Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters, Neath

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

R02

28 January 2025

Prepared on Behalf of Greentech Investment UK Ltd.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 Tir Collective is instructed by Greentech Investment UK Ltd. to prepare this Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVApp) which relates to the proposed circa 25MW solar farm on land at Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters, Neath. The site covers circa 23 hectares, as shown on **Figure LA.01 Site location**. The solar farm development would be for a temporary period of 40 years.

1.2 Scope of the Assessment

1.2.1 The proposed solar farm development would comprise ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 25MW, including permanent grid connection hub, mounting framework, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping, biodiversity net benefit and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of up to 40 years.

1.2.2 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (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.

1.2.3 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**
- The wider landscape context extends 3km from the site boundary, see **Figure LA.04**
- The visual study area extends 3km from the site boundary, see **Figures LA.08**
- The cumulative study area extends 3km from the site boundary, see **Figure LA.10**

1.2.4 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;
- Provide an input into the site layout, and to 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 proposed development;
- Set out mitigation measures which could be implemented in order to avoid, reduce or offset adverse effects and, where possible, incorporate these in the scheme design;
- Provide an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development with integral mitigation measures in place.

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

Figure List

- **Figure** **LA.01** Site Location
- **Figure** **LA.02** Designations
- **Figure** **LA.03** Public Access
- **Figure** **LA.04** LANDMAP assessment information
- **Figure** **LA.05** Topography
- **Figure** **LA.06** Site Context
- **Figures** **LA.07** Site Photographs
- **Figures** **LA.08** Zone of Theoretical Visibility plans
- **Figures** **LA.09** Viewpoints
- **Figure** **LA.10** Cumulative sites
- **Figure** **LA.11** Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility

1.2.6 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 9th May 2024 during dry weather with good visibility, and again on 20th September 2024 during dry weather with some cloud.
- 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 development proposals and consideration of potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.
- Assessment of the susceptibility and sensitivity of the landscape to the changes likely to arise from the 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.
- Assessment of magnitude of change arising from the proposal, the degree and nature of effects on the landscape and on visual amenity with the mitigation proposals in place.
- A cumulative landscape and visual assessment considering the proposed solar farm in conjunction with other solar farms in the surrounding area.

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

Assessment and Mitigation

1.3.4 The effects of the 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 of the development. Where design measures cannot address identified likely adverse effects, measures such as management of the construction, operational, and decommissioning processes. 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 2019[3]
- NRW LANDMAP assessment information and Guidance Note 46: Using LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Assessments

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 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026.

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/

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

- A Canon EOS 5D Mark iii digital SLR camera with a full frame sensor;
- Canon 50mm EF 1:1.8 II lens; and
- Manfrotto tripod and panoramic head.

1.3.9 Photographs were taken with a focal length of 50mm.

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[4] 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 Mumbles Head, the nearest Climate station to where the site is located:

- Rainfall above 1mm per day, which limits visibility, occurs on an average of 152.5 days in the year, about 41.78% of the year.
- There are on average 6.86 days when air frost occurs, which can produce hazy conditions limiting visibility, about 1.87% of the year.
- There England SW and Wales average of hours of sunshine per annum is 1530.9 hours.

[4] The data quoted are those for Mumbles Head, obtained from The Met Office website: Mumbles Head (Swansea) UK climate averages - Met Office

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."[5] The plan promotes development that enhances our wellbeing and our quality of life"[6] 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 and the site 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:

[5] https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040-0
[6] 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 2024[7] 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:

[7] Planning Policy Wales - Edition 12 (gov.wales)

- "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."

- **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."

  In relation to integrating green infrastructure and development, **paragraph 6.2.11** states "The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design."

  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."

2.2 Local Planning policy

2.2.1 The site lies within the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Unitary Authority. Planning policy for the area is provided by the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2011-2026, adopted January 2016. Policies relevant to the potential development of the site include:

Neath Port Talbot LDP 2011-2026

- **Strategic Policy SP 1: Climate Change** states "The causes and consequences of climate change will be addressed by implementing the following measures. In relation to the causes of climate change:

  […]

  4. Provision will be made for the County Borough's appropriate contribution to renewable and low carbon energy generation."

- **Policy TO 4 Walking and Cycling Routes** states "Any proposals that would prevent or have any adverse impact on their implementation will be resisted."

- **SP 14: The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast** states "The countryside… including landscapes… and agricultural land, will be protected and where feasible enhanced through the following measures:

  1. The protection of the open countryside through the control of inappropriate development outside settlement limits;

  […]"

- **Policy EN 2 Special Landscape Areas** identifies six Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) that have been designated in NPT "to protect areas of high landscape quality." The policy goes on to state "Development within the designated Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the Special Landscape Area has been designated."

  The site located in SLA EN2/2 Dulais Valley.

- **Policy EN 7 Important Natural Features** states "Development proposals that would adversely affect ecologically or visually important natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows / field boundaries, watercourses or ponds will only be permitted where:

  1. Full account has been taken of the relevant features in the design of the development, with measures put in place to ensure that they are retained and protected wherever possible; or

  2. The biodiversity value and role of the relevant feature has been taken into account and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation measures are agreed."

- **SP 18: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy** states "A proportionate contribution to meeting national renewable energy targets and energy efficiency targets will be made while balancing the impact of development on the environment and communities.

  This will be achieved by:

  1. Encouraging where appropriate, all forms of renewable energy and low carbon technology development;

  […]

  3. Ensuring that development will not have an unacceptable impact on the environment and amenity of local residents."

- **Policy RE 1 Criteria for the Assessment of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development** states "Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will only be permitted subject to the following criteria:

  […]

  4. All renewable energy or low carbon energy development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:

  (a) Measures have been taken to minimise impacts on visual amenity and the natural environment;

  (b) There will be no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity;

  […]

  (e) There are satisfactory proposals in place for site restoration as appropriate."

- **SP 21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage** states "The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced through the following measures:

  1. Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals

  […]

  4. The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement:

  […]

  (d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments;

  […]"

- **Policy BE 1 Design** states "All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places.

  Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

  1. It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site… in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing…

  2. It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape… and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges;

  3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;

[…]

5. Important local features (including… green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;

[…]"

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 within 3km of the site are shown on **Figure LA.02.**

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

2.3.2 A part of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park extends into the northern edge of the 3km study area, approximately 2.5km from the site boundary at its closest point. As a result of distance and visual separation, the development of the proposed site is not expected to impact the National Park, it is therefore excluded from further consideration within this LVApp.

Special Landscape Area

2.3.3 SLAs are non-statutory designations applied by the local planning authority to define areas of high landscape importance within their administrative boundary.

2.3.4 NPT contains six SLAs which are designated "in order to protect areas of high landscape quality". The south and central part of the site is located within the **SLA 2 Dulais Valley**, which also extends over the southern part of the study area, excluding settlement areas. The relevant Primary Landscape Qualities and Features are described as:

- The Dulais Valley SLA stretches from the outskirts of Aberdulais in the south to Seven Sisters in the north. The SLA covers the valley sides to reinforce its visual context and therefore includes the unforested uplands of Mynydd Hirfynydd and Mynydd Marchywel as the backdrop to the valley. Areas of forestry plantation are included on both valley sides for coherence as it forms the same land mass and recognizing that the appearance and biodiversity of this landcover can be enhanced through management. To the south-east the SLA links to the Vale of Neath SLA via a contiguous boundary.
- The Dulais is a typical upland u-shaped glacial river valley creating a wide valley floor and predominantly open landscape on the valley sides. The northeast – southwest running ridge along the Dulais valley is important for its Pennant sandstones and coal measures.
- It is a wide, rolling, pastoral valley with significantly treed field boundaries, many of these contain grown out hedges which are a strong element in this landscape on the lower

ground whereas drystone walls are a landscape feature of the upper reaches of the valley sides.

- Tranquillity is a key feature of the upper ridge areas supported by lack of development. It should be noted that whilst the tranquillity indices for the upper slopes indicate that they are "undisturbed" there has been a degrading of the valley floor from zone C to Zone B.
- It is an evolved landscape containing evidence from prehistory, important Roman remains, open cast and forestry. The edges of the woodland are often regular and geometric, forming an abrupt edge to the surrounding open areas, which reduces the sense of place in the upper valley sides.
- Although the historic context is mostly Roman, the landscape contains many examples of prehistoric land uses and the presence of sheepfolds indicates the importance of animal husbandry, in this area, in the post-medieval period.
- The ridge of Mynydd Hirfynydd has been a significant route through the landscape from the prehistoric period through into the medieval period, which is now used as an historic walk (Sarn Helen). It is also crossed by the long-distance footpath St Illtyd's Way.

Ancient Woodland

2.3.5 There is no Ancient Woodland within the site or within a 1km radius of the site. The wider 3km study area contains a number of blocks of woodland, generally centred on watercourses. The closest area of Ancient Woodland comprises a small area of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland north of Nant-y-cafn tip, approximately 550m southeast of the proposed site. Nearby to the southeast of this lies a further area of Ancient Woodland at Nant-y-cafn watercourse. Approximately 1.2km to the east of the site lies an area of Ancient Woodland at Nant Hir. A further small block is located on the watercourse southwest of Ty-Newydd, approximately 1.25km northeast of the site. To the northwest of the site lie some more significant areas of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland around Aber twrch, Wern Plemys Nature Reserve and Diamond Park at Glan-tawe, approximately 1.3km northwest of the site at the closest point. A further series of Ancient Woodland areas is spread within the Tawe valley to the north, around Ystradgynlais, Ynys-isaf, Cae'r-bont on the fringes of the National Park, comprising Ancient Semi Natural Woodland within distances of around 2-3km from the site boundary.

Historic and cultural landscape designations

2.3.6 Relevant historic and cultural designations are shown on **Figure LA.02**.

2.3.7 The setting of historic and cultural designations is a consideration during the preparation of landscape and visual assessments as these features inform the overall landscape character, quality and value of the area. This LVApp does not address the effects on heritage assets

however it considers the contribution these features make to landscape value and scenic quality.

2.3.8 There are no Conservation Areas or Registered Parks and Gardens within the 3km study area, they are therefore scoped out of further consideration in this LVApp.

Listed buildings

2.3.9 There is a spare number of listed buildings scattered within the 3km study area. The nearest listed building to the site is a Grade II circular pigsty at Blaendulais Farm, which is located circa 0.5km from the site. Due to the separation of listed buildings from the site and their general context within settlement, listed buildings are scope out from further consideration in this LVApp.

Scheduled Monuments

2.3.10 There are a number of **Scheduled Ancient Monuments** within the 3km study area, the closest being the **Tramroad at Ystradgynlais**, approximately 1.05km to the northeast of the site boundary, described as a "the remains of a well preserved tramroad...of national importance for its potential to enhance and illustrate our knowledge and understanding of the development of the raw materials supply and transportation network associated with nineteenth century iron industry"[8]

2.3.11 A further Scheduled Ancient Monument is located approximately 1.57km to the northeast of the site boundary at **Bryn Llechwen Ring Cairn**, comprising "the remains of a ring cairn, probably dating to the Bronze Age"[9].

2.3.12 Approximately 2.1km to the north of the site lies Ynysgedwyn Colliery, Fan House – a Scheduled Ancient Monument consisting of "the remains of a Guibal Fanhouse"[10]

2.3.13 Within the southern part of the study area, there are two further Scheduled Ancient Monuments at **Coed Ddu**[11] (approximately 1.75km from the site boundary), a registered **round cairn** at **Carn Cornel**[12] (approximately 2.1km) and registered **Roman earthworks** at **Hirfynydd**[13] (approximately 2.5km).

[8] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=en&id=618
[9] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=en&id=4241
[10] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=en&id=1808
[11] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=en&id=4277
[12] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=en&id=393
[13] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=en&id=2270

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.**

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

2.3.15 There are no SSSIs within 1km of the solar farm site. A single SSSI is located within the 3km study area, at Nant y Rhos approximately 1.2km to the southwest.

Public access

2.3.16 Public rights of way and access land are shown on **Figure LA.03.** There are no Long Distance Footpaths within the 3km study area. Long Distance Footpaths are therefore scoped out from further consideration within this LVApp

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

2.3.17 Three Public Rights of Way cross through the site, forming part of the network of footpaths that cross the Dulais valley side. Two are located in the lower, southern part of the site, running in a broadly southwest to northeast direction and connecting with the settlement of Seven Sisters. A third runs west to east through northern part of the site, to the north of Pen-Cae'r-lan farm and continuing onto the open access land to the west.

2.3.18 During field assessment, it was noted that the PRoWs in the site appear rarely used and they are difficult to navigate in places, particularly when traversing the rough pasture fields with eroded field boundaries.

2.3.19 Within the wider study area, PRoW take sweeping lines along the valley sides and ridgetops, connecting settlements, farmsteads and dwellings, following landforms. There is also a concentration of Public Rights of Way within the settlement of Ystradgynlais.

Open Access Land

2.3.20 Open Access Land within the study area is relatively significant. A large area of Open Access Land abuts the northern site boundary, extending north and west over Mynydd y Drum and towards Onllwyn and Coelbren, skirting the south of Nant-Helen open cast workings.

2.3.21 The northern side of the Dulais valley also contains further open access land at Rhos Common and the adjacent public forest to the north, approximately 1.2km to the west of the site boundary at its nearest point.

2.3.22 The southern slopes of the Dulais valley contain further blocks open land on Hirfynydd mountain, at distances of approximately 1.5km from the site.

2.3.23 A further area of Open Access Land is located to the south of the settlement of Seven Sisters, south of Mary Street, at a distance of approximately 1.3km from the site boundary at its nearest point.

National Cycle Routes (NCR)

2.3.24 National Cycle Route 43 runs broadly east-west through the northern part of the study area, following the course of an old railway, at a distance of approximately 1.3km from the proposed site.

3.0 The proposed development

3.1.1 Details of the proposed development are described in detail in the Planning Supporting 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 main feature of the proposed solar farm is the installation of ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 25MW, including permanent grid connection hub, mounting framework, inverters, a wooden post and wire stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure including a 3.53m substation in the southwest part of the site, a temporary bridge crossing over the watercourse within the site, landscaping including species rich seeding under the panels and other environmental enhancements for a temporary period of up to 40 years. The linear solar arrays would be oriented to the south with a tilt of 20 degrees. The highest edge of the solar panels would be 3.25m above the ground.

3.1.3 Access to the solar farm would be via a new access point on the southwestern site boundary, entering the southwestern field of the site and cutting north toward the central part of the site. Access into the eastern part of the site would be via a new temporary bridge crossing at the watercourse and existing access track to Pen-Cae'r-lan Farm. The route would then turn north and punch through an existing hedgerow to enter the northeastern part of the site, where a second temporary bridge crossing is required at the watercourse in this part of the site.

3.1.4 The framework of tree lines and individual trees that defines parts of site are to be largely retained, with 4no. trees removed to accommodate solar arrays. The watercourses that cross the site are to be incorporated into the landscape scheme for the site, along with associated riparian vegetation and upland pasture areas and the habitats they support to be retained.. The LEMP also provides drawings and details of the landscape and ecological proposals and the management regimes.

Sources of Potential Effects on Landscape and Views

3.1.5 The main features of the of the proposed solar farm development which could potentially result in landscape and visual 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:

- Some disturbance to upland pasture areas within the site where the solar arrays are to be installed. The removal of grass and reprofiling of land within the substation compound areas.
- The installation of temporary fencing around buffer areas to retained trees and watercourses.
- The installation of a temporary construction compound.
- The installation of ground mounted PV panels, internal access tracks, temporary watercourse crossings, transformers, inverters on loose hardcore, timber post and wire perimeter security fencing, and pole mounted CCTV cameras.
- Activities in relation to the construction of the proposed development, including deliveries, the movement of vehicles on site, and the installation of the PV panels, access tracks and other associated infrastructure.

Operational phase

3.1.7 Planning consent is sought for a 40 year operational period, which would be reversible, and would include the below activities:

- The change of use of the site from pasture farmland and rough grassland to a solar farm..
- The introduction of the solar farm and ancillary structures within the landscape. The introduction of other structures and infrastructure in the context of existing pylons and overhead cables for the on-site grid connection.
- Operational activities such as vehicle movement associated with routine inspections and maintenance of the proposed development.
- The establishment of landscape proposals such as trees, native hedgerows and scrub planting. The regeneration of upland pasture habitats underneath the solar arrays.

Decommissioning phase

3.1.8 The decommissioning phase would only apply to the areas where solar arrays are to be installed. The proposed planting and on-site grid connection proposals would be permanent. Decommissioning is expected to be 6-9 months and would include the following:

- Similar changes to the construction phase would occur but in reverse, during which the ground installations including solar arrays and CCTV cameras would be dismantled and removed from site.

Mitigation measures

3.1.9 The potential for adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity has been recognised and mitigation measures incorporated in the scheme to avoid or reduce adverse effects or to offset or compensate for unavoidable adverse effects. The Landscape Masterplan and Landscape and Ecology Management Plan for the site includes a number of measures which would provide enhancement of landscape features which contribute to the character of the local landscape and reduce the visual impact of the development when views from publicly accessible locations.

