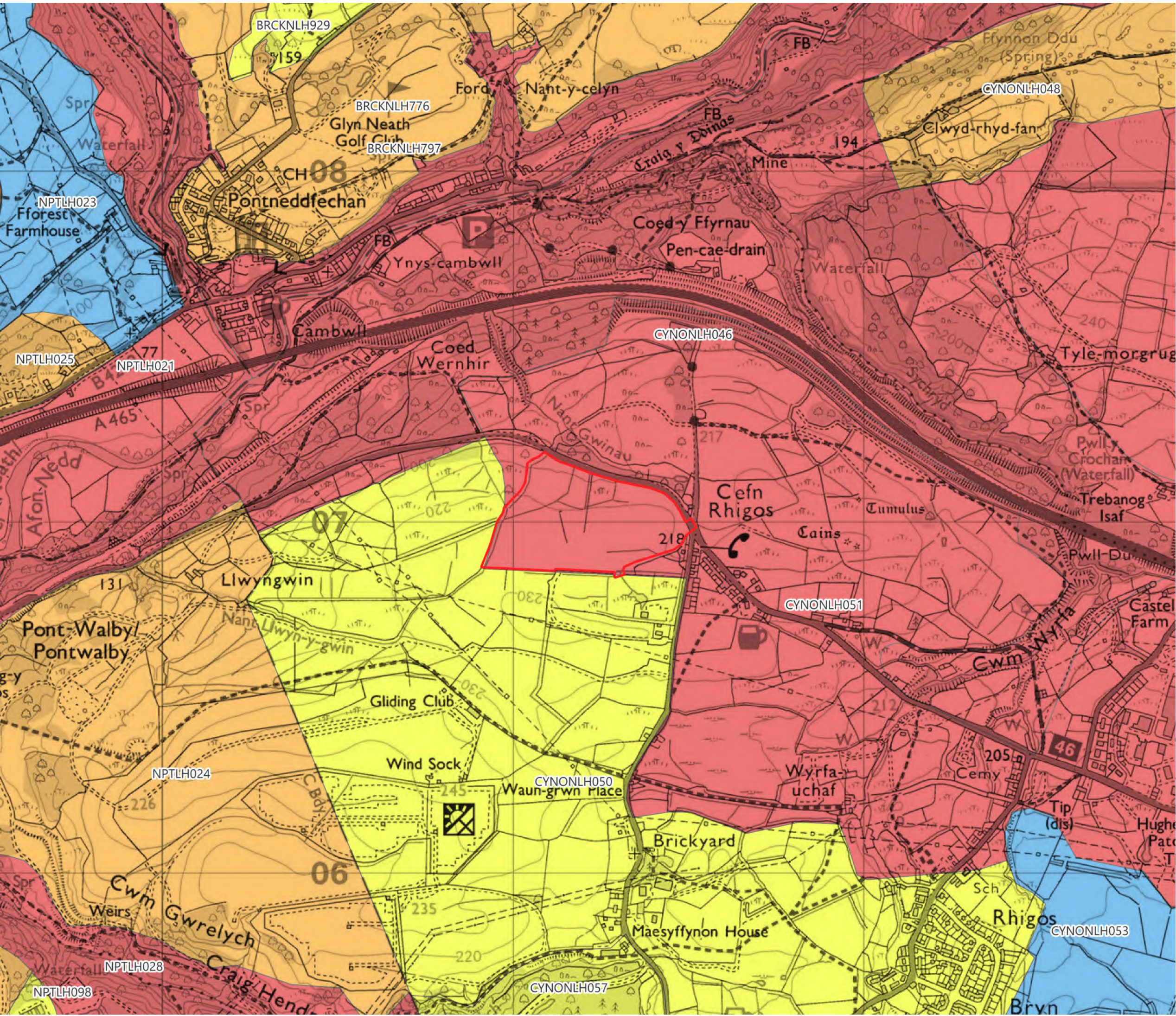
LANDMAP Landscape Habitat Overall
Evaluations (question LH45)

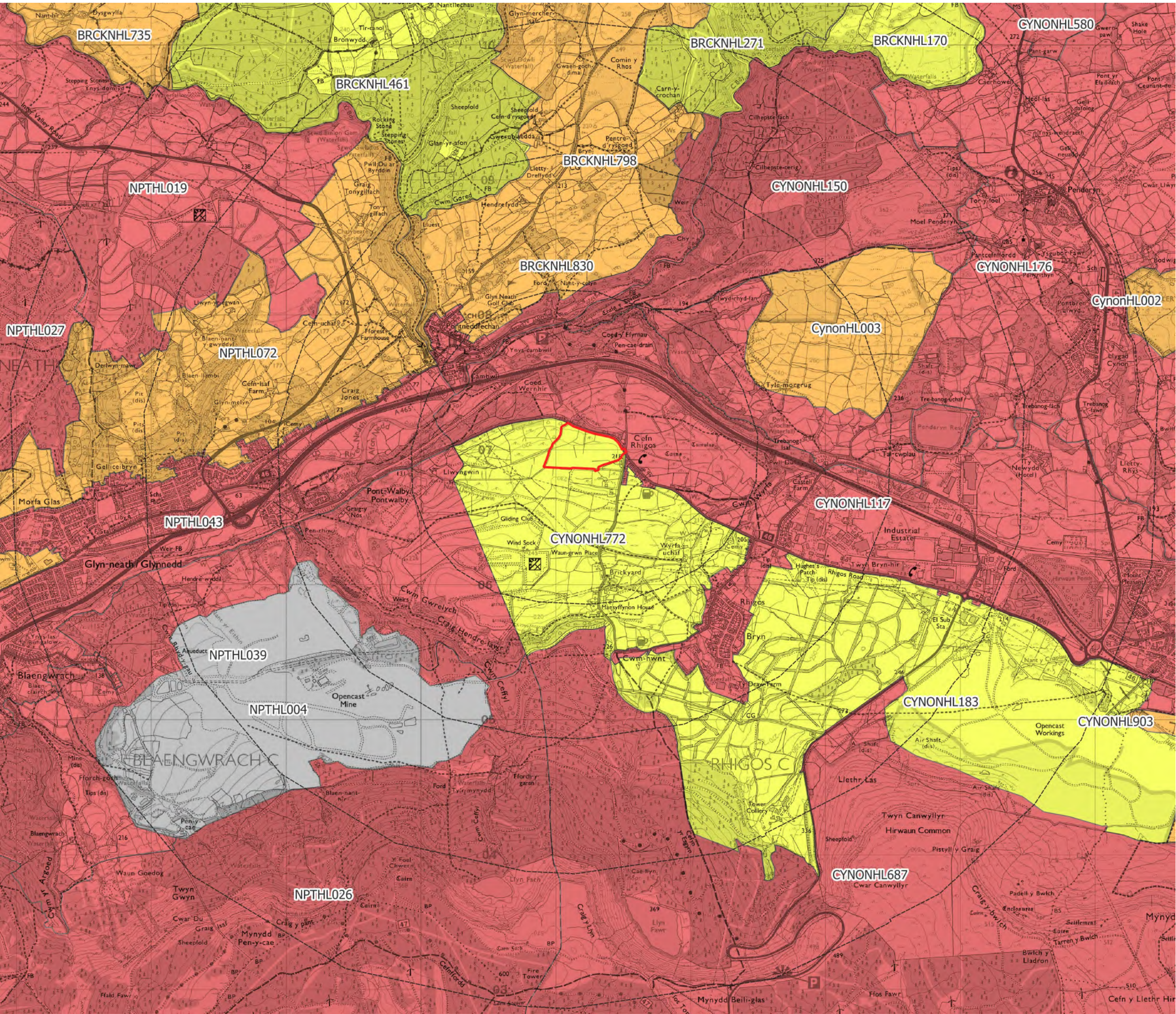
Outstanding

High

Moderate

Low





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Land west of Mount Road

LANDMAP: Historic Landscape LA.04-3

Overall Evaluation

Key

Site boundary
(excluding cable route)

1km buffers from site boundary

LANDMAP Historic Landscape Overall Evaluations (question HL40)