3.1.10 Mitigation and enhancement measures incorporated into the scheme design include:

- Selecting a site adjacent to existing pylon and electricity infrastructure, to avoid more sensitive landscape and visual receptors.
- Photovoltaic panels are to be aligned inside of existing field boundaries to avoid the removal of vegetation and to ensure the existing field pattern is retained.
- Panels are to be accommodated in the larger size, rough grass fields which form part of the transition to upland/ moorland and are considered less sensitive than the neighbouring, undeveloped smaller scale pasture
- Strengthening and reinforcement of the routes of the existing footpaths on the site, which are currently poorly legible.
- Strengthening and gapping up of outgrown hedgerows and tree belts to reduce visual effects and reinforce these landscape elements which make an important contribution to landscape character.
- The re-instatement of native hedgerows within the site with new planting.
- Some native trees and groups of native shrub planting is proposed along field boundaries to help screen and filter views of the proposed development which enhancing existing field pattern.
- Creation of buffers to boundaries and watercourses, between sensitive boundary habitats and development footprint

- Hedgerows to be managed to allow significant structure to develop.
- Security fencing is to be offset from tree canopy edges to ensure existing vegetation is not damaged or disturbed.
- 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.
- Limited site infrastructure ensures construction and decommissioning can be achieved with little disturbance.

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.

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 development proposals, and the degree and nature of the changes in the landscape arising from the proposals.

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 Neath Port Talbot. 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 Areas[14]

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

4.2.3 Characteristics of particular relevance to the site and its context are highlighted in bold. LANDMAP aspect areas for Historic Landscape and Visual and Sensory aspect layers are illustrated on **Figures LA.04**.

Geological Landscape

4.2.4 **The entirety of the site** is located within aspect area **Seven Sisters** (NPTGL016)[15], which is classified as **Upland Plateau** (Level 3). The geographical and topographical character of the area is described as (question GL4) "**Lower lying plateau** of NE-SW **regional antiform in Productive Coal Measures** mudstones with coals, dissected by NE-SE upper **Dulais river valley**. **Broad slopes covered extensively by boulder clay** and cut by NNW-SSE to N-S faults. **Coal mines** and **areas of made ground** along valley. **Alluvium** in broad valley floor."

4.2.5 The rarity/uniqueness (question GL31) of the area is evaluated as **moderate** and the overall evaluation (question GL33) for the area is **moderate**, due to the "Glacial drift covered Productive Coal Fm with extensive mining"

4.2.6 **The immediately adjacent land to the northwest** lies within aspect area **Ystradgynlais** (BRCKNGL670)[16], which is classified as Upland Valley Slopes (Level 3). The geographical and topographical character of the area is described as (question GL4) **"N-facing rounded slopes** of NE-SW **fault controlled Tawe valley** in SW-dipping **Lower and Middle Coal Measures**, dissected by **W-NW flowing Nant Llech rivers with waterfalls**. Extensive **boulder clay**

[14] LANDMAP Methodology Overview, June 2017 https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/681752/landmap-methodology-overview-2017-eng.pdf?mode=pad&rnd=131547814890000000
[15] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=2460
[16] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=346

across lower. slopes. **Mines and made ground from coal pits**. **NNW-SSE faults (Chapel, Pwllau Bach) forming topographic features to E**."

4.2.7 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 "Glacial drift covered, dissected low plateau of Productive Coal Fm; coal mining including large opencast."

Landscape Habitats

4.2.8 **The entirety of the site** is located in aspect area **NPTLH017**[17] (unnamed), which is classified as **Mosaic** (Level 3). The key features that define the area's biodiversity character (question LH24) is it "Aspect Area comprises **two separate geographical units** considered to be of similar character and value at the landscape level, lying on either side of a major river valley; **Large areas of semi-upland ''ffridd'' habitats on the valley sides of the upper Dulais river**, comprising a **mosaic of mainly grassland habitats**, mostly of **neutral** or **acid** character; interspersed by **deciduous woodland** and **flush** areas.."

4.2.9 The **overall evaluation** (question 45) for the area is **moderate**, as the area is "subject to some improvement and degradation, but still mainly comprising semi-natural habitats characteristic of the S Wales coalfield and containing numerous features of value."

4.2.10 **The land immediately adjacent to the north** is located in aspect area **BRCKNLH975**[18] (Mynydd y Drum – Twyn Eithinog), which is classified as **Mosaic** (Level 3). The key features that define the area's biodiversity character (question LH24) as "**Acid grassland** and **Purple Moor Grass** dominated upland **marshy grassland** associated with the hills above the Tawe valley at Ystradgynlais."

4.2.11 The **overall evaluation** (question 45) for the area is **high**, as it "The area is located on the hills above the Tawe valley at Ystradgynlais. The landscape habitat is characterised by **mosaic composed of Unimproved Acid Grassland, Marshy Grassland, Dry Heath/Acid Grassland Mosaic and Acid/Neutral Flush**. The area is classified as being of High value for **overall habitat and species evaluation**."

4.2.12 **The land adjoining the site to the northeast** is located in aspect area **NPTLH016**[19] (unnamed), which is classified as **Marsh/ Marshy Grassland** (Level 3). The key features that define the area's biodiversity character (question LH24) is the "a small section of much larger expanse of upland grassland, heathland and mire communities."

4.2.13 The **overall evaluation** (question 45) for the area is **moderate**, for the "area of semi-natural upland habitats, part of a much larger area; good range of typical upland special, possibly including some rarities."

[17] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=5813
[18] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=286
[19] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=5812

4.2.14 **Adjacent to the south of the site within the valley floor** is aspect area **NPTLH015**[20] (unnamed), which is classified as **Mosaic** (Level 3). The key features that define the area's biodiversity character (question LH24) is the "**major river valley system**, varying from **semi-upland to north** to **lowland in the south**; **northern valley comparatively open and mostly neutral grasslands and improved pastures**; southern valley steeper, mainly broadleaved woodland; some bracken slopes; some areas of revegetated mine spoil."

4.2.15 The **overall evaluation** (question 45) for the area is **high**, as a "**major watercourse**; **extensive and coherent linear corridor** of semi-natural habitats of high value; **extensive BAP habitats** BAP and other species of interest present."

Historic Landscape

4.2.16 **The majority of the site** is located in aspect area **Dulais Valley NW**[21] (NPTHL076), which is classified as **Irregular Fieldscapes** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question HL4) "Discontinuous area of similar landscape character and historical identity to the Dulais Valley; please refer to HL048 for technical information." The Dulais Valley aspect area (NPTHL048) extends into a small part of the southern fringes of the study area. The aspect area is described as (question HL4) "the **extent of enclosure flanking the Crynant and Severn Sisters industrial communication corridor** (HL046)... The aspect area is characterised by a **heavily industrialised, irregular, agricultural fieldscape**, with **dispersed and isolated farmsteads...** The overriding character of field boundaries is one of **drystone walls**..."

4.2.17 The **overall evaluation** (question HL40) for the area is **moderate**, as "The moderate overall value assigned to this aspect area reflects the fact that, although the irregular rural fieldscape and pattern of **dispersed settlement has survived largely intact**, the **archaeological record is modest** in scope, with only **limited potential for further study**."

4.2.18 **A small part of the eastern part of the site** is located in the west of aspect area **Twyn Eithinog**[22] (NPTHL059), which is classified as **Marginal Land** (Level 3). The aspect area is described (question HL4) "**Rhos Common** is situated on the **upland of Twyn Eithinog and Mynydd y Drum** with the **Dulais Valley snaking away to the south** and the **upland Massif of the Brecon Beacons stretching away to the north**. The Rhos Common aspect area is situated on the cusp of the Unitary Authority boundary, which dissects Mynydd y Drum and Twyn Eithinog, in effect this creates two areas of **unenclosed upland moor** (HL020 and HL059). Twyn Eithinog is located to the south of Mynydd y Drum and is defined by the Unitary Auth."

[20] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=5811
[21] NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | Wales Environmental Information Portal (arcgis.com)5
[22] NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | Wales Environmental Information Portal (arcgis.com)

4.2.19 The **overall evaluation** (question HL40) for the area is **outstanding**, as "This area has been assessed as outstanding on two counts:1/the important **survival of prehistoric funerary landscape** represented by the extensive **cairn grouping** on the southern slope of Mynydd y Drum and 2/the survival of **extensive remains of Claypon''s Extension to the Brecon Forest Tramroad**, an early **industrial railway of considerable historic importance** (as evidenced by its scheduled status).."

4.2.20 **The land immediately adjacent to the northwest** lies within aspect area **Twyn Eithiniog**[23] (BRCKHL008), which is classified as **Marginal Land** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question HL4) "**Open moorland** parts of which are crossed by a **dismantled 19th century tramroad** and by **modern electricity power lines**."

4.2.21 The overall evaluation (question HL40) for the area is moderate for "Small relatively featureless area of upland with residual mining remains and consequently low evaluation"

4.2.22 The adjoining land to the west lies within aspect area Farteg[24] (BRCKHL002), which is classified as Regular Fieldscapes (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question HL4) "Irregular fields, scattered farmsteads and cottages on fringes of upland area and mining settlements, including some small areas of reclaimed former mine shafts, opencast coal mining, and course of dismantled mineral railway line. Field shapes indicate some earlier irregular enclosure of medieval to early post-medieval date together with some later straight-sided field boundaries."

4.2.23 The overall evaluation (question HL40) for the area is moderate for "Coal mining and iron working landscape, partly 'reclaimed' with mixed industrial and farming elements. This together with its small size brings down its value."

Cultural Landscape Services

4.2.24 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..."[25] The data for CLS uses data from the other four aspect layers and provide no overall evaluations for each aspect area.

4.2.25 Refer to the Visual and Sensory aspect areas below for further detail.

[23] NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | Wales Environmental Information Portal (arcgis.com)

[24] NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | NRW LandMap Historic Landscape - Classification | Wales Environmental Information Portal (arcgis.com)

[25] LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Services, Report No 336, prepared by E.K Naumann, Dr K Metcalf, Environmental Systems, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

Visual and Sensory

4.2.26 **The entirety of the site** is located within aspect area **Dulais Valley**[26] (NPTVS846), which is classified as **Open/ Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question VS3) "**Upland valley** encompassing valley floor and **predominantly open landscape on valley sides**, ranging from approx. 50m AOD at confluence with Neath to approx. 220m AOD. A **wide, rolling, pastoral valley** with significantly **treed field boundaries** - many **grown out hedges** which are a strong element in this landscape. Although grown out hedges dominate on lower ground, the upper reaches of the valley sides are dominated by **drystone walls**. The trees produce a **sense of enclosure** and **reduce views out**. The pastoral picture of the valley creates a **settled character**. The **settlement of Crynant** sits mostly hidden in the valley bottom. A number of other **dwellings**, primarily **farmsteads**, are **scattered through the valley**. The valley road [**A4109**] runs through this area along with a number of **minor roads, tracks** - also the **mineral railway line**. **Riparian vegetation** marks the line of the river as it winds down the valley. **Small-scale commercial development** in the valley bottom is a **minor detractor**."

4.2.27 The **scenic quality** (question VS46) of the area is evaluated as **high**, **character** (question VS48) of the area is evaluated as **high**, and the **overall evaluation** (question VS50) for the area is also **high** as "This **enclosed heavily wooded pastoral mosaic valley** has **high scenic qualities**, presents **attractive views** both within at an **intimate scale** and also to **higher ground around**. **Minor detractors exist but area not sufficient to significantly diminish the character. Outgrown hedges heighten the sense of enclosure provided by the topography**. These elements create a strong **sense of place in the valley bottom**, while **clumps of woodland retain the sense of enclosure on higher ground**, and the **change in boundary type provides altitudinal distinction and variety**."

4.2.28 **The land immediately adjacent to the northwest** is located in aspect area **Twyn Eithiniog**[27] (BRCKVS007), which is classified as **Upland Moorland** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question VS3) "Small area of **bleak, exposed and open upland moorland** running down from a high point of 297mAOD to 150mAOD. The **vegetation is fairly consistent** with **rough grass and bracken**. The area is crossed by **electricity supply cables and pylons to the south**. **Public footpaths** cross from the Tawe valley to the northwest to the adjacent valley to the southeast."

4.2.29 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 evaluated as **moderate** as it "The area provides a **locally important area of open land with long views to the uplands to the north**. It has **consistent character** throughout

[26] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=1793
[27] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=110

although it is affected by the **detractors of the pylons**. As an area of **upland, it is locally prominent and acts as backcloth to the Tawe valley**."

4.2.30 The **land abutting the site boundary to the northeast** is located in aspect area Mynydd y Drum[28] (NPTVS640). It is classified as **Upland Grazing** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as an (question VS3) "**Open moorland connected to larger moorland and grazing** beyond assessment area. from approx. 170m to 297m AOD. This is a **significant area of open upland moorland and grazing**, producing an element of **wilderness**. The vegetation is generally consistent **grasses and bracken**. There are **no settlements**. **Footpaths** connecting the Dulais and Tawe valley cross through this area. **Electric pylons and cables** form detractors. The area feels **removed from adjacent reclaimed land to north**"

4.2.31 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 evaluated as **moderate** as it "Predominantly **unspoilt upland moorland**, rising from the valley, **Pylons on the lower slopes** act as **detractors**, diminishing the **simplicity and sense of wilderness**. The management is consistent across the area."

4.2.32 To the southwest of the site is aspect area **Tawe Valley and Cwm Twrch**[29] (BRCKVS436), which is classified as **Open/ Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question VS3) "**Sheltered and diverse upland valley** with valley sides running from around 300mAOD to 100mAOD focussed on the River Tawe and its tributaries including Cwm Twrch. The most dramatic topographic feature is **Varteg Hill** which rises sharply from the valley floor to the south of the area. There is a **diversity of landcover**, dominated by pasture which is being **encroached by bracken** on the upper valley sides. The field boundaries are a combination of **outgrown hedges and fences**, the former of which thicken and give a greater sense of enclosure further west. **Deciduous woodland cover is significant** both as riparian woodland, and on slopes. **This helps to integrate settlements**. **Significant coniferous woodland blocks** lie on upper slopes, heightening enclosure. **Disturbed land lies on the valley sides to the southeast of Ystradgynlais**. This is a mosaic of **pasture, settlement and rough scrub** and a **disused railway corridor.** Detractors such as the **electricity substation** are prominent in this area which appears uncared for. Most of the **settlement is linear in character**, much relating to early and current industry, and this is located along the A4067 or A4221. Some industry related settlement is exposed to views such as Coelbren. On the valley sides there are **scattered small farmsteads and dwellings** originally related to the agricultural use of the valley. This area is **relatively tranquil**. **Views are possible in places to the uplands**, particularly from the eastern parts of the area. From here, the Maesgwyn wind farm is prominent on the skyline and against higher ground to the south."

[28] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=1781
[29] https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=1763 [accessed February 2023]

4.2.33 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 evaluated as **moderate** as "The **river corridor and mosaic of pasture** and **deciduous woodlands** give the area an **attractive scenic quality**. The **Henrhyd waterfall** is a valuable feature although relatively hidden in the landscape. **Attractive views are possible** across the valley at points and to the uplands to the north."

LANDMAP Summary

4.2.34 **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	**Seven Sisters** UID: **NPTGL016**	Upland Plateau	Moderate
Landscape Habitats	Unnamed UID: **NPTL017**	Mosaic	Moderate
Historic Landscape	**Dulais Valley NW** UID: **NPTHL076**	Irregular Fieldscapes	Moderate
	Twyn Eithinog UID: **NPTHL059**	Marginal Land	Outstanding
Cultural Landscape Services	**Dulais Valley** UID: NPTCLS093	Open/ Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys	N/A
Visual and Sensory	**Dulais Valley** UID: NPTVS846	Open/ Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys	High

4.3 Site-Specific Appraisal

4.3.1 The following paragraphs provide descriptions of the site, which should be read alongside **Appendix 1** Topography **Figure LA.05** and Site Context **Figure LA.06,** and Site Photographs **Figures LA.07.**

The landscape of the site

4.3.2 The site is located on the **north/ northwestern side of the Dulais Valley**, circa 500m west of the settlement of Seven Sisters, within the county borough of Neath Port Talbot. It is situated on **semi-upland and rough grass land** on the south/ southeast sloping valley sides. **The landform of the site is sloping**, from a high point of approximately 216m Above Ordnance Datum in the north to approximately 164m in the AOD in the south.

4.3.3 The shape and boundary of the site is largely defined by **agricultural enclosures**. The **field pattern is irregular** and **medium-large**. A mixture of **linear tree groupings** along **outgrown hedgerows** and **watercourses** form boundaries, which are indistinct in places. There are a number of **watercourses** in the site, running down and along the valley sides and shaping the site landform. An **access track** to Pen-Cae'r-lan farm runs northward through the central/ western part of the site. There is a further access track close to the eastern boundary of the site. A **series of footpaths** crosses the site, forming part of the local footpath network that connects Seven Sisters, Hengaer and Twyn Eithinog, however a number of these are poorly defined and appear to be infrequently used. **Pylon infrastructure** is prominent on the upland immediately to the north of the site, including a line of pylon towers and overhead cables that roughly follows the course of the northeastern site boundary.

4.3.4 The site forms part of the **mosaic of mainly grassland, pasture and upland marshy grassland** that comprises the north/ northwestern side of the Dulais Valley. To the north of the site is an area of upland with marshy grassland, where landform continues to rise to the ridge that defines the valley. The ridge contains a series of **cairns and opencast workings at Mynydd y Drum**.

4.3.5 The **valley topography** shapes the landscape of the wider study area, with the south/ southeast side of the Dulais valley overlooking the site from an elevation of approximately **450m AOD** on the southeastern fringes of the study area. **The northwest part of the study area is visually separated from the site** due to landform that is shaped by the **Tawe valley**.

4.3.6 Settlement in the surrounding landscape is located primarily in the valley floor and sides, such as **Seven Sisters** in the north part of the study area and nearby **Nant-y-Cafn**. The village of **Crynant** is located on the southwest fringe of the study area and the edge of the settlement of **Ystradgynlais** in the northwest. There are also **scattered farmsteads** and dwellings throughout the study area, including **Pen-Cae'r-lan farm**, which is close to the west site boundary and **Ty'n-y-garreg** at close distance to the east.

Features of the site

4.3.7 The site comprises several medium sized rough pasture fields with an irregular pattern. The series of small watercourses that crosses the site contributes to the field pattern and tree structure. The fields are generally bounded by hedgerow, many of which are outgrown to form gappy linear tree groups, with some occasional scattered trees. Several of the linear tree

groups are relatively prominent on the valley side, including the southeastern boundary of the site which lines a watercourse and the central hedgerow intersection within the site. The southwestern boundary is also defined by a mature line of trees.

Characteristics and aesthetics of the site

4.3.8 The site is part of the pastoral mosaic landscape of the Dulais valley and forms a transitional landscape to upland moorland to the north. The area has scenic qualities, with attractive views in and out. Less elevated areas are of a more intimate scale, transitioning to broader scale upland to the north of the site. The lines of trees shaping the site provide a sense of enclosure, particularly at less elevated areas. The pylon infrastructure close by is a detracting element.

Landscape Value

4.3.9 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 3, Table A3-1** in order to determine the value of the landscape receptors.

4.3.10 The features/elements/characteristics identified as important or "key" to the landscape character of the site are identified as:

- Sloping landform on Dulais valley side
- Field pattern formed by watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow
- Transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north
- Recreational access on Public Rights of Way
- Overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south

4.4 Effects on the Landscape

4.4.1 This section examines the nature of 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.

4.4.2 Landscape character is derived from the combination and pattern of landscape elements. The effects of 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.

4.4.3 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.

4.4.4 The LVApp covers the following scenarios:

- Construction phase - this includes the installation of the proposed solar farm and ancillary structures.
- Operation – the fully constructed and operational solar farm.
- Decommissioning – the removal of the solar farm and associated infrastructure with the agricultural landscape fully restored.

Sensitivity

4.4.5 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.** For this appraisal, 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**.

4.4.6 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 4-1 Susceptibility and Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Sloping landform on the Dulais valley side	**Medium value:** valley landscape subject to local designation (Special Landscape Area), landform is locally distinctive and contributes to the setting of other areas. LANDMAP High	**Low susceptibility** as solar arrays accommodated within the existing topography.	**Moderate-low sensitivity**

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
	Visual and Sensory overall evaluation.		
Field pattern formed by watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow	**Medium value**: Field pattern largely intact with some degradation to boundaries. LANDMAP Moderate Landscape Habitats and Historic Landscape overall evaluation. Contribution of outgrown hedges noted as contributor within LANDMAP Visual and Sensory data, high overall evaluation. Local designation as SLA.	**Low susceptibility** as field pattern is to be retained.	**Moderate-low sensitivity**
Transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north	**Medium value**: Upland landscape contributes to the setting of other areas, containing important historical features as well as detracting visual elements. Non-designated landscape. LANDMAP Outstanding Historic Landscape overall evaluation but lower evaluations in other aspect layers.	**Low susceptibility** as larger scale upland may be more able to accommodate aesthetic and perceptual aspects of solar farm development.	**Moderate-low sensitivity**
Recreational access on Public Rights of Way	**Low value:** the landscape is the setting for recreational access where the landscape forms part of the experience; however, some routes are in poor condition and are difficult to navigate.	**Low susceptibility** as the site layout accommodates the existing footpaths which appear to be infrequently used.	**Low sensitivity**
Overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south	**High value:** an important contributor to the landscape of the area, setting of multiple landscape areas with a range of LANDMAP aspect evaluations including some outstanding and high. Part of landscape subject to local designation as Special Landscape Area.	**Low susceptibility** to change as large-scale landscape with mixed components and open views able to accommodate development.	**Moderate sensitivity**

Magnitude of change

4.4.7 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 development. The magnitude of change is fully described and set out in **Appendix 3, Table Appendix 3.1**. **Table 4-2** below provides a summary of the assessments:

Table 4-2 Landscape receptors and magnitude of change summary

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change
Sloping landform on the Dulais valley side	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Small** Decommission: **Small,** reducing to **negligible**
Field pattern formed by watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow	Construction: **small** Operation: **medium-small** Decommission: **medium-small**, increasing to **medium**
Transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Small** Decommission: **Small,** reducing to **negligible**
Recreational access on Public Rights of Way	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Medium-small** Decommission: **Medium-small,** increasing to **medium**
Overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Small** Decommission: **Small,** reducing to **negligible**

Assessment of effects on the landscape

4.4.8 Consideration of the magnitude of the changes due to the proposed solar farm is combined with consideration of the sensitivity of landscape receptors affected by the proposals to assess the degree and nature of the effect at each stage of the development, including construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed solar farm.

4.4.9 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 A2-5**. The assessment is provided in

Appendix 3, **Table Appendix 3.2** and a summary of the effects is provided below in **Table 4.3**:

Table 4-3 Effects on Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptors and Sensitivity	Effects during construction	Effects during operation	Effects during decommissioning
Sloping landform on the Dulais valley side	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, neutral reducing to negligible** once reinstated
Field pattern formed by watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow	**Minor, adverse**	**Moderate-minor, beneficial**	**Moderate-minor, beneficial increasing to moderate, beneficial** once reinstated
Transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, neutral, reducing to negligible** once reinstated
Recreational access on Public Rights of Way	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, beneficial**	**Minor, beneficial increasing to moderate-minor beneficial** once reinstated
Overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south	**Moderate-minor, adverse**	**Moderate-minor, adverse**	**Moderate-minor neutral, reducing to negligible** once reinstated

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.

5.1.2 The general methodology for assessing the effects in this report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

5.1.3 The degree of the likely visual effects of the proposed solar farm is determined by relating the sensitivity of the receptors to the changes arising from the development proposals, and the

degree and nature of the changes in the views available to people and in their visual amenity arising from the proposals.

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 where views may be available of the proposed development within the 3km visual study area. The ZTVs are calculated to the height of 3.25m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to represent the 'worst case scenario'. The viewer eye-height for the ZTVs has been set at 2m above ground level.

5.2.2 The ZTVs produced include both a bare earth scenario and a screening features scenario where features such as buildings and vegetation were taken into account. The computer generated ZTV in **Figure LA.08-1** was calculated using LiDAR composite DTM (Digital Terrain Model) with a spatial resolution of 2m. This was based upon a "bare earth scenario" i.e., no allowance has been made for the potential screening by existing buildings, woodland, trees, and hedgerows. The computer generated ZTV in **Figure LA.08-2** was calculated using LiDAR composite DSM (Digital Surface Model) with a spatial resolution of 2m, which includes heights of existing buildings and vegetation in the data. The screening effects of other surface features such as individual trees and hedgerows may not be picked up by the data.

5.2.3 **Figure LA.08-1** shows that in the "bare earth scenario", the footprint of theoretical visibility is defined by the topography of the Dulais valley, which shapes the study area. The ZTV indicates that visibility of most of the solar farm is theoretically available across the south side of the Dulais Valley and the north slopes of Hirfynydd, where elevated topography allows north/ northwest facing views toward the site. On lower parts of the valley side, theoretical visibility reduces to a moderate part of the development. Within the sunken valley floor and on the lower slopes of the north side of the valley, a minor part of the development would potentially be visible in places, with no visibility in other areas. On the north side of the Dulais valley slopes, theoretical visibility of a moderate part of the development extends across the site itself and the elevated land to the north/ northeast of the site as far as Mynydd y Drum, with most of the development predicted to be visible from elevated south facing slopes at Twyn Eithinog. Beyond the crest of Mynydd y Drum and at Nant Helen works, views are not expected to be available because of landform. Similarly, landform restricts the footprint of visibility to the west of the site, where the mounded ridge topography at Hengaer forms a limit to views. On the east facing parts of Hengaer, a minor or moderate part of the development is shown to be theoretically visible. Further west, elevated Rhos Common and the east facing part of Farteg Hill are shown to have potential visibility of a minor or moderate part of the development.

5.2.4 **Figure LA.08-2** shows that once surface screening is taken into account, the footprint of visibility is reduced – notably within wooded areas on the southern slopes of the Dulais Valley, such west of Nant Hir Colliery and within the Special Landscape Area south of Nant-y-Cafn. Elsewhere within the study area, the footprint of the ZTV is similar, however in many areas the extent of visibility reduced from a moderate part of the development being visible to a minor part of the development being visible only.

Viewpoint study

5.2.5 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 selections, 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.

5.2.6 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.

5.2.7 A total of nine views were photographed to illustrate the site and its appearance in publicly available locations. The locations of the 9 viewpoints are shown on **Figures LA.08**. **Table 5.1** below lists the 9 viewpoints, the location details, the receptors represented, and the reasons for selection.

Table 5-1 Viewpoint details

Viewpoint reference	Location	Approximate distance & direction from site	Receptors represented/Reasons for selection
01	Footpath within the site	0m	Footpath users • The viewpoint is located within the site where there would be close views of the proposals. • Located within a Special Landscape Area. • The screening ZTV indicates that a moderate part of the solar farm would potentially be visible.
02	Footpath to southwest of the site at Hengaer	296m southwest	Footpath users • Close distance view of the site from the southwest

Viewpoint reference	Location	Approximate distance & direction from site	Receptors represented/Reasons for selection
			• The screening ZTV indicates that a moderate part of the solar farm would potentially be visible. • Edge of Special Landscape Area • Convergence of multiple footpaths • Edge of outstanding and high overall value LANDMAP aspect areas for Geological Landscape and Visual and Sensory.
03	Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog	325m north	Footpath users, open access land • Close distance views of the site from elevated land to the north • Convergence of multiple footpaths • ZTVs indicate that most of the solar farm would potentially be visible. • Outstanding overall value LANDMAP Historic Landscape aspect area evaluation
04	Dulais Road, Seven Sisters	369m east	Footpath users, local residents, local road users • The viewpoint represents key receptors including nearby residents. • Close distance views from the east • The screening ZTV indicates that a moderate part of the solar farm would potentially be visible. • Edge of Special Landscape Area
05	South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn	576km	Footpath users, local residents, local road users • The viewpoint represents key receptors including nearby residents. • Mid-distance views from the south • The screening ZTV indicates that most of the solar farm would potentially be visible. • Outstanding overall value LANDMAP Historic Landscape aspect area evaluation
06	Footpath south of Seven Sisters	816m east	Footpath users • Medium distance view of the site from the east side of the Dulais valley • The screening ZTV indicates that most of the solar farm would potentially be visible.

Viewpoint reference	Location	Approximate distance & direction from site	Receptors represented/Reasons for selection
			• Located within Special Landscape Area
07	Heol Hen, Seven Sisters	1.2km east	Bridleway users, local residents, local road users • The viewpoint represents key receptors including nearby residents. • Medium distance views from the east • The ZTVs indicate that most of the solar farm would potentially be visible. • Outstanding overall value LANDMAP Historic Landscape aspect area evaluation
08	Footpath east of Seven Sisters	1.6km	Footpath users, open access land • Accessible by nearby local residents • Medium-long distance view of the site from the east, above settlement of Seven Sisters • The screening ZTV indicates that a moderate part of the solar farm would be visible
09	Bridleway near Coed Ddu	1.8km	Bridleway users, open access land • Medium-long distance view of the site from open access land to the south • Close to Scheduled Monuments and within Special Landscape Area • The ZTVs indicate that most of the proposed solar farm would potentially be visible. • Outstanding overall value LANDMAP Historic Landscape aspect area evaluation

5.2.8 Table 5-2 below provides a description of the landscape context at each of the 9 viewpoint locations and description of the existing view towards the site.

Table 5-2 Existing assessment viewpoint descriptions

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards site
01 Footpath within the site	The viewpoint is located on a track that runs through the site, connecting Pen-Cae'r-lan farm with Seven Sisters. The track runs southeast to	The foreground to the view contains the gravel access track to Pen-Cae'r-lan farm. The track is bounded on its eastern side by a post-and-wire fence, uncontained on its western side. The view southeast looks across the Dulais Valley, toward

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards site
	northwest course and a footpath cuts perpendicular to the track. The viewpoint is located at the junction of the track and footpath, at a gate opening. The land within the site rises to the northwest.	the flanks of Mynydd Hirfynydd, which contains mixed moorland and woodlands. The settlement of Seven Sisters is visible within the valley floor and lower eastern sides, generally comprising detached two storey properties. Above the settlement, two wind turbines which are part of Maesgwyn windfarm punctuate the skyline. Above the settlement at distance to the northeast, a string of pylon towers crosses the view. The middle ground of the view comprises the field enclosures within the site, to either side of the track. To the east, the field contains rushy pasture, divided from the adjacent field to the north by a line of mature trees. Mature trees also line the lower, southern side of the field. The field to the west of the track contains rough grass on rising landform. The adjacent field to the north comprises rough grassland and contains an electricity mast, its western boundary formed by sunken landform where a watercourse runs through the site. The field further to the northeast contains a series of electricity masts, which approximately mark the eastern boundary of the site where it abuts a track. Beyond the site to the northeast there is a prominent series of pylon towers breaking the skyline. The gravel track continues northwest to Pen-Cae'r-lan farm, which is out of view beyond rising landform and trees on the northern boundary of the site, immediately to the northwest of the viewpoint.
02 Footpath to southwest of the site at Hengaer	The viewpoint is located at the junction of multiple rights of way on the southeast facing slopes of Hengaer. There is a stile at close distance to the rear of the viewer and a post and wire fence runs northeast along the adjacent field boundary.	The foreground to the view overlooks an upland grassland field enclosure and across the western side of the Dulais valley. The ground slopes steadily southeast into the valley bottom, above which the settlement of Seven Sisters is visible. The lower part of the adjacent pasture field is contained by a line of trees, which marks the southwest boundary of the site. Coniferous trees obscure Pen-Cae'r-lan farm from view. The tops of trees canopies that form the western boundary of the site are visible. The southwest field of the site is

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards site
		obscured from view by boundary trees. The upper, eastern part of the site is partially visible between and above the tree lines, comprising rough grassland. Above the site rises the prominent upland slopes of Twyn Eithinog, crossed by a series of pylon towers. The backdrop is formed by a long-distance skyline, looking towards the crests of the Brecon Beacons.
03 Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog	The viewpoint is located at the intersection of a series of Public Rights of Way at Twyn Eithinog, on elevated open access land. It is close to pylons and overhead cables.	The view is characterised by the open moorland, overlooking the Dulais Valley and crossed by electricity infrastructure. The foreground contains rough grass and pylon towers at close distance. Electricity infrastructure is prominent across the breadth of the view, breaking the skyline and including multiple strings of pylon towers, electricity masts and cables. Within the middle ground of the view lies the site, comprising rough grass, with boundaries formed by gappy lines of trees. A string of electricity masts roughly marks the east/ northeast boundary of the site. Pen-Cae'r-lan farm is obscured from view by coniferous trees. The wider view contains the southern Dulais valley side, with mixed landcover. Within the valley lies the settlement of Seven Sisters, spreading along the valley floor and up the valley sides to the east. To the west lies the flat-topped landform at Farteg Hill, topped by radio masts and pylons.
04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters	The viewpoint is located in Seven Sisters, on the A4109 Dulais Road. There are residential properties and a pedestrian footway on either side of the road. Nearby to the southwest there is a bus stop. The viewpoint is located on the edge of the Dulais Valley Special Landscape Area.	The view is characterised by the urban area of Seven Sisters, viewed against the backdrop of the uplands beyond. The foreground is formed by road infrastructure and residential properties on Dulais Road. Properties are single storey and detached. Above the roofs of the properties, the southwest field of the site is visible, sloping toward the viewer. The west/ southwest boundary of the site is discernible on the crest of the landform within the southwest part of the site. There are partial glimpses of the central part of the site, filtered by tree canopies above the property roofs. The