Outstanding

High

Moderate

Unassessed

00.20.40.60.81 km

Scale 1:26,000@ A3

TC24283 LA.04-3. qgz

February 2025

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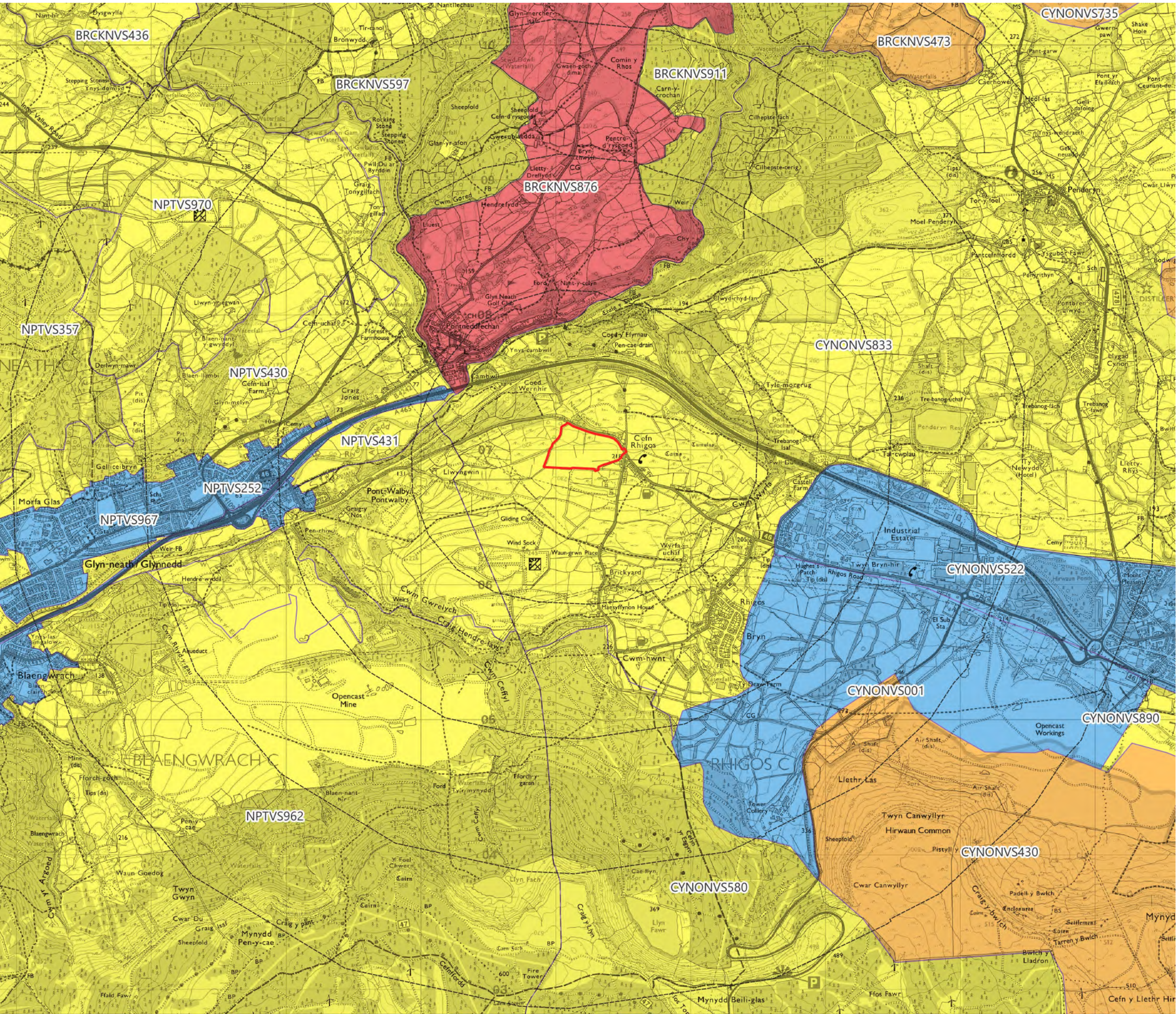
collective

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LANDMAP: Landscape and Visual Overall Evaluation

LA.04-4

Key

Site boundary (excluding cable route)

1km buffers from site boundary

Landscape and Visual overall evaluations (question VS50)

Outstanding

High

Moderate

Low

0

0.2

0.4

0.6

0.8

1 km

Scale 1:26,000@ A3

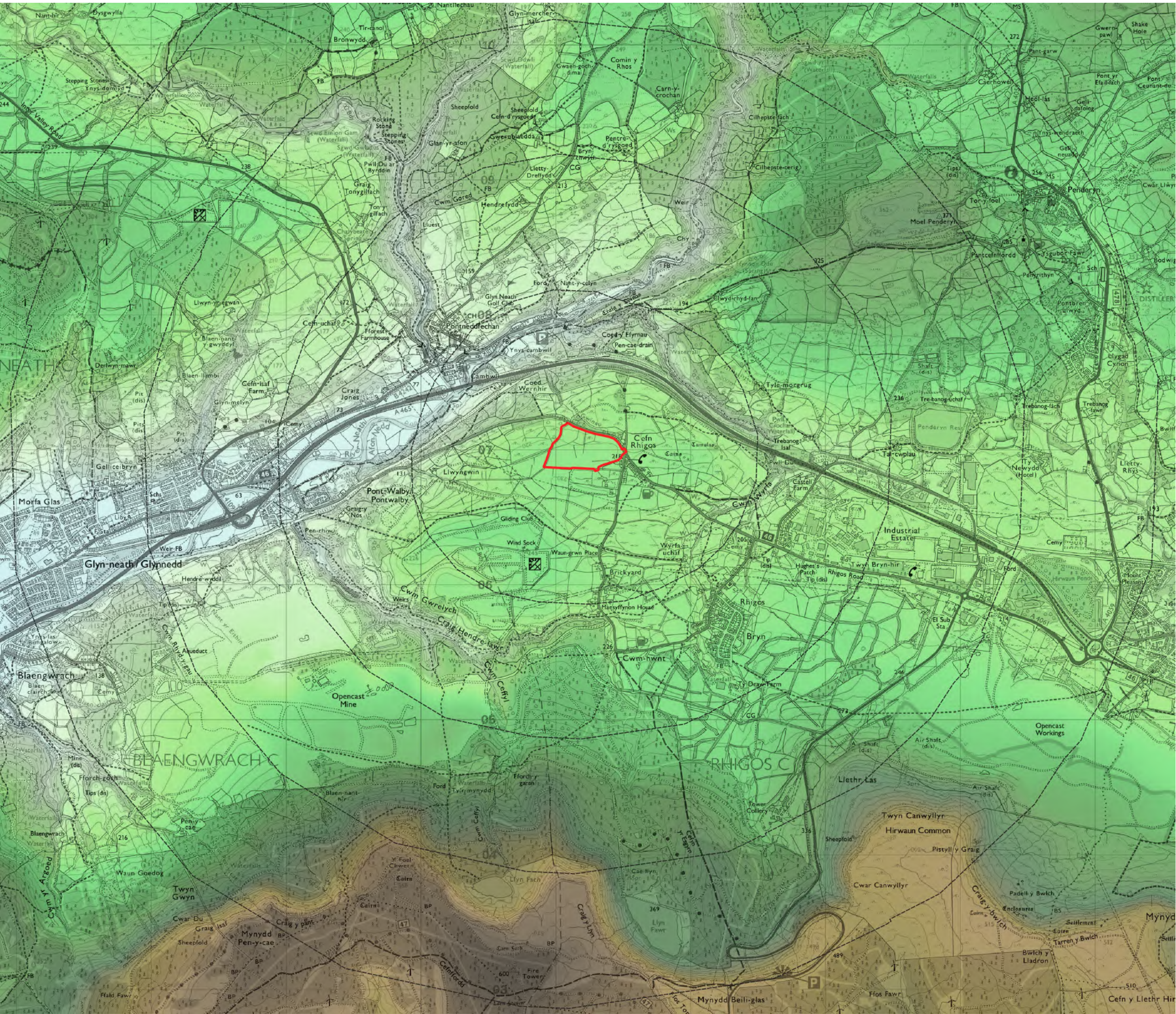
North

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Topography

LA.05

Key

Site boundary
(excluding cable route)

1km buffers from site boundary

Key

m AOD:

30

60

90

120

150

180

210

240

270

300

330

360

390

420

450

480

510

540

570

600

00.20.40.60.81 km

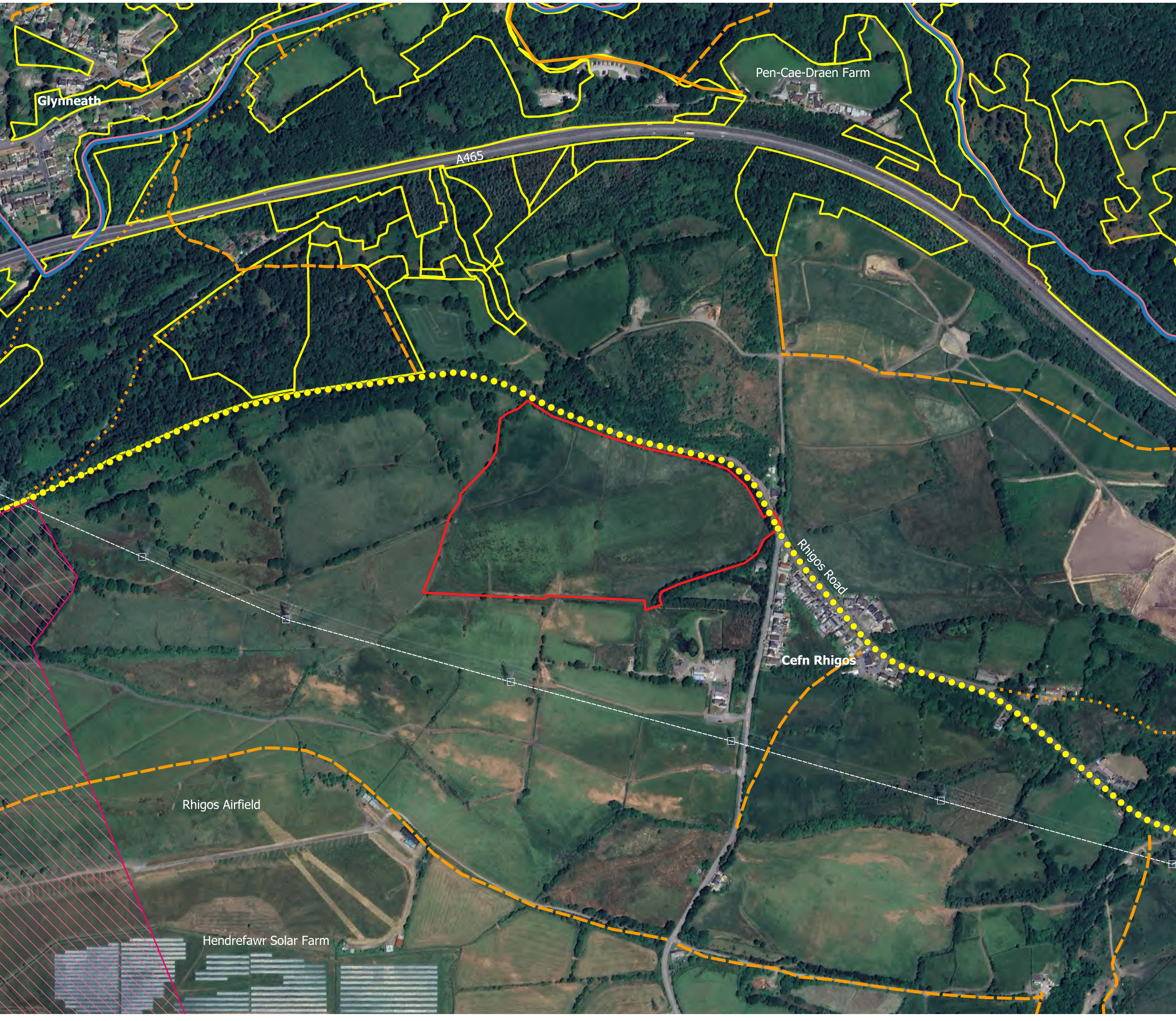
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Site Context