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards site
		eastern, upland part of the site is obscured from view by properties.
05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn	The viewpoint is located at Nant-y-cafn, approximately 1km southwest of the main centre of Seven Sisters. The Dulais Valley Primary Care Centre and its parking area is nearby to the north. Recent development lies to the west.	The view comprises nearby residential development against a medium-distance backdrop of the western flank of the Dulais Valley. The foreground contains the parking at the Dulais Valley Primary Care Centre and Dulais Road. A new development forms the centre of the view, comprising 1.5 storey properties. The properties obscure most of the site from view, although the west/ southwest boundary of the site is discernible on the crest of the site landform. The southwestern field of the site slopes towards the viewer above property roofs. Two electricity masts south of Pen-Cae'r-lan Farm mark the central part of the site, glimpsed between a property roof and tree canopy. A part of the eastern part of the site is also visible, with electricity masts marking the approximate eastern boundary.
06 Footpath south of Seven Sisters	The viewpoint is located within the Special Landscape Area, on a footpath that runs south from Seven Sisters. Nearby to the west lies the railway line.	The view looks across the Dulais Valley, which contains a characteristically mixed landscape pattern of trees, rough grassland and pasture along with prominent electricity infrastructure. The foreground to the view contains an open field, bounded to the west by the railway line. Trees occupy the valley floor, generally obscuring settlement from view. The site fields face the viewer, comprising rough grass in the southwest field of the site, sloping toward the viewer to the southern boundary of the site. Adjacent to the southwest site field, Pen-Cae'r-lan farm access track is cuts up the valley side, within the site. A grouping of trees obscures Pen-Cae'r-lan farm from view. The eastern site fields comprise rough grassland, a watercourse marked by trees and the eastern boundary of the site is roughly adjacent to a line of electricity masts. Pylon towers and cables cross the breadth of the view at various distances. A single wind turbine is visible near to Pen-Cae'r-

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards site
		lan farm. The radio mast nearby to the viewpoint to the south is also visible.
07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters	The viewpoint is located to the rear of Blaendulais Primary School, on the residential street Heol Hen, which is also a bridleway. To the east there are residential properties, above pavement level. Nearby to the north there is an area of public open space nearby to the north, crossed by the bridleway.	The view faces west over the roof of Blaendulais Primary School, on the residential street Heol Hen. The foreground contains the street Heol Hen and the curtilage to the school. Above the roof of the school, a longer distance is available toward the western side of Dulais valley, which contains the site. The central and eastern parts of the site are visible, sloping toward the viewer and crossed by the vegetated watercourse in the east of the site. A line of electricity masts running down the valley side approximately marks the eastern boundary of the site. A punctuated lines of trees marks the western boundary of the site, near Pen-Cae'r-lan farm. A linear tree group marks the southwestern boundary, and the southwest field of the site is partly visible above a roof in the foreground. The distance backdrop to the view contains a sweeping ridgeline to the west, topped by wind turbines. Pylon infrastructure at Twyn Eithinog breaks the skyline. The distinctive landform and forestry at Farteg Hill are visible to the west.
08 Footpath east of Seven Sisters	Located on a Public Right of Way that is a footpath, approximately 300m east of Seven Sisters. The viewpoint is in open access land.	The view looks down the gravel track Heol y Felin. The foreground contains the track and marshy grassland to either side. The middle ground to the view contains properties on the eastern edge of Seven Sisters, at Pen y Bryn and Hoel Heddwch. Above their roofs and partially screened by mature trees on the edge of the open access land, lies the site. The coniferous trees that screen Pen-Cae'r-lan farm are visible, above the punctuated line of small trees that forms the western boundary of the site. Below them lies the rough grassland field within the central/ eastern part of the site. The western site fields are obscured from view as a result of the site topography and intervening tree canopies in the middle ground. The eastern and lower site fields are also obscured as a result of the

Viewpoint reference	Landscape context at viewpoint location	Existing view towards site
		intervening trees within the middle ground. The pylon and electricity infrastructure at Twyn Eithinog cross the skyline. The distance backdrop is formed by Farteg Hill and the sweeping ridgeline containing wind turbines beyond.
09 Bridleway near Coed Ddu	Located on Public Right of Way that is a Bridleway, accessed via Crynant. The viewpoint is on open access land within Special Landscape Area. Nearby to the west lies the railway line. Nearby to the east lie several Scheduled Monuments.	The view looks down the Dulais Valley, along the sloping eastern valley side where the bridleway that contains the viewpoint is located. The valley sides close to the viewpoint are well vegetated, including nearby woodland south of Nant-y-cefn. Beyond, the settlement of Seven Sisters is visible against the uplands backdrop which includes Mynydd y Drum. The western side of the Dulais valley forms the middle ground, containing field enclosures on the sloping valley sides and uplands on the top of the ridge that defines the valley. The fields of the site form part of the characteristic fieldscape on the valley side defined by field boundaries that are gappy in places and contain dense lines of trees/ vegetation in others, running southeast into the valley bottom. The fields of the site contain rough grass that contrasts with the neighbouring pasture fields and forms a transition to the nearby uplands at Twyn Eithinog. To the west of the site lies the distinctive ridge at Hengaer, topped by agricultural fields. The view is expansive, containing a distance backdrop of long-ranging views including the Black Mountains to the north.

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 by the proposals in the site. 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 settlements within the 3km study area include Seven Sisters in the valley floor and sides in the north part of the study area, approximately 430m from the site at its closest point, and Nant y Cafn about 500m to the south. The fringes of the study area contain the village of Crynant in the southwest and the edges of the settlement of Ystradgynlais in the northwest. There are also scattered farmsteads and dwellings throughout the study area, including Pen-Cae'r-Lan and Ty'n-y-Garreg at close distance to the site boundary. A representative sample of views for people and residents in these settlement areas have been taken forward to assessment and include:

- Residents in the town of Seven Sisters, at close distance to the site, represented by **viewpoint 04**
- Residents in Nant-y-Cafn and Seven Sisters, at medium distance to the site, represented by **viewpoint 05** and **viewpoint 07**

5.3.3 The ZTV (**Figure LA.08-01**) confirms that intervening landform would obscure views from the settlement of Ystradgynlais. When taking into account the screening effect of surface features, the development is unlikely to be perceptible from the village of Crynant.

Users of public rights of way and areas of public access

5.3.4 There is a network of public rights of way within the 3km study area, taking sweeping lines along the valley sides and connecting settlements, farmsteads and dwellings. radiating from settlement and connecting farm dwellings and local roads. A representative sample of views for users of the public rights of way network have been taken forward to the assessment and include:

- Users of footpaths within or close to the site, represented by **viewpoint 01**, **viewpoint 02** and **viewpoint 03**
- Footpath users within the town of Seven Sisters and Nany-y-Cafn, at close or medium distance to the site, represented by **viewpoint 04, viewpoint 05** and **viewpoint 07**
- Users of footpaths at medium distance to the site in the Dulais Valley and within or near to the town of Seven Sisters, represented by **viewpoint 06, viewpoint 08** and **viewpoint 09**

Road users

5.3.5 Users of public roads are less sensitive to changes in the wider landscape because their view is constantly changing as they travel through the landscape. Movement through the landscape results in views being filtered or partly obscured by intervening features, such as roadside

hedges, and any views of the proposed development would not be the focus of interest for a long duration.

5.3.6 Within the 3km study area the principal road is the A4109 Dulais Road which transects the centre of the study area in a southwest to northeast direction. A minor local road forks off the A4109 to connect with Ystradgynlais via Rhos Common. There is also a network of streets within settlements such as Seven Sisters and Nant-y-Cafn and a number of farm access tracks within the wider landscape. A representative sample of these views have been taken forward to the assessment:

- Road users on residential streets within Seven Sisters, represented by **viewpoint 04, viewpoint 05** and **viewpoint 07.**

Other areas with a specific landscape interest

5.3.7 The Dulais Valley Special Landscape Area extends over a large part of the site and the southern part of the study area, excluding settlement areas. ZTV **Figure LA.08-2** shows theoretical visibility within some parts of the SLA, including the north facing slopes of the Dulais Valley and the part of the SLA that contains the site and its immediate setting. A representative sample of views from within the SLA have been taken forward to assessment and include:

- Footpath users within the Special Landscape Area within and close to the site, represented by **viewpoint 01**, **viewpoint 02** and **viewpoint 04**
- Footpath users within the Special Landscape Area at medium distance from the site, represented by **viewpoint 06** and **viewpoint 09**

5.3.8 There are several Scheduled Monuments in the upland parts of the study area, including two located on the crest of Mynydd Y Drum circa 1km northeast of the site and four others on the slopes below Hirfynydd circa 1.7km to the south of the site. To the northeast of the site, ZTV **Figure LA.08-2** shows that the Scheduled Monument on the northern cairn of Mynydd y Drum is located entirely outside of the zone of theoretical visibility. The second Scheduled Monument nearby to the south (An historic tramroad) lies on the periphery of the ZTV, where a minor part or no part of the development is likely to be visible. The Scheduled Monuments to the south of the study area include two near to Coed Ddu, which are shown to have theoretical visibility of a moderate part or most of the development. The remaining two Scheduled Monuments (Carn Cornel and Hirfynydd Roman Earthwork) lie on the periphery of the zone of theoretical visibility. **ZTV Figure LA.08-2** shows that no views of the development would be available from Carn Cornel.

- Footpaths users close to the Scheduled Monuments at Coed Ddu are represented by **viewpoint 09**

5.4 Effects on visual amenity

5.4.1 The visual assessment covers the assessment scenarios described in paragraph 5.4.3 below.

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 A2-9 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 obstructed 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 Table 5.2 above. 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 3.3**. A summary of the magnitude of change is provided in Table 5-3 below.

Table 5-3 Viewpoint and magnitude of change summary

Reference viewpoints	Magnitude of change:
01 Footpath within the site	Construction: **great** Operation: **great** Decommission: **great,** reducing to **medium-small**

Reference viewpoints	Magnitude of change:
02 Footpath to the southwest of the site at Hengaer	Construction: **small** Operation: **small** Decommission: **small,** reducing to **negligible**
03 Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog	Construction: **medium** Operation: **medium** Decommission: **medium,** reducing to **small**
04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters	Construction: **medium-small** Operation: **small** Decommission: **medium-small,** reducing to **small**
05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn	Construction: **medium-small** Operation: **small** Decommission: **medium-small,** reducing to **small**
06 Footpath south of Seven Sisters	Construction: **medium-great** Operation: **medium** Decommission: **medium-great,** reducing to **small**
07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters	Construction: **medium** Operation: **medium-small** Decommission: **medium,** reducing to **small**
08 Footpath east of Seven Sisters	Construction: **small** Operation: **small** Decommission: **small,** reducing to **negligible**
09 Bridleway near Coed Ddu	Construction: **medium-small** Operation: **medium-small** Decommission: **medium-small,** reducing to **small**

Effects on visual receptors

5.4.5 Final conclusions about the degree of visual effects, whether adverse or beneficial, relate to the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes, as

illustrated in the indicative criteria shown in **Table A2-10**. 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 3.4** and a summary of the effects is provided below in **Table 5.4**:

Table 5-4 Effects on Visual Receptors

Visual receptors, sensitivity, and reference viewpoints	Effects during construction	Effects during operation	Effects during decommissioning
People in residential properties in Seven Sisters, at close or medium distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** **04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters** **05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn** **07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters**	**Moderate, adverse**	**Moderate-minor, adverse**	**Moderate, adverse,** reducing to **moderate-minor neutral**
Footpath users within or close to the site with open views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** **01 Footpath within the site** **03 Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog**	**Moderate-major** or **moderate adverse**	**Moderate-major** or **moderate adverse**	**Moderate-major** or **moderate adverse** reducing to **moderate-minor** or **minor beneficial**
Footpath users within or close to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** Or footpath users at medium distance to the site, in or near to the town of Seven Sisters in the SLA, with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** **02 Footpath to the southwest of the site at Hengaer** **08 Footpath east of Seven Sisters**	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, adverse**	**Minor, adverse** reducing to **minor, beneficial** or **minor, neutral**

Visual receptors, sensitivity, and reference viewpoints	Effects during construction	Effects during operation	Effects during decommissioning
Footpath users at medium distance to the site, in or near to the town of Seven Sisters in the SLA, with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** Or footpath users at medium distance to the site, in the Dulais Valley and SLA with open views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** **06 Footpath south of Seven Sisters** **09 Bridleway near Coed Ddu**	**Moderate, adverse**	**Moderate, adverse**	**Moderate, adverse,** reducing to **minor neutral**
Road users on residential streets within Seven Sisters, at close or medium distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **lesser sensitivity** **04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters** **05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn** **07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters**	**Moderate-minor, adverse**	**Minor, adverse**	**Moderate-minor, adverse,** reducing to **minor neutral**

6.0 Cumulative assessments

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section deals with the cumulative effects of the proposed solar farm on landscape character and visual amenity. The general methodology for assessing the cumulative landscape and visual effects in this report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

6.2 Cumulative baseline

6.2.1 For the cumulative landscape and visual assessment of the proposed solar farm, the known surrounding solar farm developments were mapped. This included known operational, consented, and proposed solar farm developments with submitted planning applications[30]. Potential solar farm developments at earlier stages were scoped out, as there is too great uncertainty about their location, form, and scale.

6.2.2 The nearest proposed solar farm development to the site is at Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park, which is located circa 1.5km to the south. The next nearest solar farm (existing) is located circa 4.8km to the northwest. Due to the relatively contained ZTV for the site (see **Figure**

[30] At the time of the assessment, January 2025

LA.08-2) and the distance of the surrounding cumulative schemes from the site, a 3km cumulative study area is considered for the cumulative landscape and visual assessments. Any solar developments beyond 3km were excluded from cumulative assessment.

6.2.3 Details of other solar farms that are identified as having the potential to result in cumulative effects with the proposed solar farm is provided in Table 6-1 below:

Table 6-1 Cumulative solar farm scheme

Development name	Status and details	Distance and direction to site
Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar[31]	Under consideration Up to 50MW (solar) Operational life: unknown (assumed 40 years) Height of panels: unknown (assumed 3.25m)	1.5km to the south

6.3 Cumulative landscape effects

6.3.1 The assessment of cumulative landscape effects focuses on the landscape areas where cumulative effects are likely to occur. For this reason, the scope of the cumulative landscape assessment focuses on landscape character and receptors located close to the site where there could potentially be perceptual effects.

Additive effects

6.3.2 The cumulative landscape additive effect of the proposed development would be combined with the 'under consideration' solar scheme at Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park. The entirety of the proposed Pen-Cae'r-Lan site is located within LANDMAP Visual and Sensory aspect area Dulais Valley (NPTVS846), which is classified as Open/ Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys (Level 3), which mainly comprises rough pasture with an irregular pattern, forming a transitional landscape to upland moorland to the north. The 'under consideration' scheme at Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park spreads across three LANDMAP Visual and Sensory aspect areas: the west part of the site is located in the same aspect area as the Pen-Cae'r Lan development (Dulais Valley). The central and eastern parts of the site fall within Dulais Valley Moorland (NPTVS751) and Hirfynydd (NPTVS357) aspect areas. The proposed Pen-Cae'r-Lan solar farm would be distinctly separate from the proposals at Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park, which is partly located in notably different landscape types and is on the south side of the Dulais Valley, clearly distinct from the proposed development.

6.3.3 Reversible effects would be to increase the presence of solar farm developments in the wider landscape of the Dulais Valley.

[31] EDF Renewables - Hirfynydd Virtual Exhibition

Temporal effects

6.3.4 The lifespan of the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme was unknown at the time of writing this assessment; however, it is expected that it would be similar to that of the proposed Pen-Cae'r-Lan development. It is therefore assumed, at the time assessment, that the operational period of the two schemes would overlap, should they both gain consent.

Assessment

6.3.5 The cumulative landscape effect of the proposed solar farm development with the cumulative solar farm developments would result in **minor adverse** effects on the local landscape, which would be reversible. Solar farms would not form a key characteristic of the landscape. The proposed development includes mitigation proposals that complement and strengthen existing key characteristics such as field pattern with hedgerow trees, and it is expected that an appropriate scheme for landscape mitigation would be required for the cumulative Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park scheme.

6.4 Cumulative visual effects

6.4.1 Cumulative visual effects are considered within a 3km visual study area.

6.4.2 A Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility (CZTV) plan was generated for the proposed development in combination with Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme, see **Figure LA.12**. The height of the panels proposed at Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar was unknown at the time of writing this assessment, therefore the CZTV was calculated to the height of the proposed solar farm (3.25m). The CZTV does not consider other elements of each development such as fencing, battery storage units, and associated infrastructure as details of these elements were unknown at the time of writing. The CZTV also does not consider the proposed wind turbines that form part of the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park development. The CZTV illustrates the potential visibility of the proposed solar farm only, the potential visibility of the cumulative scheme only, and areas where both the proposed solar farm and cumulative scheme would potentially be visible in combination.

6.4.3 The CZTV was generated using LiDAR composite DSM (Digital Surface Model) with a spatial resolution of 2m, which includes heights of existing buildings and vegetation in the data. The screening effects some surface features such as individual trees and hedgerows may not be picked up in the data.

Additive effects

6.4.4 The 'under consideration' solar scheme at Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park is located 1.5km to the south of the site. **Figure LA.12** shows that potential visibility of the proposed development in combination with the Hirfynydd scheme is mainly concentrated to the north side of the Dulais Valley, where south-facing views toward the Hirfynydd site are potentially

available, and a smaller area at Farteg Hill to the west of the proposed site. Should both schemes gain consent, the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme would be viewed as a separate isolated element of the landscape in views. The visual receptors affected would largely comprise walkers on the footpaths within and local to the site and north Dulais Valley side (refer to **Figure LA.12**). Where cumulative views are available, they would generally be away from the main view direction of walkers and the Hirfynydd solar scheme would occupy a separate visual plain to the proposed Pen-Cae'r-Lan development, at greater distance and elevation, within a different landscape setting. The CZTV **(Figure LA.-12**) confirms that cumulative views would generally not be available for the most sensitive residential receptors within the settlements Seven Sisters and Nant-y-cafn.

Sequential effects

6.4.5 The CZTV **(Figure LA.-12)** illustrates potential sequential effects would be largely limited to the network of rights of way within and local to the site and the north Dulais Valley, primarily within 1-1.5km of the Pen-Cae'r-Lan solar site boundary. The CZTV shows that there are likely to be sequential effects along public rights of way between the developments, and along a short stretch of railway line close to the northern boundary of the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme. The primary local vehicular routes within the study area lie largely outside of the CZTV are would therefore generally not be subject to any cumulative effects. Beyond1-1.5km of the site, sequential effects are unlikely to be discernible.

Temporal effects

6.4.6 The lifespan of the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme was unknown at the time of writing this assessment; however, it is expected that it would be similar to that of the proposed Pen Cae'r-Lan development. It is therefore assumed, at the time assessment, that the operational period of the two schemes would overlap, should they both gain consent.

Assessment

6.4.7 The cumulative visual effect of the proposed solar farm with the cumulative solar farm development would result in **minor adverse** effects. There are limited areas where the proposed development and the 'under consideration' solar farm at Hirfynydd would be potentially visible together. However, due to the location of the Hirfynydd scheme on the south side of the Dulais Valley, at greater distance and elevation, cumulatively the solar farms are likely to be viewed as separate isolated elements of the landscape, too infrequent and of insufficient importance to be perceived as a visual characteristic of the area. The cumulative effects on visual amenity would be reversible, over a restricted area.

6.4.8 However, should the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme be refused planning permission, the cumulative effects would be **negligible**, should the proposed development gain consent.

7.0 Summary and Conclusions

7.1 Baseline

7.1.1 Tir Collective is instructed by Greentech Investment UK Ltd. to prepare this Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVApp) which relates to the proposed circa 25MW solar farm on land at Pen-Cae'r-lan Farm, Seven Sisters, Neath. The site covers 23 hectares and would include ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 25MW, including permanent grid connection hub, mounting framework, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping, biodiversity net benefit and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of up to 40 years.

7.1.2 This LVApp has assessed the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape character and visual amenity for a 3km study area. A 3km cumulative study area was considered.

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

7.2 Summary of findings

Landscape assessment

7.2.1 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 study site is not located within or close to a statutory designated landscape. The majority of the site is located inside the Dulais Valley Special Landscape Area. There are also a number of Scheduled Monuments in the wider landscape. Three Public Rights of Way cross through the site and a large area of Open Access Land abuts the northern site boundary.

7.2.2 In relation to LANDMAP assessments, Geological Landscape identifies the site's location in an **Upland Plateau** in the Productive Coal Measures. The Landscape Habitat Aspect Layer notes that the entirety of the site is located in a **Mosaic** with large areas of semi-upland comprising a mosaic of mainly grassland habitats. In the Historic Landscape Layer, the majority of the site is located in **Irregular Fieldscapes**, characterised by a heavily industrialised, irregular agricultural fieldscape. The overall evaluations for the Geological, Landscape Habitat and Historic Landscape Aspect Layers that contain the site are moderate. A small part of the eastern part of the site is located in Twyn Eithinog **Marginal Land**, which has outstanding overall evaluation due to the important survival of prehistoric and industrial historic landscape features.

7.2.3 The Visual and Sensory Aspect Layer indicates that the entirety of the site is located within the aspect area Dulais Valley, which is classified as **Open/ Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys** and is described as "**Upland valley** encompassing valley floor and **predominantly open landscape on valley sides**…A **wide, rolling, pastoral valley** with significantly **treed field boundaries** - many **grown out hedges** which are a strong element in this landscape…The trees produce a **sense of enclosure** and **reduce views out**. The pastoral picture of the valley creates a **settled character**. …A number of other **dwellings**, primarily **farmsteads**, are **scattered through the valley**. The valley road [**A4109**] runs through this area along with a number of **minor roads, tracks** - also the **mineral railway line**…"

7.2.4 Evaluations for the Visual and Sensory aspect area containing the site are high, including for scenic quality and character, with overall evaluation also high as a result of high scenic qualities, attractive views at an intimate scale and also on higher ground.

7.2.5 A site-specific appraisal was also carried out identifying the landscape features, characteristics, and aesthetics. The appraisal confirmed the site's location on the **north/ northwestern side of the Dulais Valley**, circa 500m west of the settlement of Seven Sisters, within the county borough of Neath Port Talbot. The site comprises **semi-upland and rough grass land** on the south/ southeast sloping valley sides. **The landform of the site is sloping**, from a high point of approximately 216m Above Ordnance Datum in the north to approximately 164m AOD in the in the south.

7.2.6 The shape and boundary of the site is largely defined by **agricultural enclosures**. The **field pattern is irregular** and **medium-large**. A mixture of **hedgerows**, **linear tree groupings** along **outgrown hedgerows** and **watercourses** form boundaries, which are indistinct in places.

7.2.7 A **series of footpaths** crosses the site, however a number of these are poorly defined and appear to be infrequently used. **Pylon infrastructure** is prominent on the upland immediately to the north of the site.

7.2.8 The **valley topography** shapes the landscape of the wider study area, with the south/ southeast side of the Dulais valley overlooking the site. Settlement in the surrounding landscape is located primarily in the valley floor and sides, such as **Seven Sisters** in the north part of the study area and nearby **Nant-y-Cafn**. There are also **scattered farmsteads** and dwellings throughout the study area.

7.2.9 The assessment of landscape effects considered the effects of the proposed development on landscape features, qualities, and characteristics within the site and on the wider surrounding landscape character during construction, operation, and decommissioning. The findings of the assessment concluded that during construction of the proposed solar farm, effects on the **sloping landform on the Dulais valley side** were **minor, adverse** due to the small-scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Defining topography would remain mostly

intact. Effects were assessed as **minor, adverse** during operation and minor, neutral during decommissioning, but once the activities are completed, the landscape would be fully restored, and effects would be **negligible.**

7.2.10 Effects on the field pattern formed by **watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow** were assessed as minor, adverse during construction as effects would mostly be because of temporary tree and hedgerow protection rather than removal. During operation and decommissioning, effects were assessed as **moderate-minor, beneficial** as existing field boundaries tree/ hedgerow structure would be retained and mitigation proposals implemented. Following establishment of mitigation proposals, effects would increase to **moderate, beneficial.**

7.2.11 Effects on the **transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north** would be **minor, adverse** during construction and operation as activity and infrastructure would be accommodated in the largescale landscape. During decommissioning effects would be **moderate-minor beneficial**, increasing to **moderate, beneficial** following the establishment of mitigation proposals.

7.2.12 For the landscape receptor **recreational access on Public Rights of Way**, effects would be **minor, adverse** during construction, increasing to **minor beneficial** during operation and decommissioning as a result of increased legibility and recreational access. Following reinstatement effects would increase to **moderate-minor beneficial.**

7.2.13 Effects on the defining quality of the site being **overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south** would be **moderate-minor, adverse** during construction, operation and decommissioning as the expansive landscape would accommodate the development without affecting its key characteristics. Following reinstatement, effects would reduce to **negligible.**

7.2.14 Overall, the development of the site would change the rough grass within the site with the introduction of solar arrays, ancillary structures and grassland. The landscape of the site on the Dulais valley side and character transition to upland would be retained, and effects would be fully reversible. The fields of the site are larger scale and comprise rough grass, which is considered more able to accommodate solar development than the neighbouring, retained smaller pasture enclosures. The solar development is likely to be regarded as an adverse change to the landscape character, although some features of the proposals seek to retain existing features such as the field pattern, hedgerow boundaries, and linear tree groupings. Once the establishment and decommissioning activities are completed, the landscape would be fully restored and the positive effects on the landscape character and features resulting from mitigation and management proposals would be beneficial to landscape character and features. The proposals detailed within the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan for the scheme would result in strengthening and enhancement of the features of the site which contribute to the character of the Dulais Valley.

Visual assessment

7.2.15 To confirm the baseline studies of designations, landscape character, and ZTV mapping, a total of nine views were photographed to illustrate each site and their appearance from publicly available locations.

7.2.16 The visual assessment concluded that for People in residential properties in Seven Sisters, at close or medium distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site, visual effects were assessed as moderate, adverse during construction and decommissioning and moderate-minor, adverse during operation. Views would generally be partial due to screening. The solar development would be accommodated alongside dominant man-made elements in the view and there would be some visual integration into the landscape fabric of the valley side through layout and design.

7.2.17 **Footpath users within of close to the site with open views of the site** would be subject to **moderate-major** or **moderate adverse** effects throughout the lifespan of the development. Once decommissioning is completed, effects would be **moderate-minor or minor, beneficial.** The majority of the site would be visible at close distance.

7.2.18 For footpath users within or close to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site and footpath users at medium distance to the site, in or near to the town of Seven Sisters in the SLA, with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site, effects throughout the lifespan of the development would be minor, adverse due to small change for moderately sensitive receptors. Once decommissioning is completed effects would be minor, beneficial or minor neutral. Effects would be limited by the very partial nature of views and overall view composition would be retained.

7.2.19 Footpaths users at medium distance to the site, in or near to the town of Seven Sisters in the SLA, with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site or footpath users at medium distance to the site, in the Dulais Valley and SLA with open views of the site would be subject to moderate, adverse effects throughout the lifespan of the development. The solar arrays would be accommodated in the fieldscape pattern. Once decommissioning is completed effects would be minor, neutral.

7.2.20 For road users on residential streets within Seven Sisters, at close or medium distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site, effects would be moderate-minor, adverse during construction and decommissioning and minor adverse during operation due to the medium-small or small change for lesser sensitivity receptors.

7.2.21 Overall, the most adverse visual effects would occur within and close to the site during construction and operation of the proposed solar farm. As distance increase from the site, visual effects would reduce. For residents in the settlement of Seven Sisters, views are expected to be available but would be partial, filtered and/ or oblique and including existing man-made elements in baseline views. From within the Special Landscape Area there would

be some visual integration in largescale views of the valley landscape as a result of the layout, which reflects landscape pattern and form.

7.2.22 Weather conditions, as described in paragraph 1.3.12 above would limit visibility for receptors as conditions that limit visibility occur due to rainfall (152.5 days on average in the year) and air frost (6.86 days on average in the year).

Cumulative assessment

7.2.23 The known operational, consented, and proposed solar farm developments with submitted planning applications within the 3km cumulative study area were mapped. Potential solar farm developments at earlier stages were scoped out, as there is too great uncertainty about their location, form, and scale. The Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme is the only known solar scheme within 4km of the study area.

7.2.24 Cumulative landscape effects would be **minor, adverse.** Reversible effects would be to increase the presence of solar farm developments in the wider landscape of the Dulais Valley. Solar farms would not form a key characteristic of the landscape.

7.2.25 In relation to cumulative visual effects, a Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility (CZTV) was generated for the 3km cumulative study area (refer to **Figure LA.12**), illustrated the potential visibility of the proposed solar farm only, the potential visibility of the cumulative scheme only, and areas where both the proposed solar farm and cumulative scheme would potentially be visible in combination.

7.2.26 Potential sequential effects would be largely limited to the network of rights of way within and local to the site and the north Dulais Valley, primarily within 1-1.5km of the Pen-Cae'r-Lan solar site boundary. The primary local vehicular routes within the study area lie largely outside of the CZTV are would therefore generally not be subject to any cumulative effects. Beyond 1-1.5km of the site, sequential effects are unlikely to be discernible.

7.2.27 The cumulative visual effect of the proposed solar farm with the cumulative solar farm development would result in **minor adverse** effects. Due to the location of the Hirfynydd scheme on the south side of the Dulais Valley, at greater distance and elevation, cumulatively the solar farms are likely to be viewed as separate isolated elements of the landscape, too infrequent and of insufficient importance to be perceived as a visual characteristic of the area. The cumulative effects on visual amenity would be reversible, over a restricted area.

7.2.28 Should the Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar scheme be refused planning permission, the cumulative effects would be **negligible**, should the proposed development gain consent.

7.3 Conclusions

7.3.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVApp) has examined the landscape and visual impacts in relation to the proposed solar farm. The potential impacts have been thoroughly assessed

through a combination of desk studies, a walk-over of the site, survey and reconnaissance of the surrounding landscape of the site.

7.3.2 Proposals for the site to retain and incorporate existing key landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. This would help to integrate the proposed solar farm and ancillary structures into the landscape whilst minimising any potential impacts on character. The Landscape Masterplan and Landscape and Ecology Management Plan for the site include mitigation and enhancement proposals for provision of additional habitat and beneficial management of existing and proposed landscape features. Whilst the site would change from rough grassland, the characteristic valley side transition to upland character would appropriately accommodate the development and changes would be fully restored following decommissioning, incorporating landscape enhancement through planting and management. Visual effects of the site would also be contained due to the retained and surrounding trees, hedgerows and vegetation screening views towards the proposals.

7.3.3 Although the proposed development would increase the presence of solar development within the landscape, it would not result in a change to the overall character of the Dulais valley side and character transition to upland, accommodated alongside existing electricity infrastructure in the landscape. The proposals would also be fully reversible and include mitigation proposals that would help integrate the solar farm into the landscape.

7.3.4 Cumulative effects of the proposed solar farm, should it gain consent, would be limited. There is one other known solar farm relevant to this LVApp, which is located 1.5km to the south. Although the proposed solar development would increase the presence of solar farms within the landscape, it would not result in a change to the overall character or key characteristics of the area. The proposals would also be fully reversible and include mitigation proposals that would help integrate the solar farm into the landscape.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Figures

Appendix 2 – Assessment Methodology

Appendix 3 – Assessment of Effects

Appendix 1 – Figures

Figure LA.01	Site Location
Figure LA.02	Designations
Figure LA.03	Public Access
Figures LA.04	LANDMAP
Figure LA.05	Topography
Figure LA.06	Site Context
Figures LA.07	Site Photographs
Figures LA.08	Zone of Theoretical Visibility plans
Figures LA.09	Viewpoints
Figure LA.10	Cumulative sites
Figure LA.11	Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Greentech Investment UK Ltd.

Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Site Location **LA.01**

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.01. qgz

January 2025

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Designations **LA.02**

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary
- Bannau Brycheiniog National Park
- Special Landscape Area

Ancient Woodland

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

Ecology Designations

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Historic and Cultural Designations

- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Listed Buildings:

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.02. qgz

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Public Access **LA.03**

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary

National Cylce Routes

- National Cycle Route 43

Long Distance Footpaths

- St Illtyds Walk

Public Rights of Way

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- CROW Access Land

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.03. qgz

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LANDMAP: Geological Landscape Overall Evaluation **LA.04-1**

Key

Site Boundary

1km Buffers from Site Boundary

Geological Landscape overall evaluations (question GL33)

Outstanding

High

Moderate

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.04-1. qgz

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LANDMAP: Landscape Habitats Overall Evaluation **LA.04-2**

Key

Site Boundary

1km Buffers from Site Boundary

Landscape Habitats overall evaluations (question LH45)

High

Moderate

Low

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.04-1. qgz

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

LANDMAP: Historic Landscape Overall Evaluation **LA.04-3**

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary

Historic Landscape overall evaluations (question HL40)

- Outstanding
- High
- Moderate
- Low

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.04-2. qgz

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

LANDMAP: Landscape and Visual Overall Evaluation **LA.04-4**

Key

Site Boundary

1km Buffers from Site Boundary

Landscape and Visual overall evaluations (question VS50)

High

Moderate

Low

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.04-3. qgz

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Topography **LA.05**

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary

mAOD	
50	290
70	310
90	330
110	350
130	370
150	390
170	410
190	430
210	450
230	470
250	490
270	

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.05. qgz

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Upland

C

B

D

Pen-c'aer lan farm

Tree line along field boundary

Watercourse lined with trees

Seven Siters

Small pasture fields adjacent to the site

Pasture fields

01

Farm access track

1

A4109

Greentech Investment UK Ltd.

Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Site Context **LA.06**

Key

Site Boundary

Special Landscape Area

Public Rights of Way

Footpath

Bridleway

CROW Access Land

Listed Building

Grade II

Features:

Pylons

Overhead cables

A Site photo locations

01 Viewpoint location (360 degree)

0 50 100 150 200 250 m

Scale 1:5,000 @ A3

North

TC23191 LA.06. qgz

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Site photograph A: View from a footpath on a local track in the southeast of the site looking west



Site photograph B: View from a footpath in the northwest of the site looking east

Greentech Investment UK Ltd.