LA.06

Key

 Site boundary

 Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

 Special Landscape Area

 Ancient Woodland

Public Access

Public Rights of Way

 Bridleway

 Footpath

 National Cycle Route

Features

 Towers

 Overhead Lines

0 50 100 150 200 250 m

Scale 1:6,000@ A3

 North

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Land west of Mount Road

ZTV: Bare Earth
BESS and Control Room

LA.07-1

Key

- Site boundary (excluding cable route)
- 1km buffers from site boundary
- BESS and control room location

ZTV Bare Earth

- Calculated to 3.5m high for the BESS units and 6m high for the control room
- Minor part of above development proposals potentially visible
- Moderate part of above development proposals potentially visible
- Most part of above development proposals potentially visible

Public Rights of Way

- Bridleway
- Footpath
- National Cycle Network

- Viewpoint locations
- Context photo locations

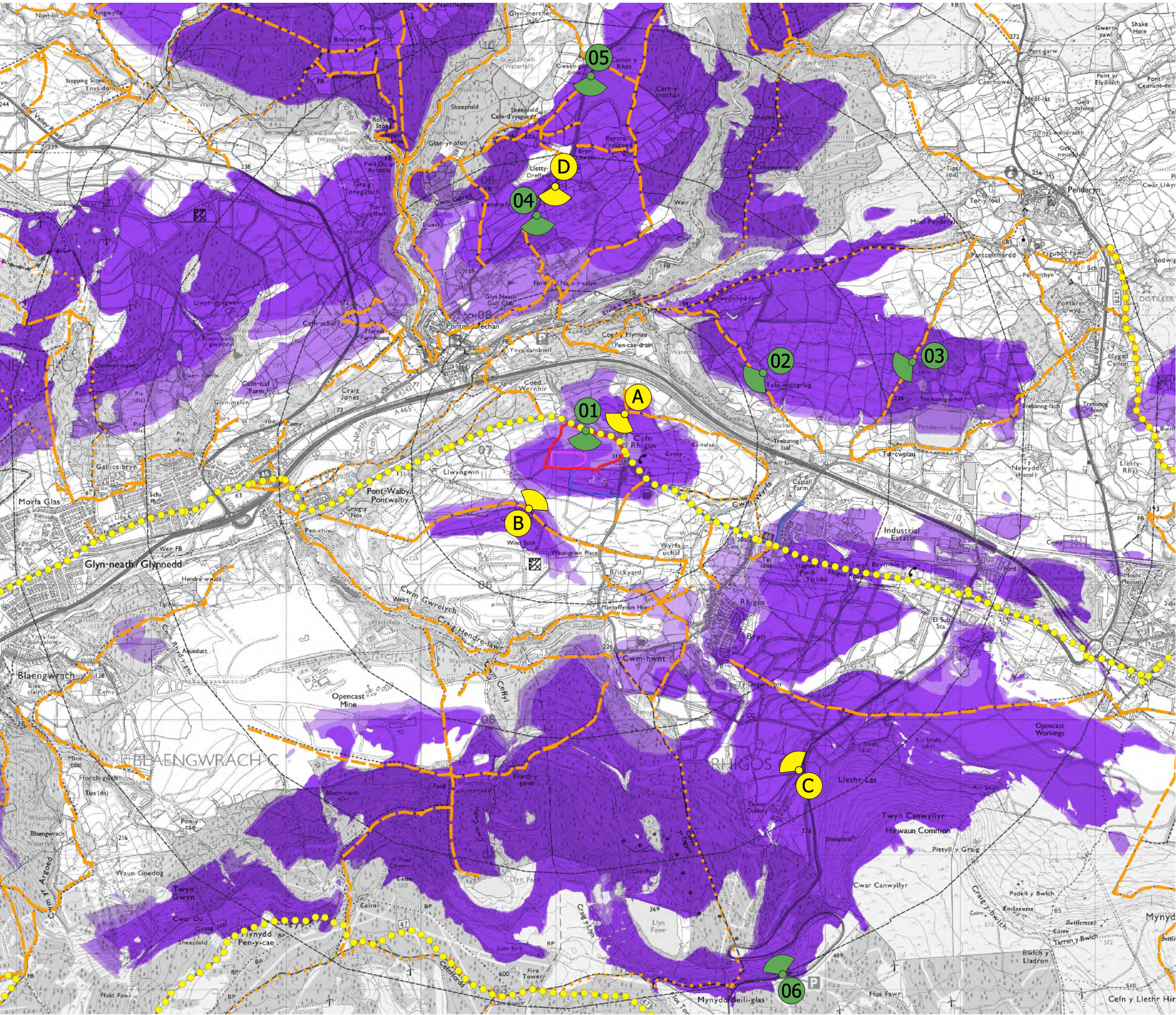
0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 km
Scale 1:26,000@ A3



TC24283 LA.07-1. qgz February 2025



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Land west of Mount Road

ZTV: Bare Earth Substation LA.07-2

Key

- Site boundary (excluding cable route)
- 1km buffers from site boundary
- Substation Location