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Severn Sisters

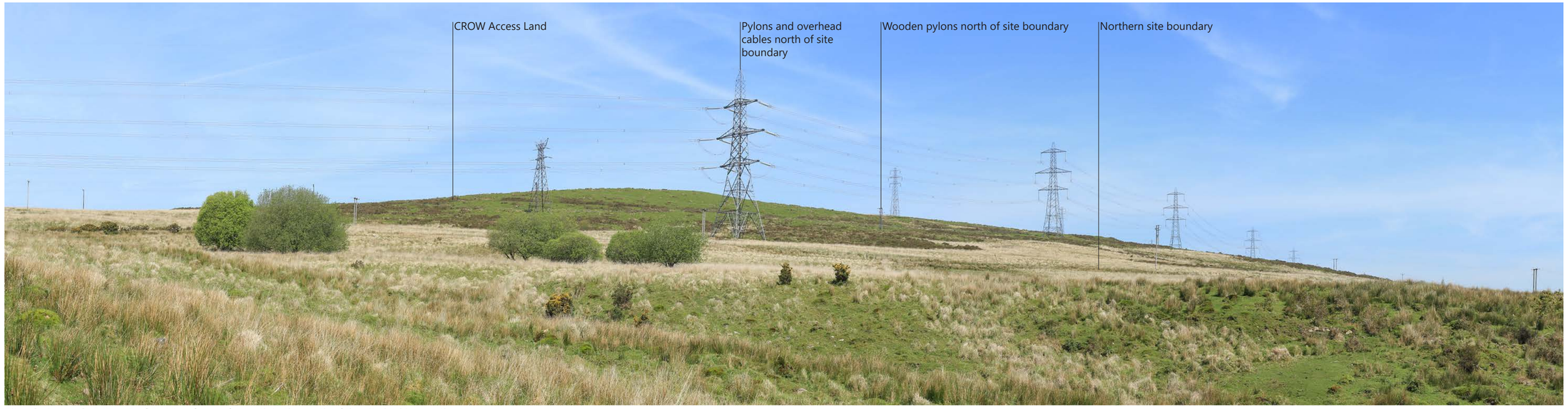
Site photographs A and B **LA.07-1**

Page size: extended A3 w597mm, h297mm

TC23191 Photos.indd January 2025

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Site photograph C (Part 1 of 2): View from a footpath in the north of the site looking north



Site photograph C (Part 2 of 2): View from a footpath in the north of the site looking east

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Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Severn Sisters

Site photograph C **LA.07-2**

Page size: extended A3 w597mm, h297mm

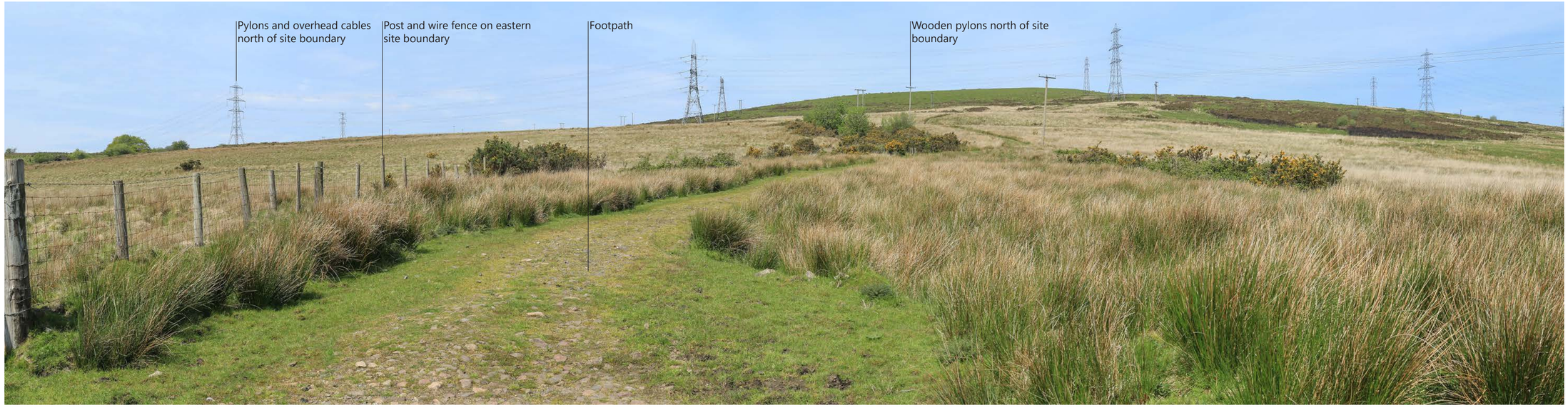
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Site photograph D (Part 1 of 2): View from a footpath on a local track on the eastern boundary of the site looking west



Site photograph D (Part 2 of 2): View from a footpath on a local track on the eastern boundary of the site looking north

Greentech Investment UK Ltd.

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Severn Sisters

Site photograph D **LA.07-3**

Page size: extended A3 w597mm, h297mm

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Zone of Theoretical Visibility: LA.08-1 Bare Earth

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary
- Bannau Brycheiniog National Park
- Special Landscape Area

ZTV: Bare Earth

- Minor part of the proposed development potentially visible
- Moderate part of the proposed development potentially visible
- Most of the proposed development potentially visible

Public Rights of Way

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- National Cycle Route 43
- St Illtyds Walk

- 01 Viewpoint locations

NOTE: ZTV calculated to the height of 3.25m to represent the 'worst case scenario'. The viewer eye-height for the ZTVs has been set at 2m above ground level. ZTV has been calculated using LiDAR composite DTM (Digital Terrain Model) with a spatial resolution of 2m. This was based upon a "bare earth scenario" i.e., no allowance has been made for the potential screening by existing buildings, woodland, trees, and hedgerows.

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.08-1. qgz

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Zone of Theoretical Visibility: LA.08-2 Screening

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary
- Bannau Brycheiniog National Park
- Special Landscape Area

ZTV: Screening

- Minor part of the proposed development potentially visible
- Moderate part of the proposed development potentially visible
- Most of the proposed development potentially visible

Public Rights of Way

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- National Cycle Route 43
- St Illtyds Walk

01 Viewpoint locations

NOTE: ZTV calculated to the height of 3.25m to represent the 'worst case scenario'. The viewer eye-height for the ZTVs has been set at 2m above ground level. ZTV has been calculated using LiDAR composite DTM (Digital Terrain Model) with a spatial resolution of 2m. This was based upon a "bare earth scenario" i.e., no allowance has been made for the potential screening by existing buildings, woodland, trees, and hedgerows.

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.08-1. qgz

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Baseline Photograph **View flat at a comfortable arm's length**

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280626 N208416
Ground level:	179m AOD
Direction of view:	132°
Distance to site:	0m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 12:29



Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 01 (Part 1): View from track and footpath intersection in the south part of the site, looking southeast

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-1

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280626 N208416
Ground level:	179m AOD
Direction of view:	69°
Distance to site:	0m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
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Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 01 (Part 2) : View from track and footpath intersection in the south part of the site, looking northeast

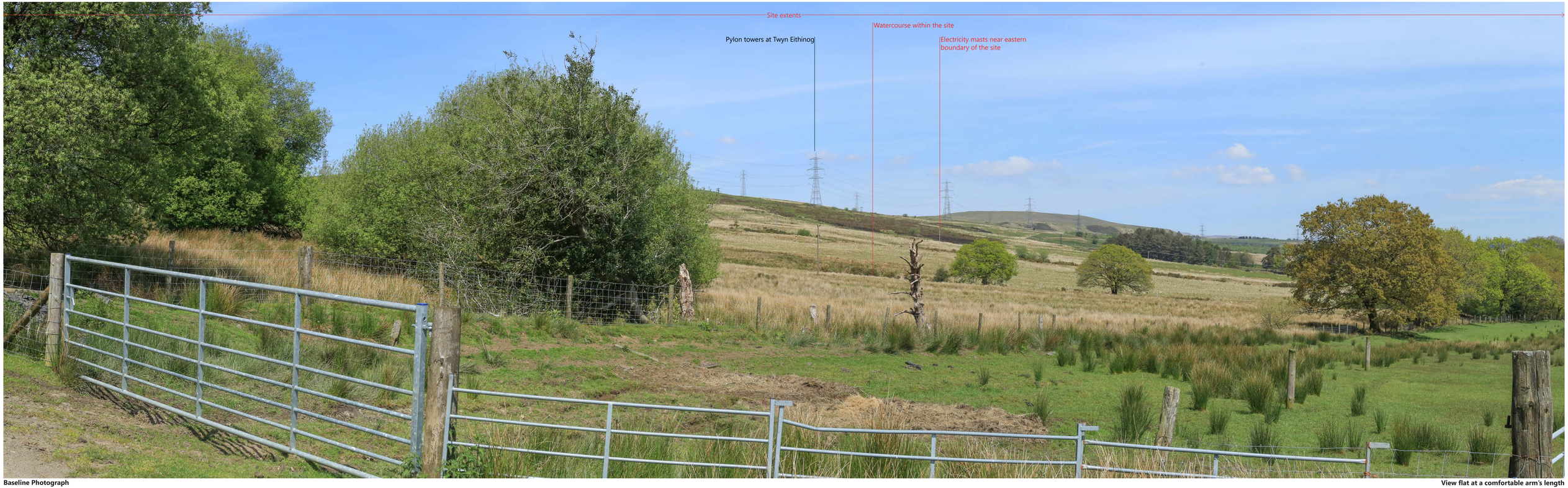
Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-2

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Baseline Photograph **View flat at a comfortable arm's length**

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280626 N208416
Ground level:	179m AOD
Direction of view:	350°
Distance to site:	0m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 12:29



Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 01 (Part 3): View from track and footpath intersection in the south part of the site

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-3

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280626 N208416
Ground level:	179m AOD
Direction of view:	302°
Distance to site:	0m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 12:29



Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 01 (Part 3): View from track and footpath intersection in the south part of the site

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-4

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280196 N208087
Ground level:	204m AOD
Direction of view:	72°
Distance to site:	296m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 11:05

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 02: Footpath to southwest of the site at Hengaer

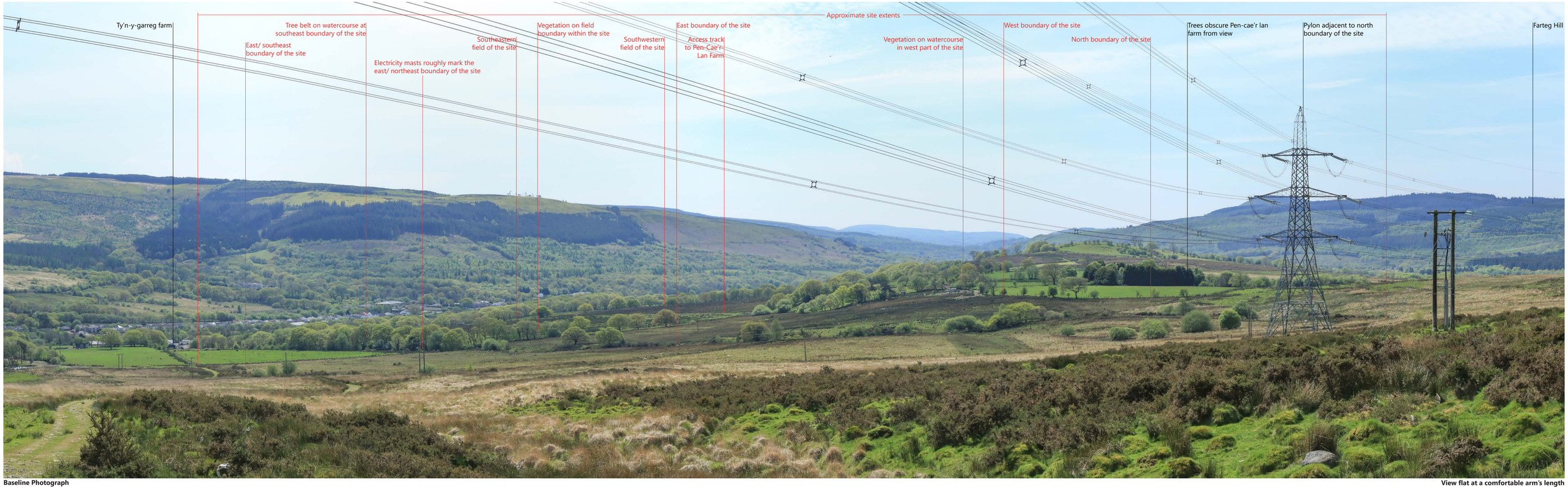
Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-5

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Baseline Photograph **View flat at a comfortable arm's length**

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280761 N209279	Horizontal field of view:	90° (cylindrical projection)	Correct printed image size:	820 x 250mm
Ground level:	243m AOD	Vertical field of view:	27°	Camera:	EOS 5D Mk III
Direction of view:	219°	Enlargement factor:	96%	Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Distance to site:	325m	Principal distance:	812.5mm	Camera height:	1.5m AGL
		Paper size:	840 x 297mm (extended A3)	Date and time:	09/05/2024 12:48

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Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

Viewpoint 03: Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog

LA.09-6

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E281372 N208337	Horizontal field of view:	90° (cylindrical projection)	Correct printed image size:	820 x 250mm
Ground level:	150m AOD	Vertical field of view:	27°	Camera:	EOS 5D Mk III
Direction of view:	285°	Enlargement factor:	96%	Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Distance to site:	369m	Principal distance:	812.5mm	Camera height:	1.5m AGL
		Paper size:	840 x 297mm (extended A3)	Date and time:	09/05/2024 10:10

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

Viewpoint 04: Dulais Road, Seven Sisters

LA.09-7

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E281031 N207696
Ground level:	137m AOD
Direction of view:	332°
Distance to site:	576m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 15:02

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 05: Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn

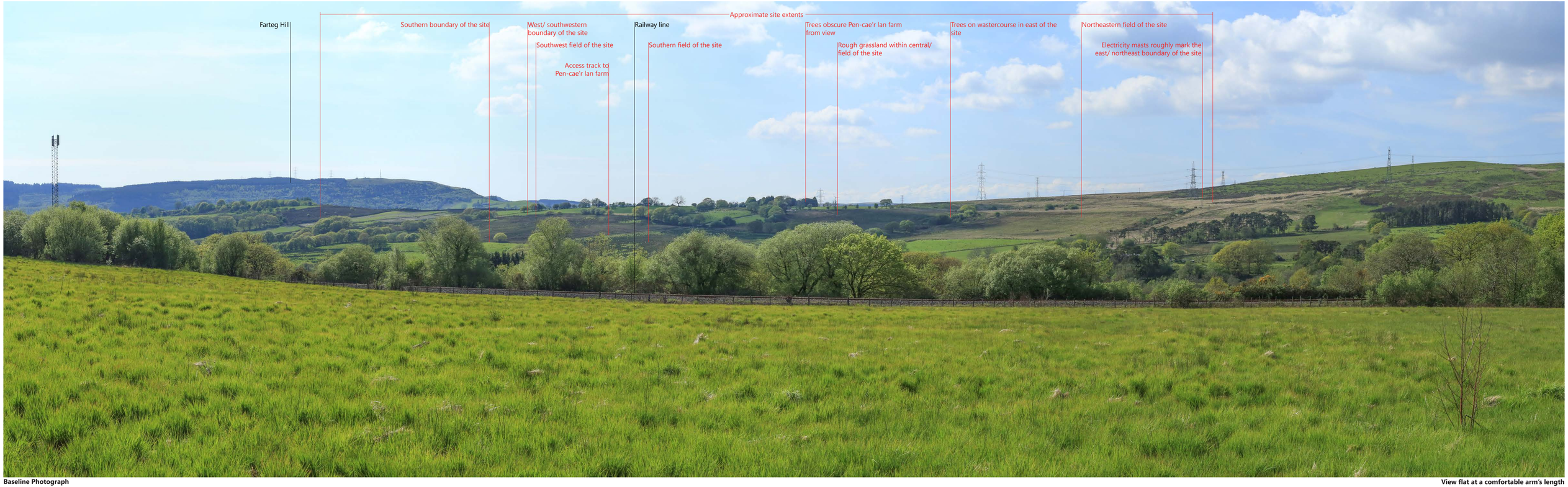
Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-8

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E281811 N208234
Ground level:	187m AOD
Direction of view:	286°
Distance to site:	816m

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 15:53

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

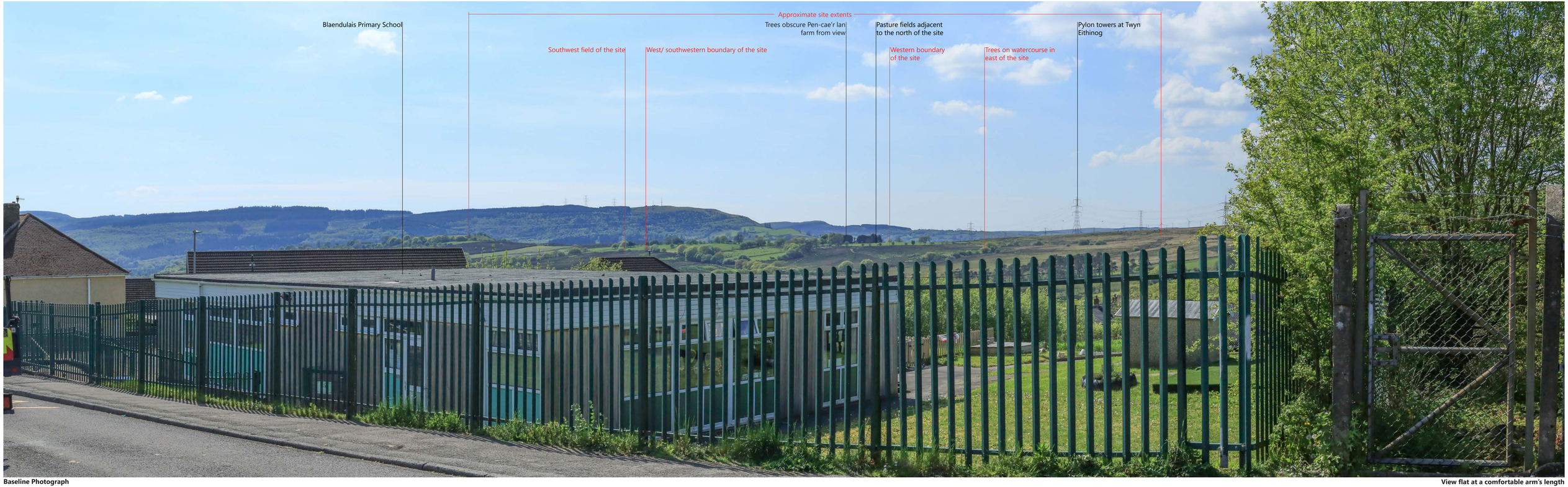
Viewpoint 06: Footpath south of Seven Sisters

LA.09-9

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E282150 N208813
Ground level:	214m AOD
Direction of view:	260°
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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2024 15:29

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 07: Heol Hen, Seven Sisters

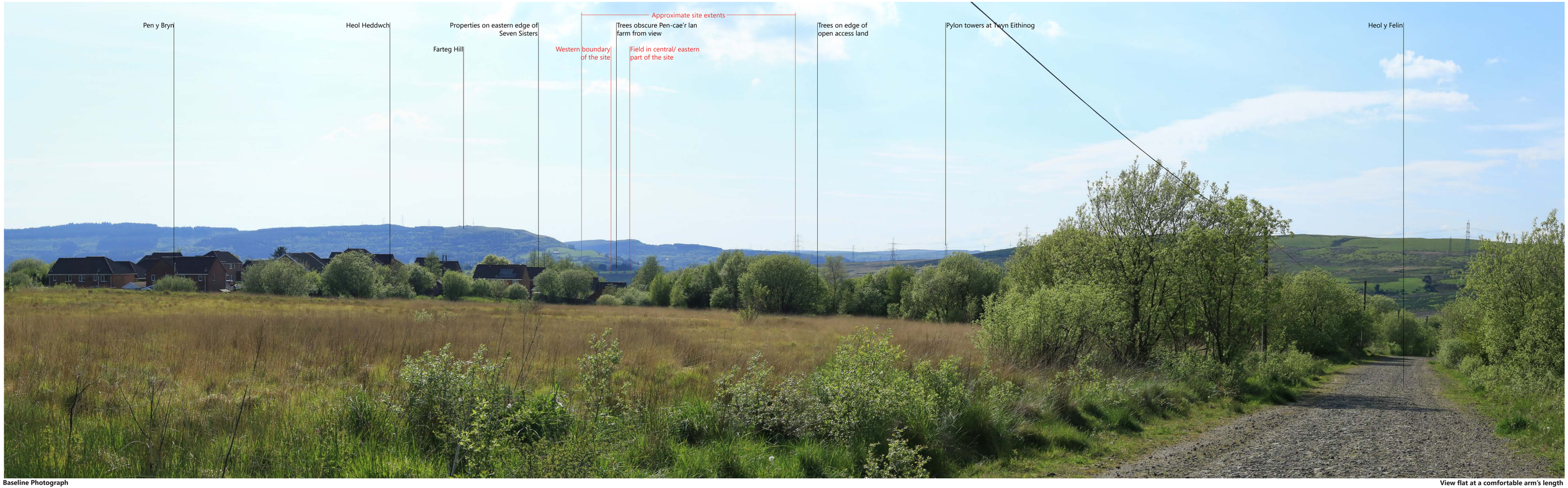
Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.**09-10**

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Baseline Photograph **View flat at a comfortable arm's length**

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E282554 N208865	Horizontal field of view:	90° (cylindrical projection)
Ground level:	232m AOD	Vertical field of view:	27°
Direction of view:	263°	Enlargement factor:	96%
Distance to site:	1.6km	Principal distance:	812.5mm
		Paper size:	840 x 297mm (extended A3)

Correct printed image size:	820 x 250mm
Camera:	EOS 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	09/05/2023 16:44

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Viewpoint 08: Footpath east of Seven Sisters

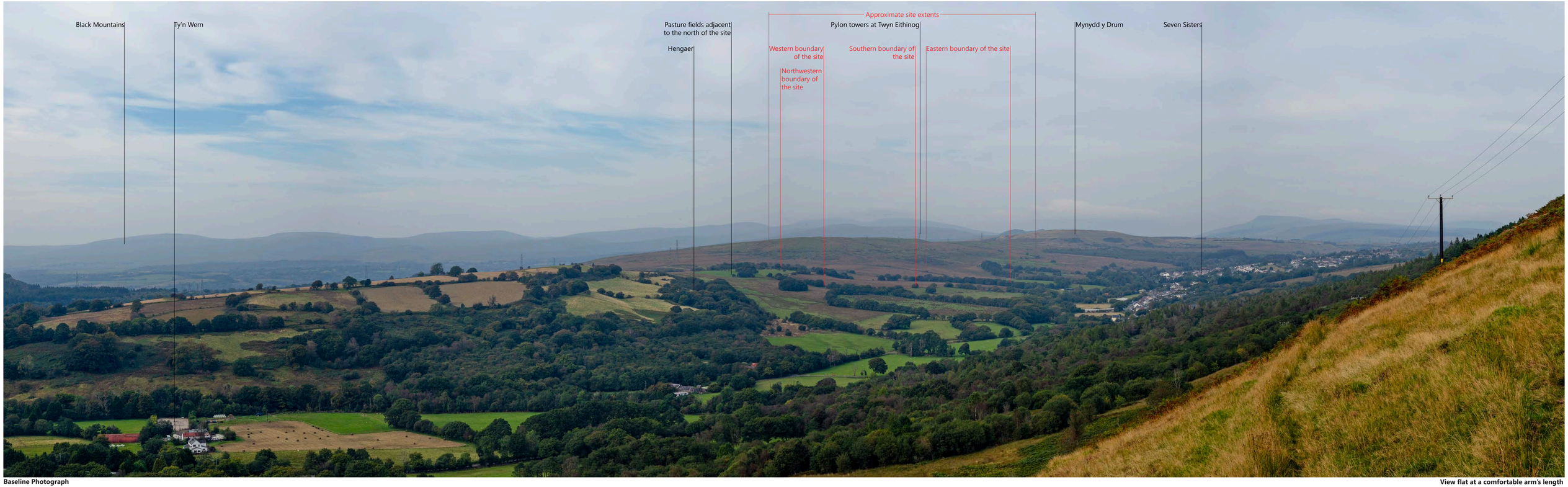
Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

LA.09-11

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Baseline Photograph

View flat at a comfortable arm's length

Viewpoint information:

OS reference:	E280248 N206270
Ground level:	197m AOD
Direction of view:	11°
Distance to site:	1.8km

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 5D Mk III
Lens:	50mm (Canon EF 50mm f/1.8)
Camera height:	1.5m AGL
Date and time:	19/09/2024 16:02

Project no. TC23191 January 2025

Pen-Cae'r-Lan Farm, Seven Sisters

Viewpoint 09: Bridleway near Coed Ddu

LA.09-12

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Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Cumulative Scheme Location Plan LA.11

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffers from Site Boundary
- Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park
- Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar array area

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

TC23191 LA.11. qgz

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Greentech Investment UK Ltd.

Pen Caer Lan Solar Farm, Neath

Cumulative Zone of Theoretical Visibility: Screening **LA.12**

Key

Site Boundary

1km Buffers from Site Boundary

ZTV: Screening

Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park

Hirfynydd Renewable Energy Park solar array area

Hirfynydd Energy Park solar visible in isolation

Pen Caer Lan solar farm visible in isolation

Hirfynydd Energy Park solar and Pen Caer Lan solar farm visible in combination

NOTE: ZTV calculated to the height of 3.25m to represent the 'worst case scenario'. The viewer eye-height for the ZTVs has been set at 2m above ground level. ZTV has been calculated using LiDAR composite DSM (Digital Surface Model) with a spatial resolution of 2m, which includes heights of existing buildings and vegetation in the data. The screening effect of other surface features such as individual trees and hedgerows may not be picked up by the data.

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Scale 1:22,500@ A3

North

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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).

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

Table A2-1 characteristics of solar farm developments

Character	Criteria
Location	The location of solar energy developments is typically dictated by the availability and capacity of the grid connection. To make the best of the solar resource over land, solar farms are frequently located in larger fields of consistent or gentle gradient.
Glint & glare	The effect of reflection from the solar panels or galvanised array frames when viewed from the south could increase their visual prominence. Glint is the direct reflection of sunlight, whereas glare is the diffuse reflection (or reflection of the bright sky around the sun). Glint is typically more intense than glare. Solar cells are designed to absorb light to generate electricity rather than reflect it, so are less reflective than other sources of glint.
Ground disturbance	Solar arrays can be installed with minimal ground disturbance by being pinned directly to the ground. Cable trenching and the formation of access tracks also result in ground disturbance.
Construction plant	Smaller plant such as telehandlers is typically used to transport the array frames and panels around the solar development for installation, once delivered to a central location.
Activity for maintenance and repair	Personnel, with vehicles and equipment, visiting the solar farm at regular intervals, and the activities associated with the maintenance operations.
Views	Solar farms are generally constructed over several fields within existing and sometimes enhanced hedgerow boundaries. Views of entire solar farm proposals may not be possible due to screening effects of existing and proposed features.
Duration	The solar farm would be in place and operational for 50 years. Effects during the operational period are considered permanent, but fully reversible. The construction and decommissioning phases would be in the order of up to 6 months, and the effects during these periods are 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

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.
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;

Value	Criteria
	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;
- 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. 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 value and susceptibility.

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 twenty years; Long term: twenty to forty years; Permanent: more than forty years.
Reversibility	The prospect and the practicality of the effect being reversed.

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

Magnitude of Change	Landscape Change
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;
- 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.

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

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: twenty to forty years; Permanent: more than forty years.
Reversibility	The prospect and the practicality of the effect being reversed.

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

Magnitude of Change	Visual Change
	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 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.

Methodology for the Cumulative Assessment

The cumulative assessment considers the potential effects upon landscape character and potential effects upon visual amenity that may arise as an indirect consequence of the proposed wind farm.

Types of cumulative effects

Cumulative landscape and visual effects result from additional changes to landscape and visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction or in combination with other proposed solar farms. The types of cumulative effects assessed are:

- **Additive effects**: landscape and/or visual effects combined with or in addition to the effects of the other solar farms;
- **Sequential effects**: experience of first one effect, and later another at different places as one moves through the landscape;
- **Temporal effects**: effects accumulating over a period of time on the landscape or visual amenity, from this proposal and the other solar farms that are either operational, under construction, or have planning approval.

Cumulative landscape and visual effects that may introduce new types of change and/or increase or extend effects of the main project are identified and whether the proposed project adds to or combines with the other wind farms to create a cumulative effect.

Assessing the Cumulative Landscape Effects

The assessment considers cumulative effects on the fabric of the landscape and its individual elements or features; on the aesthetic, perceptual or experiential aspects of the landscape, such as scale, sense of enclosure, diversity, pattern, colour, sense of naturalness, remoteness or tranquillity, and on the overall character of the landscape, especially modification to key characteristics and possible creation of new landscape character.

Final conclusions about the degree of the cumulative effect on the landscape of this proposed project with the other wind farms considered are based upon the following considerations:

Table A2-13 Indicative criteria for assessing cumulative landscape effects.

Cumulative landscape effect	Indicative criteria
Major	Large irreversible effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes. Cumulatively, the solar farms are a key characteristic of the landscape, defining a new landscape character type or area.
Moderate	Cumulatively, the solar farms are becoming a characteristic of the landscape, but not of sufficient dominance to be a defining characteristic of the area.
Minor	Cumulatively, the solar farms are not an important or key characteristic of the landscape and have little effect on the values and experiences associated with the landscape e.g., wildness, sense of history; Reversible 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 the landscape.
Negligible	The solar farms have little effect on the landscape character cumulatively.

Assessing the Cumulative Visual Effects

Cumulative visual effects, resulting from changes in the content and character of the views due to introduction of new elements or removal of or damage to existing ones, are identified and the nature of views available and the contribution of project being assessed to cumulative visual effects. Additive effects may occur either when developments are seen together in one angle of view or where they are seen when looking in different directions from one location. The effects on viewers as they follow linear routes and move through the landscape are considered as sequential effects.

Final conclusions about the degree of the cumulative effect on the visual amenity of this proposed project with the other solar farms considered are based upon the following considerations:

Table A2-14 Indicative criteria for assessing cumulative visual effects.

Cumulative landscape effect	Indicative criteria
Major	Cumulatively, the solar farms dominate the view, seeming to define a new visual aesthetic; Large scale effects arising from new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view of highly sensitive receptors, or at recognised and important viewpoints, or from recognised scenic routes.
Moderate	Cumulatively, the solar farms are seen as a characteristic of the landscape in the view, but not of sufficient dominance to be a defining characteristic of the visual amenity.
Minor	Cumulatively, the solar farms are separate isolated elements of the landscape in the view, too infrequent and of insufficient importance to be perceived as a characteristic of the area; Cumulatively, the effects on visual amenity are reversible, of short duration, or occur over a restricted area.
Negligible	The solar farms have little effect on the visual amenity cumulatively.

Appendix 3 – Assessment of Effects

Table Appendix 3.1: Landscape Magnitude of Change

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change during construction	Magnitude of Change during operation	Magnitude of Change during decommissioning
Sloping landform on the Dulais valley side	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 to would be small. The defining landscape features of the 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 valley side landform would accommodate the south-facing solar arrays, set within the existing profile. 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**.	The short-term activities would be similar to the construction activities but in reverse. The scale of the change to would be small over a small-medium geographical area. Change would be over the short-term. Magnitude of construction phase change is **small**. Following completion of the activities, over time the magnitude of change would reduce to **negligible** as the rough pasture is reinstated.
Field pattern formed by watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow	The field boundaries within the site would remain largely intact, with some limited disturbance where short sections of removal is required to accommodate access. Existing lines of trees and hedgerow would be fenced and protected during construction. 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 but reversible change. The magnitude of change is considered to be **small**.	The proposed development would be accommodated within the existing retained field pattern, which would shape the layout of the solar arrays and associated infrastructure. The scale of change to the field pattern would be small within the geographical area of the site and its immediate setting. The development would be contained to the larger size rough grass fields on the valley side, leaving the neighbouring smaller scale pasture fields unaffected. Any minor losses to existing hedgerows to facilitate access would be compensated for through planting of new native species hedgerow in gaps. Gappy or defunct hedgerows will be infill planted. Mitigation proposals would create enhancement of hedgerow features which form the field pattern. The permanent change would be reversable. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small**.	The short-term activities would be similar to the construction activities but in reverse. The scale of the changes would be medium-small scale over a medium geographical area. Following the establishment of planting and implementation of the management regime prescribed for the lifespan of the development (as detailed in the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan), the poorer quality hedgerows on the site would likely have improved structure and reinforced landscape and visual value, along with ecological connectivity to the retained higher quality tree lines. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small**. Following the completion of the decommissioning activities, the magnitude of change would increase to **medium** as rough pasture is reinstated and planting becomes fully established in accordance with management objectives.
Transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north	The construction activities on the site would introduce additional sound and movement within the wider setting. There would be some interruptions to elevated views from the uplands looking on to the site from the north the site as a result of construction activity; however, activity maybe perceived within the context of existing pylon infrastructure. The short-term changes would lead to permanent but reversible change. The magnitude of chance is considered to be **small**.	The proposed development would add infrastructure to the site, accommodated within the existing landscape pattern and within larger scale rough grass fields. The role of the landscape as transition to upland landscape would remain largely unaffected by the proposals, with the proposals accommodated within the largescale landscape setting. The permanent change would be reversible. Overall magnitude is considered to be **small.**	The short-term activities would be similar to the construction activities but in reverse. The scale of the changes would be medium-small scale over a medium geographical area. The magnitude of change is considered to be **small**. Following the completion of the activities, overtime the magnitude of change would reduce to **negligible** as arable farmland is reinstated.