ZTV Bare Earth

Calculated to 12m high for proposed substation

Potential visibility of substation

Public Rights of Way

- Bridleway
- Footpath
- National Cycle Network

Viewpoint locations

Context photo locations

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 km

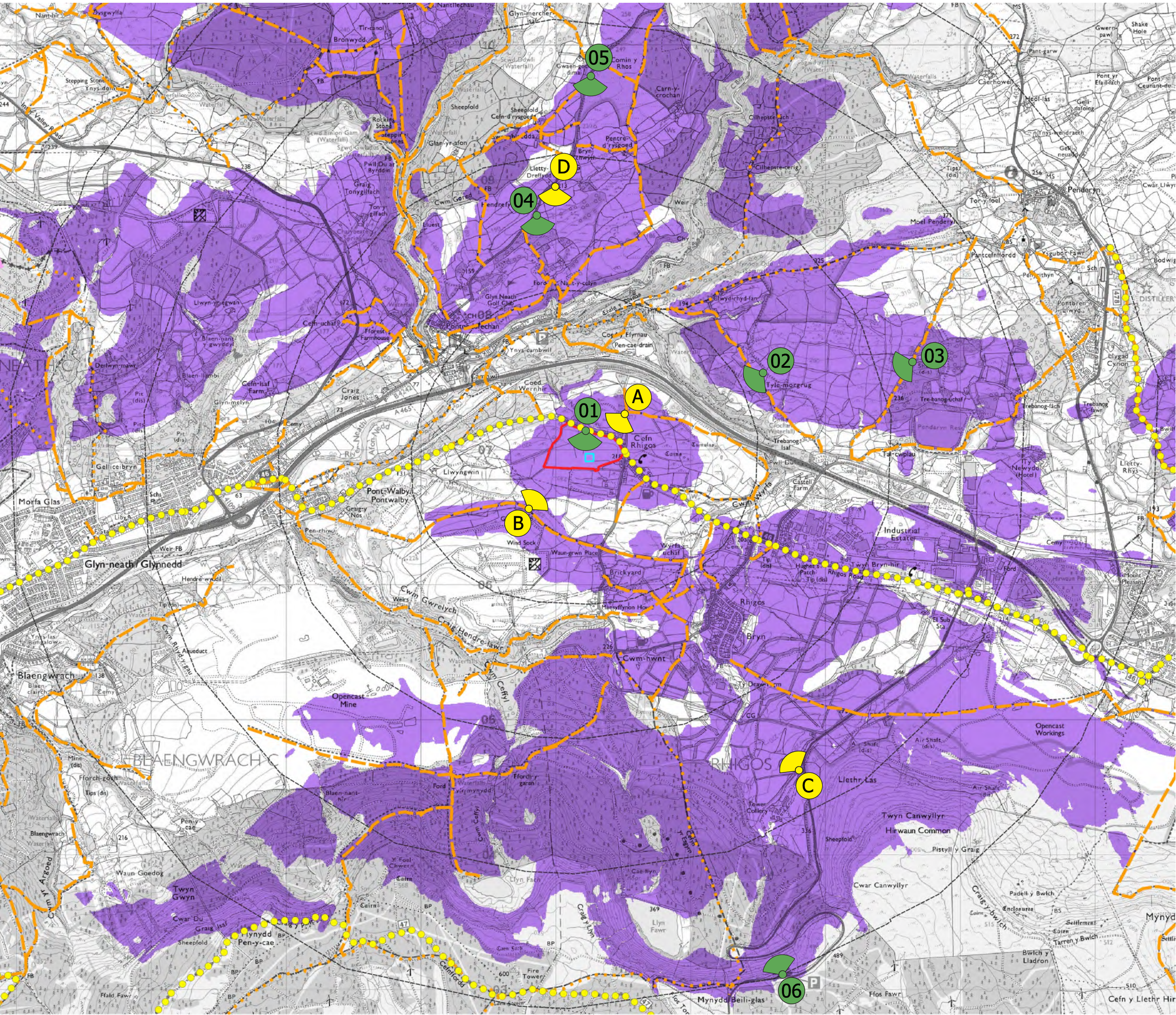
Scale 1:26,000@ A3

North

TC24283 LA.07-2. qgz February 2025

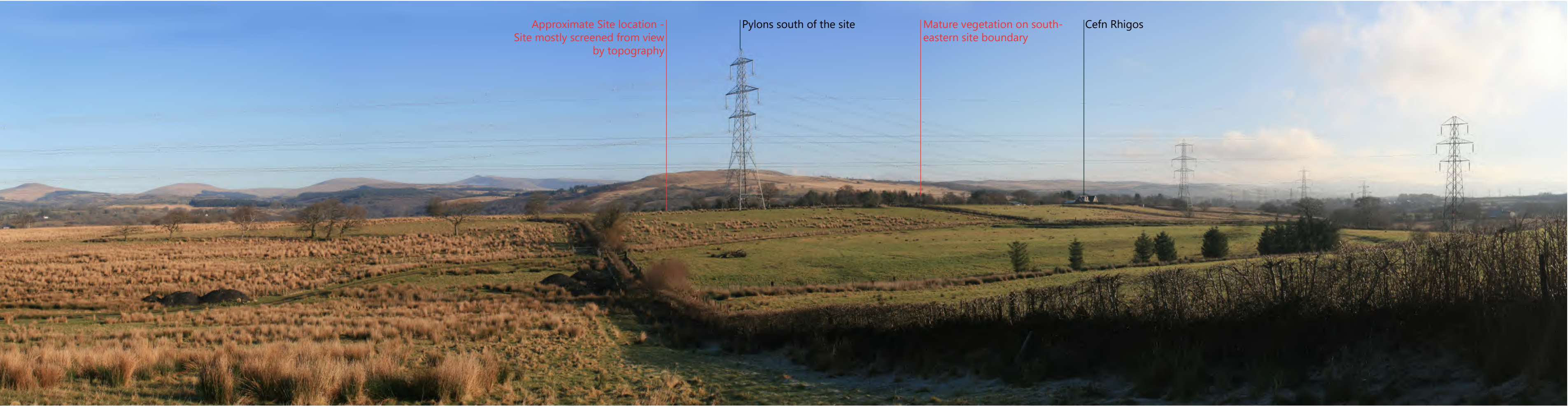
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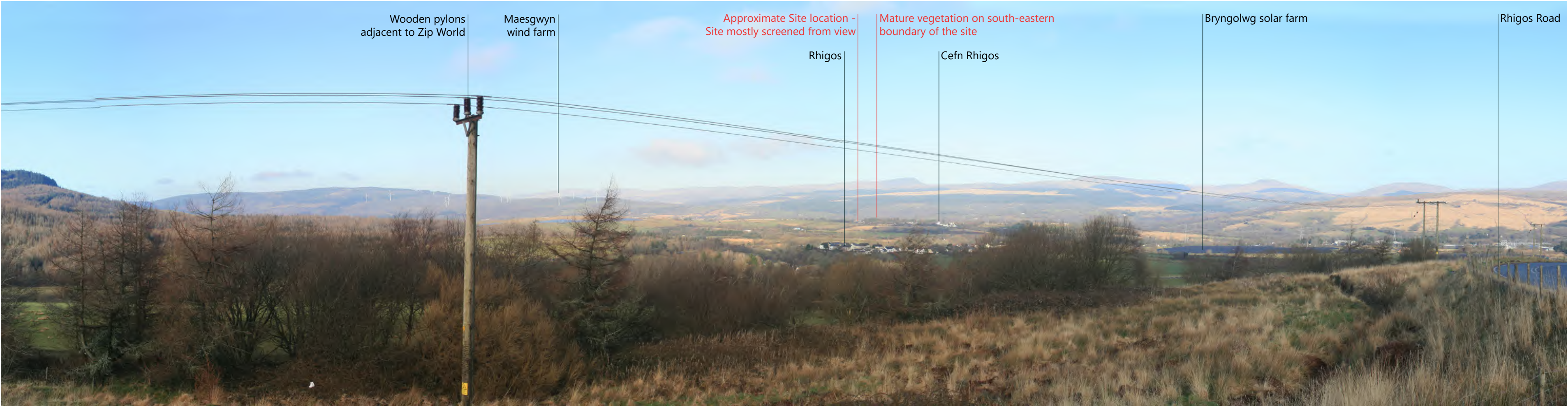




Context photograph A: View from public right of way north of Rhigos looking southwest towards the site.



Context photograph B: View from public right of way south of Rhigos Airfield looking northeast towards the site.



Context photograph C: View from Rhigos Road at the entrance to Zip World looking northwest towards the site.



Context photograph D: View from minor road Llety Drefydd north of Pontneddfechan looking southeast towards the site.



Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference: E291233 N207148
Ground level: 210m AOD
Direction of view: 188°
Distance to site: 8m

Horizontal field of view: 90° (cylindrical projection)

Vertical field of view: 27°
Enlargement factor: 96%
Principal distance: 812.5mm
Paper size: 840 x 297mm (extended A3)

Correct printed image size: 820 x 250mm

Camera: EOS 400D
Lens: 18-55mm (Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6)
Camera height: 1.5m AGL
Date and time: 06/02/2025 09:45

Project no. TC24583

February 2025

Land west of Mount Road

Viewpoint 01: View from National Cycle Route on Rhigos Road, north of the site boundary

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LA.09-1





Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference: E29256 N207572
Ground level: 235m AOD
Direction of view: 233°
Distance to site: 1.2km

Horizontal field of view: 90° (cylindrical projection)

Vertical field of view: 27°
Enlargement factor: 96%
Principal distance: 812.5mm
Paper size: 840 x 297mm (extended A3)

Correct printed image size: 820 x 250mm

Camera: EOS 400D
Lens: 18-55mm (Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6)
Camera height: 1.5m AGL
Date and time: 06/02/2025 11:23

Project no. TC24583

February 2025

**Land west of Mount
Road**

Viewpoint 02: View from a permissive path
at Tyle-Morgrug looking southwest

LA.09-2

REWE 11 Limited





Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference: E293659 N207674
Ground level: 259m AOD
Direction of view: 250°
Distance to site: 2.26km

Horizontal field of view: 90° (cylindrical projection)

Vertical field of view: 27°
Enlargement factor: 96%
Principal distance: 812.5mm
Paper size: 840 x 297mm (extended A3)

Correct printed image size: 820 x 250mm

Camera: EOS 400D
Lens: 18-55mm (Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6)
Camera height: 1.5m AGL
Date and time: 06/02/2025 10:54

Project no. TC24583

February 2025

Land west of Mount Road

Viewpoint 03: View from a minor road above Penderyn Reservoir looking southwest

REWE 11 Limited

LA.09-3





Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length



Baseline Photograph

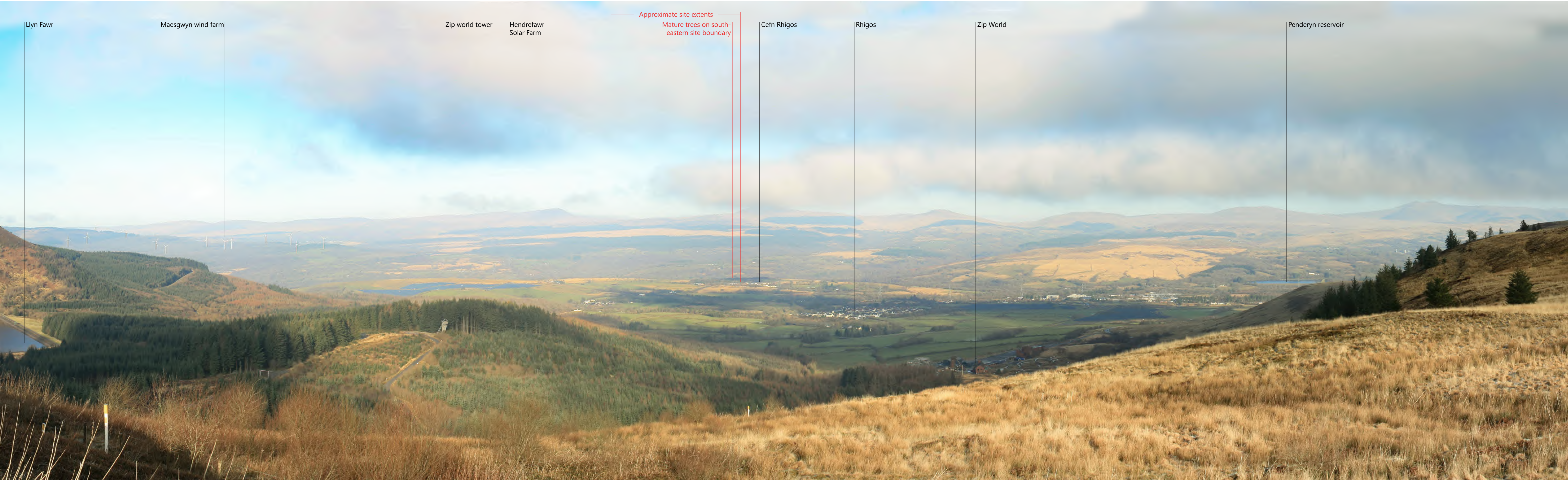
View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:		Horizontal field of view: 90° (cylindrical projection)	Correct printed image size: 820 x 250mm
OS reference:	E291328 N209861	Vertical field of view: 27°	Camera: EOS 400D
Ground level:	251m AOD	Enlargement factor: 96%	Lens: 18-55mm (Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6)
Direction of view:	183°	Principal distance: 812.5mm	Camera height: 1.5m AGL
Distance to site:	2.69km	Paper size: 840 x 297mm (extended A3)	Date and time: 06/02/2025 16:39

Project no. TC24583 February 2025 **Land west of Mount Road**

Viewpoint 05: View from a footpath on a road in Comin y Rhos looking south

LA.09-5



Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:		Horizontal field of view: 90° (cylindrical projection)	Correct printed image size: 820 x 250mm
OS reference:	E292712 N203103	Vertical field of view: 27°	Camera: EOS 400D
Ground level:	490m AOD	Enlargement factor: 96%	Lens: 18-55mm (Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6)
Direction of view:	338°	Principal distance: 812.5mm	Camera height: 1.5m AGL
Distance to site:	4.02km	Paper size: 840 x 297mm (extended A3)	Date and time: 06/02/2025 10:33

Project no. TC24583 February 2025 **Land west of Mount Road**

Viewpoint 06: View from Rhigos viewpoint on the A4061 looking northwest **LA.09-6**

Appendix 2 – Assessment Methodology

The methodology used in this assessment has been based upon the recommendations in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in April 2013 (GLVIA3).

Battery storage developments have particular characteristics which are potential sources of impact on landscape character and on visual amenity:

Table A2-1 characteristics of battery storage developments

Character	Criteria
Location	The location of battery storage developments is typically dictated by the location of existing large substations and cable connections. Battery storage is frequently located in fields of consistent or gentle gradient.
Ground disturbance	Battery storage is generally constructed on concrete foundations. Cable routes are typically bored underground without changes above ground. Gravel access tracks are constructed to connect with nearby roads.
Construction compound	Construction compounds are temporary and used for delivery of the components.
Appearance	Battery storage units are typically laid out in rows, offset from field boundaries. The units are metal finish and can be finished in a subdued colour. The compound is surrounded by fencing with some CCTV cameras on poles.
Activity for maintenance and repair	Personnel, with vehicles and equipment, visiting the battery storage site at regular intervals, and the activities associated with the maintenance operations.
Views	Battery storage developments are generally constructed in small fields or part of a field within existing and sometimes enhanced hedgerow boundaries.
Duration	The battery storage site would be in place and is likely to be operational for at least 40 years. The construction is expected to be up to 12 months', and the effect during this period is considered short term.

Landscape Effects Assessment

Establishing the landscape baseline

Baseline studies for assessing the landscape effects included a mix of desk study and field work to identify and record the character of the landscape and the elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to it.

The elements that make up the landscape in the study area were recorded, including:

- physical influences - geology, soils, landform, drainage and water bodies;
- land cover, including different types of vegetation and patterns and types of tree cover;
- the influence of human activity, such as, land use and management, the character of settlements and buildings, the pattern and type of fields and enclosure; and
- the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape, e.g.: its scale, complexity, openness, tranquillity, wildness.

The overall character of the landscape in the study area was considered, including the particular combinations of elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects that make each distinctive, usually by identification as key characteristics of the landscape. Evidence about change in the landscape was considered, including the condition of the different landscape types and/or areas, and their constituent parts and evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape.

Landscape value

The European Landscape Convention promotes taking account of all landscapes, including ordinary or undesignated landscapes. The relative value attached to the landscape was considered at the baseline stage to inform the judgments about the effects likely to occur, whether to areas of landscape as a whole or to individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions, at the community, local, national or international levels.

Landscape designation is a starting point in understanding landscape value, but value may also be attached to undesignated landscapes. Special Qualities, reasons for designation, relevant policies in management plans or designation-specific policies in development plans, were consulted in assessing the relative value of the landscape within designated areas.

Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued. For "ordinary, everyday landscapes," the judgement was based upon the degree to which they are representative of typical character, the intactness of the landscape

Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

and the condition of its elements, scenic quality, sense of place, aesthetic and perceptual qualities.

When determining the landscape value, the following elements were considered, in addition to consideration of values associated with designations:

- The importance of the landscape, or the perceived value of the landscape to users or consultees, as indicated by, for example, international, national or local designations;
- The importance of elements or components of the landscape in the landscape character of the area or in their contribution to the landscape setting of other areas;
- Intrinsic aesthetic characteristics, scenic quality or sense of place, including providing landscape setting to other places;
- Cultural associations in the arts or in guides to the area, or popular use of the area for recreation, where experience of the landscape is important;
- The presence and scale of detractors in the landscape and the degree to which they are susceptible to improvement or upgrading; and
- Conservation interests: The presence of features of 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.

The following table indicates the criteria used to determine the Landscape value:

Table A2-2 Criteria to determine landscape value.

Value	Criteria
High Value	Landscapes subject to international or national designations, and non-designated landscapes where the following considerations apply: Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition; Scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and/or natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape; There are important cultural and artistic associations; They are representative of typical character of the area or have a character or elements that are valued for their rarity; Particular components may be identified as important contributors to the landscape character; The landscape is valued for recreational activities where experience of the landscape is important.

Value	Criteria
Medium Value	Landscapes subject to local designations, and non-designated landscapes where the following considerations apply: Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact with few detractors; Scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and/or natural or cultural heritage features make a contribution to the landscape; There are cultural and artistic associations; They are representative of typical character of the area or have a character or elements that are identified for their rarity; Particular components may be identified as contributors to the landscape character; The landscape is a setting for recreational activities where experience of the landscape forms part of the experience.
Low Value	Areas of non-designated landscapes whose character is in poor condition; Scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and/or natural or cultural heritage features are not key characteristics of the landscape; Cultural and artistic associations are absent; They are not representative of typical character of the area, but are also not valued for rarity; Particular components may be identified as contributors to the landscape character; There is little scope for recreational activities where experience of the landscape is important.

Where the value identified falls between high, medium and low, an intermediate level of value is assigned, e.g., "low-medium or medium-high." The basis for the value assigned to the landscape receptor is linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

The landscape baseline report aims to:

- describe, map and illustrate the character of the landscape of both the wider study area and the site and its immediate surroundings;
- identify and describe the individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape, particularly those that are key characteristics contributing to its distinctive character;
- indicate the condition of the landscape, including the condition of landscape elements or features;

Land west of Mount Road

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- project forward drivers and trends in change and how they may affect the landscape over time, in the absence of the proposal; and
- evaluate the landscape and, where appropriate, its components, aesthetic and perceptual aspects, particularly the key characteristics.

Assessing the Landscape Effects

The baseline information about the landscape was combined with understanding of the details of the proposal to identify and describe the landscape effects. The landscape receptors were identified, that is, the components or aspects of the landscape likely to be affected, such as, overall character or key characteristics, individual elements or features, or specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

Interactions between the landscape receptors and the components or characteristics of the development at its different stages were considered: construction and operation, and the different types of effect: direct and indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, adverse and beneficial.

Landscape effects considered included:

- change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features or aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- addition of new elements or features that will influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape; and
- combined effects of these changes on overall character.

The landscape effects were categorised as adverse, beneficial, or negligible in their consequences for the landscape, judged from the degree to which the proposal fits with existing character and the contribution the development makes to the landscape in its own right, even if in contrast to existing character.

The assessment of the landscape effects was based on assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the change in the landscape arising from the proposal.

Sensitivity of the landscape receptors

The sensitivity of landscape receptors combines judgments of their susceptibility to the type of change arising from the development proposal and the value attached to the landscape.

Susceptibility to change means the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

The value attached to the landscape receptors was established in the baseline study.

The sensitivity of landscape receptors to change is categorised as high, moderate or lesser, in accordance with the criteria set out below to determine the susceptibility and value of the landscape receptor.

When determining the landscape susceptibility, the following elements were considered:

- The ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies;
- The degree to which the changes arising from the development would alter the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area;
- The degree to which the changes arising from the development would alter individual elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to the landscape character; and
- Existing landscape studies may identify the sensitivity of the landscape type or area or its characteristics to the general type of development that is proposed.

The following table indicates the criteria used to determine the landscape susceptibility:

Table A2-3 Criteria for landscape susceptibility

Susceptibility	Criteria
High Susceptibility	The changes arising from the type of development would alter the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area. The changes arising from the type of development would alter or remove individual elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to, or add new elements incongruous to, the landscape character. The type of development would compromise the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies for the landscape. The changes arising from the type of development would alter or remove elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to the landscape character or add new elements that would reinforce the key characteristics of the landscape character.
Low Susceptibility	The changes arising from the type of development would not alter the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area.

Land west of Mount Road

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Susceptibility	Criteria
	The type of development would not compromise the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies for the landscape. The changes arising from the type of development would not alter or remove individual elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to, or add new elements incongruous to, the landscape character.

Where the susceptibility identified falls between high and low, an intermediate level of susceptibility is assigned, e.g., "moderate." The basis for the scale of susceptibility assigned to the landscape receptor is linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

Table A2-4 illustrates indicative criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity combining

Category	Indicative criteria
High sensitivity	A highly valued landscape e.g., of national or international importance, whose character or key characteristics are very susceptible to change; Aspects of the landscape character are highly valued as "key characteristics" and, often identified as susceptible to change in national or local character assessments; The landscape character is highly valued as intact and in good condition and particularly vulnerable to disturbance; A highly valued landscape with no or limited potential for substitution or replacement.
Moderate sensitivity	A landscape of local importance or value, whose character or key characteristics are susceptible to change; Other characteristics of the landscape character also valued in national or local character assessments and susceptible to change; The landscape character is valued for moderate condition and not particularly vulnerable to disturbance; A moderately valued landscape with some potential for substitution or replacement.
Lesser sensitivity	No or little evidence of value or importance attached to the landscape area, its features or characteristics; Few features, characteristics or qualities susceptible to disturbance or particularly susceptible to improvement or upgrading. Good potential for substitution or replacement

Where the sensitivity based on the combination of the judgement of susceptibility and value falls between high, moderate and lesser, an intermediate level of sensitivity is assigned, e.g., "lesser-moderate or moderate-high." The basis for the sensitivity assigned to the landscape receptor is linked back to evidence from the baseline study and analysis of the nature of the potential effects on the receptor as a result of the proposed development.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

Effects on landscape receptors are assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility.

Table A2-5 Considerations for assessing magnitude of landscape change.

Consideration	Indicative criteria
Size or scale of change	Categorised on a scale of Large, Medium, Small, Negligible or None, based upon: The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost (or added), the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape; The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or additions of new ones; Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.
Geographical area over which the landscape would be changed	Categorised on a scale of: Small: at site level, within the development site itself or at the level of the immediate setting of the site; Medium: at the scale of the landscape type or character area within which the proposal lies; Large: where the development influences several landscape types or character areas.
The duration of the changes	The durations of changes due to the development are categorised as: Short term: zero to three years; Medium term: three to fifteen years; Long term: fifteen to twenty-five years; Permanent: more than twenty-five years.

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Consideration	Indicative criteria
Reversibility	The prospect and the practicality of the effect being reversed within twenty-five years.

Indicative criteria used to determine the magnitude of change is as follows:

Table A2-6 Indicative criteria for assessing magnitude of landscape change.

Magnitude of Change	Landscape Change
Great change	Major size or scale of change, affecting the landscape type or character of the area within which the proposal lies or extending over the wider area; likely to be longer term or permanently, with low prospect of reversibility
Medium change	Intermediate size or scale of change, affecting part of the landscape type or character of the area within which the proposal lies, or larger scale of change at the level of the site or immediate context; likely to continue into the medium term, with good prospect of reversibility
Small change	A minor proportion of the extent of the character type or area is affected or smaller scale of change over a larger extent; the changes occur at the level of the site or immediate context, and likely to be short term and reversible.
Negligible	No apparent change to landscape characteristics

While GLVIA3 includes the duration of the change in the consideration of the magnitude of change, in some cases a major size or scale of change of shorter duration may be considered a "great change".

Assessment of landscape effects

Final conclusions about the degree of effect, whether adverse or beneficial, relate the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes combined, based upon the following indicative considerations and criteria:

Table A2-7 Indicative criteria for assessing landscape effects.

Landscape effect	Indicative criteria
Major	Highly sensitive landscape completely degraded or greatly changed, with little or no scope for mitigation; Great improvement, sufficient to upgrade overall landscape character. Irreversible adverse or beneficial effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes.
Moderate	Medium change to moderately sensitive landscape or its character; lesser change to higher sensitivity landscape or greater change to less sensitive landscape.
Minor	Small or limited adverse change to the existing landscape or its character; greater change to less sensitive landscape; Considerable scope for mitigation; Small improvement to the existing landscape. Reversible adverse or beneficial effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value.
Negligible	No perceptible change to the existing landscape or its character; The change is difficult to discern.

Intermediate conditions may be described, such as Moderate-Major, where the criteria for Moderate may be exceeded but not qualify as Major. Where magnitude of change is "None," the effect would correspondingly be "None."

Effects may be adverse or beneficial. In some instances, the effect may be offset by other considerations, for example, through the mitigation or landscape proposals, and the resulting effect may be neither beneficial nor adverse.

Visual Effects Assessment

Establishing the visual baseline

Baseline studies for visual effects establish:

- the area in which the development may be visible;

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- the different groups of people who may experience views of the development;
- the location where they will be affected;
- the nature of the views at those points; and
- the different groups of people who may be affected by the changes in views or visual amenity.

The potential areas where the site and development proposal are likely to be visible were mapped. Landscape components affecting visibility, like buildings, walls, fences, trees, hedgerows, woodland and banks, were identified through field surveys and mapped where relevant.

The people within the area who may be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity – the visual receptors – were identified, for example:

- people living in the area;
- people passing through on roads and the local lanes;
- people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions; and
- people engaged in recreation of different types, including users of public rights of way, bridleways and access land.

Where relevant, views that form part of the experience and enjoyment of the landscape were noted, for example, from promoted paths, tourist or scenic routes and associated viewpoints.

The proposed viewpoints selected were discussed with the local authority, and informed by the visual appraisal, field surveys, and by desk-based research on various issues, for example, access and recreation, valued landscapes, tourist attractions and destinations, popular vantage points, and relative distribution of population. Viewpoints were selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptors.

The details of viewpoint locations were mapped and catalogued, sufficient to allow someone else to return to the location and record the same view. Photography was carried out in accordance with the Landscape Institute, Advice Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (2019).

The baseline report aims to describe, map and illustrate:

- the type of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected, making clear the activities they are likely to be involved in when enjoying the view;
- details of the viewpoints and of the visual receptors likely to be affected at each;

- the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing view, noting any particular horizontal or vertical emphasis, and any key foci; existing views have been illustrated in annotated photographs identifying important components of the view.
- elements, such as landform, buildings or vegetation, which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views;
- whether or how the view may be affected by seasonal or weather variation.

Assessing the Visual Effects

Predicting and describing visual effects

The baseline information about the visual receptors was combined with understanding of the details of the proposal to identify and describe the visual effects, considering:

- changes in views and visual amenity arising from elements of the development;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the development and whether the viewer would focus on the development due to its scale and proximity or whether the development would be only a small or minor element in a panoramic view;
- whether the view is stationary or transient or one of a sequence of views;
- the nature of the changes: changes in the skyline, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new elements, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale or the degree of visual enclosure; and
- seasonal differences in effects, arising from the varying degree of screening and/or filtering of views by vegetation in summer and winter.

Categorising the visual effects as adverse or beneficial (or neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity was based on judgments about whether the changes affect the quality of the visual experience, and the nature of the existing views and the nature of the changes to the views.

The visual effects were assessed, based on assessment of the nature of the visual receptors and their sensitivity, and the nature of the effect on views and visual amenity, that is, the magnitude of visual change.

Sensitivity of the visual receptors

The people or groups of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint – the visual receptors – are assessed in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and the value attached to particular view locations and views.

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The susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is a function of the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations and the extent to which their attention or interest is focused on the views or the visual amenity they experience at particular locations. The context of the location also contributes to susceptibility, for example, people viewing from residential properties or from a valued landscape are likely to be more susceptible to change than people viewing from an industrial context. Table A2-8 illustrates indicative criteria used to determine visual receptor susceptibility:

Table A2-8 Indicative criteria to determine visual receptor susceptibility.

Susceptibility	Criteria
High Susceptibility	Residents at home. People engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views. Visitors to designated landscapes, heritage assets, or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.
Moderate Susceptibility	Residents at home with oblique, filtered, interrupted views. People engaged in outdoor sports and recreation, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the activity/sport rather than the view. Visitors to the landscape where the surroundings contribute to the experience.
Low Susceptibility	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape. People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity not on their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, except along recognised scenic routes, where awareness of views is likely to be high.

Where the susceptibility identified falls between high and low, an intermediate level of susceptibility is assigned, e.g., "medium." The basis for the scale of susceptibility assigned to the visual receptor is linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

Judgments were made about the value attached to the views identified, taking account of recognition, for example, in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations, appearance in guidebooks or on tourist maps, promotion of particular locations or provision of facilities provided for their enjoyment, such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive material, or references to them in literature or art.

The sensitivity of visual receptors to change is categorised as high, moderate or lesser, in accordance with the criteria set out below.

Table A2-9 Indicative criteria for visual sensitivity

Category	Indicative criteria
High sensitivity	Viewers in residential or community properties. Views experienced by many viewers. Daily, prolonged or sustained views available over a long period, or where the view of the landscape is an important attractant. A view from a landscape, recreation facility or route valued nationally or internationally for its visual amenity.
Moderate sensitivity	Viewers in residential or community properties with partial or largely screened views of the site. Frequent open views available. Viewers are pursuing activities such as sports or outdoor work, where the landscape is not the principal reason for being there or the focus of attention is only partly on the view. A view from other valued landscapes, or a regionally important recreation facility or route.
Lesser sensitivity	A view of low importance or value, or where the viewer's attention is not focused their surroundings. A view from a landscape of moderate or less importance, or a locally important recreation facility. Occasional open views or glimpsed views available; passing views available to travellers in vehicles. A view available to few viewers.

Where the sensitivity based on the combination of the judgement of susceptibility and value falls between high, moderate and lesser, an intermediate level of sensitivity is assigned, e.g., "lesser-moderate or moderate-high." The basis for the sensitivity assigned to the visual

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receptor is linked back to evidence from the baseline study and analysis of the nature of the potential effects on the receptor as a result of the proposed development.

Magnitude of visual change

The visual effects identified are evaluated in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, duration and reversibility.

Table A2-10 Considerations for assessing magnitude of visual change

Consideration	Indicative criteria
Size or scale of change	Categorised on a scale of large, medium, small or none, based upon: The degree of the loss or addition of features in the view; The extent of changes in the composition of the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development; The degree of contrast or integration of the changes with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics; The nature of the view of the proposed development, whether full, partial or glimpsed, or the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced.
Geographical area over which the changes would be experienced	The geographic extent reflects: The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible; The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor; The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.
The duration of the changes	Categorised as: Short term: zero to three years; Medium term: three to twenty years; Long term: fifteen to twenty-five years; Permanent: more than twenty-five years.
Reversibility	The prospect and the practicality of the effect being reversed within twenty-five years.

Indicative criteria used to determine the magnitude of change is as follows:

Table A2-11 Indicative criteria for assessing magnitude of visual change.

Magnitude of Change	Visual Change
Great change	Major size or scale of change, affecting a large proportion of the angle of the view, or affecting views from a wide area; continuing into the longer term or permanently, with low prospect of reversibility.
Medium change	Intermediate size or scale of change, affecting part of the angle of the view, or affecting some views from the wider area, or larger scale of change in views from within the immediate context of the site; continuing into the medium term, with good prospect of reversibility.
Small change	A minor proportion of the angle of view is affected or the contribution of the changed elements or characteristics to the composition of the view is not important; the changes are viewed from longer distances, are short term and reversible.
Negligible	Barely perceptible change or the change is difficult to discern; No change in the view or the changes due to the development are out of view.

Judging the overall visual effects

Final conclusions about the degree of visual effects, whether adverse or beneficial, relate the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes, as illustrated in the indicative criteria shown in Table A2-12:

Table A2-12 Indicative criteria for assessing visual effects.

Visual effect	Indicative criteria
Major	Great change or visual intrusion experienced by highly sensitive viewers or from highly sensitive public viewpoints; The proposal would cause a great deterioration in the existing view available to highly sensitive viewers; Great improvement in the view, sufficient to upgrade overall visual amenity. Large scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view, especially where affecting people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and

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Visual effect	Indicative criteria
	visual amenity or people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes.
Moderate	Medium change or visual intrusion experienced by moderately sensitive viewers; Smaller change to higher sensitivity viewers or greater change to less sensitive viewers.
Minor	Small or localised visual intrusion in the existing view, especially for less sensitive viewers. Small or localised reduction in visual intrusion, or improvement in the view. Reversible short-term changes, in views available to people for whom the view of the landscape is not the principal focus of interest.
Negligible	Negligible change in the view or the change is difficult to discern even for a highly sensitive viewer.

In addition to these criteria, in some instances the effect may be discernible or greater, but offset by other considerations, for example, through the mitigation or landscape proposals for the development, and the resulting effect is neither beneficial nor adverse.

Appendix 3 – Assessment of Effects

Table Appendix 3.1: Landscape Magnitude of Change

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change <u>during construction</u>	Magnitude of Change <u>during operation at year 1</u>	Magnitude of Change <u>at year 10 of operation</u>
Gentle sloped topography on valley plateau	The sloping topography would remain largely unaltered by the construction of the development. The use of large vehicles including tall equipment may temporarily alter the skyline from some viewing angles, however the topography would remain largely intact. Construction activities would create movement and associated sound. The scale of the change would be small. The defining features of the landscape receptor would not be altered by construction. The geographical area affected would be small-medium – change would be at the site level but may be visible from a number of surrounding character areas. Change would be over the short-term. Magnitude of construction phase change is small.	The physical features of the topography would remain largely intact. The BESS development would be accommodated on a fairly level part of the site, requiring minimal reprofiling. The topography in the remainder of the site would be generally unaltered. The scale of the change would be small – the defining topography of the site would be mostly unaltered. The geographical area affected would be small-medium – change would be at the site level but may be discernible in the backdrop to views from surrounding character areas. Change would be permanent. Magnitude of change is small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated landscape mitigation proposals including tree and shrub planting within the site would be established. The magnitude of change would remain small.
Regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland.	The field pattern of the site would remain largely intact, with some limited disturbance of boundary vegetation where short sections of removal maybe required to accommodate access and/ or underground cabling. The defining elements of field pattern would be protected during construction, along with the parts of the site that are to remain as rough grassland. The scale of changes to the field pattern would be small within the geographical area of the site and its immediate setting. The short-term changes would lead to permanent change. The magnitude of change is considered to be small.	The proposed development would be accommodated within the existing retained field pattern. The BESS infrastructure and substation would be contained to a part of the site only, with rough grassland in the rest of the site remaining in place. Mitigation proposals would create enhancement of features which form the field pattern. Planting proposals including strengthening the existing vegetated boundaries and providing appropriate tree planting along open boundaries, reflecting the existing field pattern and the character of the field boundaries elsewhere in the local landscape. The existing field pattern shape of the site would be retained. Change would be permanent. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium-small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated landscape mitigation proposals including strengthening of the existing site boundaries would be mature, forming an established component of the wider landscape pattern. The magnitude of change would be medium-small.

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change <u>during construction</u>	Magnitude of Change <u>during operation at year 1</u>	Magnitude of Change <u>at year 10 of operation</u>
Mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries.	The field boundaries of the site would remain largely intact, with some limited disturbance of boundary vegetation where short sections of removal maybe required to accommodate access and/ or underground cabling. Existing boundary tree belts/ boundary vegetation and the scattered isolated trees along boundaries would be fenced and protected during construction. The single tree in the centre of the site would be retained and protected. Landscape proposals would be implemented. The scale of changes to the site boundaries would be small within the geographical area of the site and its immediate setting. The short-term changes would lead to permanent change. The magnitude of change is considered to be small.	Landscape treatments implemented during construction would continue to mature and grow in their contribution to the boundaries of the site during the operation phase. Where any minor losses to existing hedgerows is required to facilitate access and/ or underground cabling, it would be compensated for through planting of new native species in poorly defined boundaries and in buffers to existing vegetated boundaries. Change would be permanent. Overall magnitude is considered to be medium-small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated landscape mitigation proposals including strengthening of the existing site boundaries would be mature, forming an established, improved structure. The magnitude of change would increase to medium.
Historic industrial influence and disturbed land	The regular fieldscape that contains the site is indicated to be heavily influenced by early industrial activities. The historic field pattern of the site would remain intact. Construction activity would be accommodated within the disturbed landscape that is heavily influenced by historic human activity. The scale of the change would be small, affecting a small geographical area. The activities would be over the short-term, the magnitude of change is considered to be small.	The BESS scheme would be accommodated alongside the existing elements that are critical to landscape character – infrastructure and human activity is characteristic of the land. The development would represent a minor component in terms of the total extent of the landscape receptor. The scale of the changes would be small, affecting a small geographical area. The indirect changes would be permanent. Magnitude of change is considered to be small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated landscape mitigation proposals within the site would be established, further embedding the scheme into the landscape. The magnitude of change would remain small.
Upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor.	The construction activities on the site would introduce additional sound and movement within the wider setting. There may be some interruptions to views from the wider landscape, or perception of increased activity and movement, however activity maybe perceived within the context of the range of manmade influences and activity within the valley corridor and plateau. The short-term changes would lead to permanent change. The magnitude of change is considered to be small.	The proposed development would add infrastructure to the site, accommodated within the existing landscape pattern. The role of the site within the upland edge setting to the valley would remain largely unaffected by the proposals, which would be accommodated within the landscape backdrop. Change would be permanent. Overall magnitude is considered to be small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated landscape mitigation proposals within the site would be established, further embedding the scheme into the landscape. The magnitude of change would remain small.

Table Appendix 3.2: Landscape effects

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity to changes arising from the proposals	Magnitude of change	Degree & nature of effects <u>during construction</u>	Degree & nature of effects <u>during operation at year 1</u>	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
Gentle sloped topography on valley plateau	Moderate-high sensitivity	Construction: Small Operation: Small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to the small scale change for moderate-high sensitivity receptors. Landform change because of construction would be limited.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to the small scale change for moderate-high sensitivity receptors. Defining topography would remain mostly unaltered.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to the small scale change for moderate-high sensitivity receptors
Regular field pattern enclosing rough grassland.	Moderate sensitivity	Construction: Small Operation: Medium-small After 10 years: Medium-small	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to the small scale change for moderate sensitivity receptors. The existing field pattern would be protected. A part of semi-improved grassland outside of the SINC would accommodate the development.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to the medium-small scale change for moderate sensitivity receptors. Existing field structure would be retained and mitigation proposals would be implemented.	Moderate-minor beneficial due to the combination of moderate sensitivity receptors and medium-small change. After ten years, mitigation proposals would positively contribute to the field pattern in the landscape local to the site.
Mixed boundaries including tree belts and open boundaries.	Low sensitivity	Construction: Small Operation: Medium-small After 10 years: Medium	Effects would be minor, adverse as a result of small scale change for low sensitivity receptors. Effects would mostly be because of temporary tree and hedgerow protection rather than removal.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to the medium-small magnitude change for low sensitivity receptors. Boundaries would be retained and strengthened through additional buffer and infill planting.	Effects would be moderate-minor, neutral as a result of medium scale change for low sensitivity receptors. After ten years, mitigation proposals would improve boundary structure.
Historic industrial influence and disturbed land	Moderate-low sensitivity	Construction: Small Operation: Small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be minor, adverse as a result of small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Construction activities would be accommodated by the landscape.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to the combination small magnitude and moderate-low sensitivity. BESS infrastructure would be accommodated alongside other human influences.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to the combination small magnitude and moderate-low sensitivity. BESS infrastructure would be accommodated alongside other human influences.



Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity to changes arising from the proposals	Magnitude of change	Degree & nature of effects during construction	Degree & nature of effects during operation at year 1	Magnitude of Change at year 10 of operation
Upland edge setting to Cynon valley settlement infrastructure corridor.	Moderate-low sensitivity	Construction: Small Operation: Small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be minor, adverse as a result of small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Construction activities would be accommodated by the diverse landscape.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to the combination small magnitude and moderate-low sensitivity. BESS infrastructure would be accommodated alongside other infrastructure elements.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to the combination small magnitude and moderate-low sensitivity. BESS infrastructure would be accommodated alongside other infrastructure elements.

Table Appendix 3.3: View with development & magnitude of change

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development during construction and magnitude of change	View of the operational proposed development at year 1 and magnitude of change	Magnitude of Change at year 10 of operation
01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	During the construction phase, construction activity would occur within the site at close distance. Although direct, ground-level views of the part of the site that would contain construction activity are not expected to be available, it is likely that the taller elements would be visible on the skyline, behind the tree in the centre of the site. This might include the erection of temporary fencing, along with the removal of semi-improved grass within the site, some reprofiling inside the BESS site area and planting of the landscape mitigation proposals. Activity could involve the use of large sized vehicles and plant and would likely result in the perception of noise and movement in the site at close distance. The scale of change to the view would be medium – there would be the addition of construction activity on the skyline. Noise and movement from construction activity would likely be perceived in context to the existing noise and movement of traffic on Rhigos Road and the view would be partial. Although screening from trees and vegetation along Rhigos Road would limit the geographical area affected as no view would be available from many locations along the route, construction would occur at close distance, above eye-level and within a moderate proportion of the view. Views of construction would be away from the main view direction. The changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium.	Following construction of the scheme, the development would likely be partially visible on the skyline. The taller elements such as substation, transformer and other infrastructure would likely break the skyline, behind the existing retained tree in the centre of the site. As the landscape planting implemented to the northern boundary area of the site establishes, it is likely that the development would become increasingly obscured from view by the planted boundary buffer. The scale of change to the view would be medium-small. Partial views of the completed development would likely be available, forming new elements on the simple skyline. There would likely be some degree of integration alongside the existing pylon infrastructure close to the site. The extent of area affected would include the specific locations on Rhigos Road where there are views between the gaps in boundary trees. Views would be above eye-level and away from the main view direction, at close distance. The geographical area affected is therefore small-medium. The changes would be permanent. The magnitude of change during operation would be medium-small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated planting within the site would be established. Trees along the northern boundary would be mature, reflecting the character of the belt of existing trees that lines Rhigos Road elsewhere along the route. The tall trees would largely obscure the development from view. The magnitude of change would be small.

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development <u>during construction</u> and magnitude of change	View of the <u>operational</u> proposed development <u>at year 1</u> and magnitude of change	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
02 - Permissive path at Tyle-morgrug, looking southwest toward the site	Construction activity would occur at medium-long distance. There may be some perception of activity at distance within the site, including the movement of large vehicles and plant. Views would be partial and filtered by the existing belt of conifer trees on the site boundary. The scale of change to the view would be small. The additional features in the view resulting from construction would be small, occupying a small proportion of the field of view. Views would be partial and filtered. Activity may be perceived in context to existing farming activity in the agricultural landscape. The geographical area affected would include the stretch of permissive path local to the viewpoint that have open views toward the site. Views would be at eye-level, at medium-long distance. The changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be small.	Following completion of the development, partial views of the BESS would be available but the existing coniferous trees at the northeast corner, strengthened by further buffer planting, would likely filter and obscure the development from view. The scale of the change would be small – partial and filtered views would integrate into the crest of the plateau alongside the existing pylon infrastructure. The geographical area affected would include the stretch of permissive path local to the viewpoint that have open views toward the site. Views would be at eye-level, at medium-long distance. The changes would be permanent. The magnitude of change during operation would be small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated planting within the site would be established. Trees planted along the northern and eastern boundaries, strengthening the existing coniferous belt, would be mature, restricting views of the development. The magnitude of change would be small.
03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site	Construction activity would occur at long distance. There may be some slight perception of activity within the site during the construction phase, however the extent of visibility would be limited by distance and the partial nature of views. The scale of change to the view would be small. Additional features resulting from construction would occupy a small proportion of the expansive view and would be minor new elements. Views would be partial and there would be some degree of screening from the existing tree belt that bounds the northeast part of the site. The geographical area affected would include the elevated part of the minor local road where the viewpoint is located. As a result of landform, views may not be available from elsewhere. The changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be small.	Following completion, the completed BESS would likely be partially visible on the crest of the site field to the southwest. There would be some degree of screening of lower elements as a result of the existing coniferous trees on the northwest boundary, which would be further strengthened as landscape planting in this part of the site matures. The scale of change would be small – new elements would integrate into the view alongside electricity infrastructure and as a result of the existing tree belts and proposed buffer planting. The geographical area affected would include the elevated part of the minor local road where the viewpoint is located. As a result of landform, views may not be available from elsewhere. The changes would be permanent. The magnitude of change during operation would be small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated planting within the site would be established. Trees planted along the northern and eastern boundaries, strengthening the existing tree belts, would be mature, restricting views of the development. The magnitude of change would be small.

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development <u>during construction</u> and magnitude of change	View of the <u>operational</u> proposed development <u>at year 1</u> and magnitude of change	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site	Construction activity would occur on the crest of the valley side, at medium-long distance. There may be some perception of activity in the site, such as from the use of large vehicles for stripping of land, erection of the BESS infrastructure and implementation of planting proposals. The scale of change to the view would be medium-small. Construction activity may be perceived in context to existing largescale agricultural activity in the landscape and there may therefore be some degree of integration into the view. Views of activity on the site would be relatively open, albeit at distance. The geographical area affected would be small, limited by the trees which screen views from the road elsewhere along the route. The angle of view would be above eye-level, affecting a medium proportion of the field of view. Changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be medium-small.	During operation, the completed BESS would be visible on the crest of the valley side. Proposed tree planting close to the north of the BESS units would be implemented and would help to embed the development into the landscape as they mature. The scale of change to the view would be medium-small. There would be some degree of integration because of mitigation proposals. New built infrastructure would also integrate into the view alongside the existing pylon infrastructure close to the site. The geographical area affected would be small, limited by the trees which screen views from the road elsewhere along the route. The angle of view would be above eye-level, affecting a medium proportion of the field of view. Changes would be permanent. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation would be medium-small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated planting within the site would be established. Scattered tree planting to the north of the BESS would filter and break up views of the development. The magnitude of change would be small.
05 - Minor road at Comin y Rhos, looking south toward the site	The upper canopies of trees in the middle ground may obscure the northernmost part of the site from view, however the rest of the site is visible almost in full, albeit obliquely and at long distance. There may be some slight perception of activity within the site during the construction phase, however the extent of visibility would be limited by distance. Construction activity may be perceived in context to existing largescale agricultural activity in the landscape and there may therefore be some degree of integration into the view. Fast moving traffic on the road where the viewpoint is located would likely be more dominant than distant construction activity in the site. The scale of change to the view would be small. The geographical area affected would be medium-small – the ZTV indicates that views would be available from a length of the route as it crosses the landscape in the north of the study area, at long distance from the site. Changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be medium-small.	During operation, the completed BESS would be visible on the crest of the valley side. Proposed tree planting proposals close to the north of the BESS units would be implemented and would help to embed the development into the landscape as they mature. The scale of change to the view would be small. There would be some degree of integration as a result of mitigation proposals. New built infrastructure would also integrate into the view alongside the existing pylon infrastructure close to the site. The geographical area affected would be medium-small – the ZTV indicates that views would be available from a length of the route as it crosses the landscape in the north of the study area, at long distance from the site. Changes would be permanent. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation would be small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated planting within the site would be established. Scattered tree planting to the north of the BESS would filter and break up views of the development. The magnitude of change would be small.



Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development <u>during construction</u> and magnitude of change	View of the <u>operational</u> proposed development <u>at year 1</u> and magnitude of change	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
06 - Public parking area, Craig y llyn, looking northeast toward the site	As a result of distance, the extent of construction phase change would be limited. Although likely to be visible, construction activity in the site would form a minor component in the expansive view that might be missed by the casual observer. The scale of change would be small. The geographical area affected would be medium-large, including the elevated mountains close to the viewpoint that have north-facing views. Changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be small.	During operation, the completed BESS would likely be visible but would be a minor component in the expansive view. The scheme would integrate into the view as a result of distance. New elements would not be incongruous alongside the existing manmade elements of various scales and nature scattered through the view. The scale of change would be small. The geographical area affected would be medium-large, including the elevated mountains close to the viewpoint that have north-facing views. Changes would be short-term, leading to permanent change. Overall, the magnitude of change during operation would be small.	At year 10, the magnitude of change would be similar to the changes at year 1, but the associated planting within the site would be established. Trees scattered along the southern boundary would have matured and would help to further integrate the development into the landscape, already limited in magnitude by distance and the expansive nature of the view. The magnitude of change would be small.

Table Appendix 3.4: Visual effects

Visual Receptors & Sensitivity	Reference Viewpoints	Magnitude of change:	Degree & nature of effects <u>during construction</u>	Degree & nature of effects <u>during operation at year 1</u>	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
Residents in scattered farmsteads at medium-long distance with oblique views of the site: moderate sensitivity	04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site	Construction: Medium-small Operation: Medium-small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be moderate, adverse due to medium-small change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be moderate, adverse due to medium-small change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to small change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.
Users of the National Cycle Routes at the northern boundary of the site, with partial, filtered and oblique views of the site: moderate sensitivity	01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	Construction: Medium Operation: Medium-small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be moderate, adverse due to medium change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be moderate, adverse due to medium-small change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be moderate-minor, neutral due to small change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers. Effects would be mainly limited to views of established mitigation proposals.

Visual Receptors & Sensitivity	Reference Viewpoints	Magnitude of change:	Degree & nature of effects <u>during construction</u>	Degree & nature of effects <u>during operation at year 1</u>	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
Users of PRow and permissive paths at medium-long or long distance to the northeast, within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, with filtered and oblique views of the site: moderate sensitivity	02 - Permissive path at Tyle-morgrug, looking southwest toward the site 03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site	Construction: Small Operation: Small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to small change, experienced by moderate sensitivity receptors.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to small change, experienced by moderate sensitivity receptors.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to small change, experienced by moderate sensitivity receptors.
Walkers and recreational users at long distance to the southeast at Craig y Llyn, at recognised viewpoint and within the Special Landscape Area: high sensitivity	06 - Public parking area, Craig y Llyn, looking northeast toward the site	Construction: Small Operation: Small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be moderate-minor due to small change, experienced by high sensitivity receptors. Effects are considered neutral as the quality of visual experience would continue to be broadly similar.	Effects would be moderate-minor due to small change, experienced by high sensitivity receptors. Effects are considered neutral as the quality of visual experience would continue to be broadly similar.	Effects would be moderate-minor due to small change, experienced by high sensitivity receptors. Effects are considered neutral as the quality of visual experience would continue to be broadly similar.
Users of the local road network at close distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: lesser sensitivity	01 - Northern site boundary with Rhigos Road, looking south into the site	Construction: Medium Operation: Medium-small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to medium change, experienced by lesser sensitive viewers.	Effects would be moderate-minor, adverse due to medium-small change, experienced by lesser sensitive viewers.	Effects would be minor, neutral due to small change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers. Effects would be mainly limited to views of established mitigation proposals.



Visual Receptors & Sensitivity	Reference Viewpoints	Magnitude of change:	Degree & nature of effects <u>during construction</u>	Degree & nature of effects <u>during operation at year 1</u>	Magnitude of Change at <u>year 10 of operation</u>
Local road users at medium-long or long distance from the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: lesser sensitivity	03 - Minor road and Public Right of Way north of Penderyn Reservoir, looking southwest toward the site 04 - Minor road near Hendrefydd farm, looking south toward the site 05 - Minor road at Comin y Rhos, looking south toward the site 06 - Public parking area, Craig y llyn, looking northeast toward the site	Construction: Small or medium-small Operation: Small After 10 years: Small	Effects would be minor or moderate-minor, adverse due to medium change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to medium-small change, experienced by lesser sensitive viewers.	Effects would be minor, adverse due to small change, experienced by lesser sensitivity viewers.