Landscape Receptor	Magnitude of Change during construction	Magnitude of Change during operation	Magnitude of Change during decommissioning
Recreational access on Public Rights of Way	During construction there are likely to be some interruptions/ diversions along the footpaths that cross within the site. Beyond the site boundary, changes to the routes would be indirect. Perceptual changes during the activities would include the movement of vehicles and associated sound. The activities would be over the short-term, the magnitude of change is considered to be **small**.	The footpaths through the site would be retained. Changes to the routes would be limited; however, there would be perceptual changes to views from the routes as a result of the proposed development, including some hedgerow and tree planting alongside the routes as well as the addition of solar arrays. Some views from routes beyond the site would be filtered by the retained and proposed hedgerow and trees. The legibility of the routes would be improved by the development. The scale of the changes would be small, affecting a small geographical area. The indirect changes would be permanent but reversible. Magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small**.	The short-term activities would be similar to the construction activities but in reverse. The scale of the changes would be medium-small scale over a medium geographical area. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small**. Following the completion of the activities, overtime the magnitude of change would increase to **medium** as a result of improved connectivity through recreational access.
Overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south	The construction activities on the site would introduce additional sound and movement within the wider setting. There would be some interruptions to distant and elevated views from the uplands overlooking the site from the south as a result of construction activity; however, activity maybe perceived within the context of the range of manmade influences and activity within the valley setting. The short-term changes would lead to permanent but reversible change. The magnitude of chance is considered to be **small**.	The proposed development would add infrastructure to the site, accommodated within the existing landscape pattern. The role of the Hifrynydd ridge and valley sides in the landscape setting would remain largely unaffected by the proposals, which would be accommodated within the landscape backdrop. The permanent change would be reversible. Overall magnitude is considered to be **small.**	The short-term activities would be similar to the construction activities but in reverse. The scale of the changes would be medium-small scale over a medium geographical area. The magnitude of change is considered to be **small**. Following the completion of the activities, overtime the magnitude of change would reduce to **negligible** as arable farmland is reinstated.

Table Appendix 3.2: Landscape effects

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity to changes arising from the proposals	Magnitude of change	Degree & nature of effects during construction	Degree & nature of effects during operation	Degree & nature of effects during decommissioning
Sloping landform on the Dulais valley side	**Moderate-low sensitivity**	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Small** Decommission: **Small,** reducing to **negligible**	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to the small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Landform change because of construction would be limited.	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Defining topography would remain mostly unaltered.	Effects would be **minor, neutral** due to the small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Decommissioning activities would have little effect on characteristic topography. Once decommissioning is completed, effects would be **negligible**.

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity to changes arising from the proposals	Magnitude of change	Degree & nature of effects during construction	Degree & nature of effects during operation	Degree & nature of effects during decommissioning
Field pattern formed by watercourses, lines of trees and mixed quality hedgerow	**Moderate-low sensitivity**	Construction: **small** Operation: **medium-small** Decommission: **medium-small**, increasing to **medium**	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to the small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Effects would mostly be because of temporary tree and hedgerow protection rather than removal.	Effects would be **moderate-minor, beneficial** as a result of medium-small change to moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Existing field boundaries tree/ hedgerow structure would be retained and mitigation proposals would be implemented.	**Moderate-minor beneficial** due to the combination of moderate-low sensitivity receptors and medium-small change. Following completion of decommissioning and establishment of mitigation proposals, effects would increase to **moderate, beneficial.**
Transition to upland crossed by pylon infrastructure to the north	**Moderate-low sensitivity**	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Small** Decommission: **Small,** reducing to **negligible**	Effects would be **minor, adverse** as a result of small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Construction activities would be accommodated by the largescale landscape.	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to the small magnitude change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. The transition to upland would continue and solar infrastructure would be accommodated alongside pylon infrastructure.	Effects would be **minor, neutral** as a result of small scale change for moderate-low sensitivity receptors. Decommissioning activities would be accommodated by the largescale landscape. Following reinstatement, effects would reduce to **negligible**.
Recreational access on Public Rights of Way	**Low sensitivity**	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Medium-small** Decommission: **Medium-small,** increasing to **medium**	Effects would be **minor, adverse** as a result of small scale change for low sensitivity receptors. There may be some perceptual change to the setting of the footpaths because of construction however routes are likely to be infrequently used and poor legibility.	Effects would be **minor, beneficial** due to the combination of medium-small magnitude and low sensitivity. The legibility of routes would likely be improved once the development is completed.	**Minor, beneficial** throughout the decommissioning phase of the scheme, increasing to **moderate-minor beneficial** following decommissioning of the scheme because of increased legibility and recreational access through the reinstated site.
Overlooked by Hirfynydd and valley sides to the south	**Moderate sensitivity**	Construction: **Small** Operation: **Small** Decommission: **Small,** reducing to **negligible**	Effects would be **moderate-minor, adverse** as a result of small scale change for moderate sensitivity receptors. Construction activities would be accommodated by the largescale landscape.	Effects would be **moderate-minor, adverse** due to the small magnitude change for moderate sensitivity receptors. The expansive landscape would accommodate the development without affecting its key characteristics.	Effects would be **moderate-minor, neutral** as a result of small scale change for moderate sensitivity receptors. Decommissioning activities would be accommodated by the largescale landscape. Following reinstatement, effects would reduce to **negligible**.

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 and magnitude of change	View of the proposed development during decommissioning and magnitude of change
01 Footpath within the site	Construction activities would occur within the immediate setting, affecting a wide proportion of the view, particularly to the southeast and northeast where installation of the solar panels would occur at close distance (refer to **Figure LA.09-2** and **LA.09-2**). Effects would include the removal of rough pasture, installation of panels and other infrastructure associated with the proposed solar farm. To the north/ northwest (refer to **Figure LA.09-4**), temporary fencing would be erected to protect the boundary trees, which are to be retained. The movement and sound of the construction deliveries and other vehicles would also occur within the immediate setting. The scale of the changes would be large, over a medium-large geographical area, at close distance. The short-term activities would lead to a permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered to be **great**.	The proposed solar farm would be a clearly visible additional feature, at close distance, occupying a wide proportion of the field of view. The view composition would likely change from that of rough pasture to eye-level views of the solar arrays. In southeast facing views (refer to **Figure LA.09-1**), the rough grass on rising landform would be replaced by solar panels, set within the exiting topography and bounded by a timber post and wire security fence. In northeast facing views (refer to **Figure LA.09-2**), the panel arrays would be visible alongside the new access track and the retained footpath, which would form a clearly legible route outside of the security fence. The line of trees in the middle ground would be retained beyond security fencing, with a buffer of grassland. There would be some degree of integration within the view as a result of the retained framework of vegetation and accommodation of the panels within the existing topography and field pattern; however, the scale of change would be large, over a medium-large geographical area from within the site. Changes would be reversible. Magnitude of visual change is considered to be **great.**	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **great** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **medium-small,** following the establishment of planting, increased recreational access and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.
02 Footpath to the southwest of the site at Hengaer	Taller elements of construction may be discernible above tree canopies, along with some partial glimpses of construction activities in the southwest field of the site, available between gaps in the trees at the southwest boundary of the site. There may also be some perception of additional movement and sound because of construction deliveries and other vehicles within the site. As a result of landform and intervening surface vegetation, direct views of construction activity occurring within the site fields would likely be limited. The scale of the changes would be small, over the medium geographical area that includes the footpaths local to Hengaer. The short-term activities would lead to a permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change is considered **small**.	The solar farm would be largely out of view as a result of landform and intervening surface vegetation. It is possible that the upper parts of the 3.53m high substation compound in the southwest part of the site would be partially visible, above the tree canopies on the southwest boundary. Some very partial glimpses of the solar panels may also be available in this part of the site and the western part of the site, in the gaps between the boundary trees. Development in the central part of the site would likely not be visible as a result of landform. Some distant, partial views of the eastern areas of the site may be available, where landform rises however these would be oblique and fragmented by intervening vegetation. The scale of the changes would be small, affecting a small proportion of the angle of view and not altering the overall composition of the view. Change would be over the medium geographical area that includes the footpaths local to Hengaer. Changes would be reversible. The overall magnitude of visual change is considered to me **small**.	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **small** and once the activities are completed, changes would reduce to **negligible** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development <u>during construction</u> and magnitude of change	View of the <u>operational</u> proposed development and magnitude of change	View of the proposed development <u>during decommissioning</u> and magnitude of change
03 Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog	There are likely to be close distance views of construction activities, including the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure, visible within the majority of the site. The movement and noise of construction deliveries and other vehicles would also likely be visible. The scale of the change would be medium, over a moderate geographical area. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be **medium**.	Following completion of the development, views of the majority of the completed solar farm would be visible at close distance. The panel arrays would be accommodated in the field pattern that forms the site, partly obscuring some of the lower elements of boundary vegetation from view but set within the framework of retained vegetation within the site. The development would be visible in the context of the existing electricity infrastructure that is dominant within the view. The characteristic, largescale backdrop and overall view composition would remain intact, with the development occupying a medium proportion of the wider field of view. The scale of the change would therefore be medium-small, affecting the moderate geographical area local to Twyn Eithinog. Changes would be reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change following completion of the development would be **medium.**	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar views to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **small** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration. There would be increased connectivity of the footpath running south from the viewpoint with the site footpath that enters the eastern site field following restoration.
04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters	Partial views of construction activity within the site would be available at close distance but interrupted by the buildings and vegetation in the foreground. Activity in the southwest field of the site would likely be visible, including the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure. Partial views of these activities may also be available in the central part of the site, above roofs and between tree canopies. The movement and noise of construction deliveries and other vehicles relating to construction of the scheme would also likely be discernible, within the context of vehicular movement within the immediate setting. The scale of the change would be medium. The geographical area affected would be medium-small, comprising the specific locations where views are available above property roofs. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to the **medium-small**.	Following completion of the development, partial views of the completed development would likely be available. The panel arrays would be set within the existing field pattern, with views limited largely to the southwest field of the site but also including partial glimpses of development in the central part of the site. A small part of the skyline at the southwestern field of the site may be interrupted by the solar arrays. Generally, elsewhere, the development would be accommodated within the ridge skyline. The additional features would affect a small part of the overall field of view. The degree of additional features in the view would be small as a result of screening. The views would be partial and solar development would be accommodated alongside dominant man-made elements in the view. The scale of change would therefore be small. The geographical area effected would be medium-small, comprising the specific locations where views are available above property roofs. Changes would be reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change following the completion of the development would be **small**.	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **small** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development <u>during construction</u> and magnitude of change	View of the <u>operational</u> proposed development and magnitude of change	View of the proposed development <u>during decommissioning</u> and magnitude of change
05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn	Close distance, partial views of the construction activity within the site would likely be available, beyond the buildings and tree canopies in the middle/ foreground. Activity such as the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure would likely be partially visible in the southwest field of the site and glimpsed in the central and eastern areas of the site. The taller elements of construction in the more elevated parts of the site may break the skyline. The movement and noise of construction deliveries and other vehicles in the site would also likely be perceptible, within the context of vehicular movement within the immediate setting. The scale of the change would be medium. The geographical area affected would be medium-small, comprising the specific locations where views are available above property roofs. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be **medium-small**.	Once completed, development would be partially visible above eye-level, partly obscured middle/ foreground elements and accommodated in the retained structure of vegetation in the site. The skyline would likely remain unchanged, although it is possible that the panel arrays would skim the skyline above the southwest field of the site, in front of the skyline trees behind the site. The less elevated parts of the development would be entirely screened by tree cover on the lower valley sides and buildings. There would be some perception of additional features within the view as a result of the development, which would be partially visible, occupying a small part of the wider field of view. Views would be partly screened and broken. The skyline elements and retained vegetation in the site would help to integrate the development in the view. Solar development would be accommodated alongside dominant man-made elements in the view. The scale of the change to the view would therefore be medium-small. The geographical area affected would be medium-small, comprising the specific locations where views are available above property roofs. Changes would be reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change following completion would be **small**.	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **small** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.
06 Footpath south of Seven Sisters	Construction activities would be perceived at medium distance. This would likely include the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure. There would also likely be additional sense of movement and noise resulting from construction of the site. The scale of change would be medium-great. The geographical area would be medium-great, affecting this stretch of the footpath where the viewpoint is located. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. The magnitude of change during construction would be **medium-great.**	Development in all but the lowest parts of the site would be visible once completed. The solar arrays would face south into the valley, following the lines of the existing landform. The footprint of the development would reflect the existing landscape pattern, occupying the larger rough grass fields on the valley side, with the adjacent smaller pasture fields remaining untouched. The field boundary vegetation in the site would be retained and strengthened, breaking up the arrays. A medium-large proportion of the field of view would be occupied by the development, at medium distance. There would be some integration as a result of the layout, which reflects landscape pattern and form. The overall view composition would remain intact. The site would be visible almost in full. The scale of change is therefore medium-great. Views of a similar nature may be available from elsewhere along the route, therefore the geographical area affected is medium-great. Changes would be reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change following completion would be **medium.**	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-great** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **small** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development during construction and magnitude of change	View of the operational proposed development and magnitude of change	View of the proposed development during decommissioning and magnitude of change
07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters	Medium distance, partial views of the construction activity within the site would likely be available, beyond the buildings in the foreground. Activity such as the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure would likely be partially visible in the central/ eastern fields of the site and glimpsed in the southwest of the site. The movement and noise of construction deliveries and other vehicles in the site would also likely be perceptible, within the context of vehicular movement within the immediate setting. The scale of the change would be medium. The geographical area affected would be medium-small, comprising the specific locations where views are available above property roofs. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction would be **medium.**	Once completed, the upper parts of the development would be visible above the intervening built elements in the foreground. Oblique views of the development in the central and eastern part of the site would be available, with arrays facing south into the valley. The lower parts would be screened from view by the school building. A small part of the upper southwestern site field would also be visible, shaped by boundary vegetation. The arrays would reflect the existing field structure. Development would be contained within the larger scale rough grassland fields on the valley side. The smaller pasture fields adjacent to the site and field boundaries within the site would remain intact. A medium proportion of the field of view would be affected by the development, at medium distance. There would be some visual integration into the landscape fabric of the valley side through layout and design. Views would be partial due to screening but all of the site fields would be at least partly visible. Solar development would be accommodated alongside dominant man-made elements in the view. The resulting scale of change to the view would be medium. The geographical area affected would be medium-small, comprising the specific locations where views are available above and between buildings. Changes would be reversible. The overall magnitude of change following development would be **medium-small.**	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **small** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.
08 Footpath east of Seven Sisters	Very partial views of construction activity within the small part of the site visible at medium-long distance. Activity in the visible part of the central field would likely include the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure. There may be some slight perception of the movement and noise of construction activity on the site. The scale of the change would be small. The geographical area affected would be medium-great. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. Overall, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to the **small**.	Once completed, the solar panels in the small central part of the site that is visible above trees/ buildings would be visible. Development within the majority of the site would be screened from view as a result of screening in the middle ground. The scale of the change to the view would be small as a result of the very partial nature of views. The proportion of the view affected would be very small. Views of a similar nature may be available from elsewhere along the route and in the open access land, therefore the geographical area affected is medium-great. Changes would be reversible. The overall magnitude of change following completion would be **small**.	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **small** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **negligible** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.

Viewpoint reference	View of the proposed development during construction and magnitude of change	View of the operational proposed development and magnitude of change	View of the proposed development during decommissioning and magnitude of change
09 Bridleway near Coed Ddu	Construction activities would be perceived at medium-long distance. This would likely include the removal of rough grass, installation of panels and other associated infrastructure. There may be some slight perception of the movement and noise of construction activity on the site. The scale of change would be medium. The geographical area would be medium-great, affecting the route facing down the valley. The short-term activities would lead to permanent but reversible change. The magnitude of change during construction would be **medium-small. .**	The solar farm would be clearly visible on the valley side. The solar arrays would be accommodated in the fieldscape pattern, reflecting the existing field structure. Boundary vegetation surrounding and within the site would be retained, breaking up the arrays. Arrays would be contained within the larger rough grass fields on the valley side, leaving the small pasture fields unaffected. A medium-small proportion of the field of view would be occupied by the development. Most of the site would be visible however there would be some integration because of the layout, which reflects landscape pattern and form. The scale of change is considered medium. Views of a similar nature may be available looking down the valley from elsewhere along the route, therefore the geographical area affected is medium-great. The overall expansive composition of the view would remain intact. Changes would be reversible. Overall, the magnitude of change following completion would be **medium-small.**	Decommissioning activities would be viewed over the short-term. Views would be similar to construction activities, but in reverse. The magnitude of change is considered to be **medium-small** but once the activities are completed, changes would be **small** following the establishment of planting and management of the landscape features visible within the site after restoration.

Table Appendix 3.4: Visual effects

Visual Receptors & Sensitivity	Reference Viewpoints	Magnitude of change:	Degree & nature of effects during construction	Degree & nature of effects during operation	Degree & nature of effects during decommissioning
People in residential properties in Seven Sisters, at close or medium distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity**	**04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters** **05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn** **07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters**	Construction: **medium-small** or **medium** Operation: **small** or **medium-small** Decommission: **medium-small** or **medium,** reducing to **small**	Effects would be **moderate, adverse** due to medium-small or medium change, experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be **moderate-minor, adverse** due to small or medium-small change or visual intrusion experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be **moderate, adverse** due to the medium-small or medium change for medium sensitivity receptors. Once decommissioning is completed effects would be **moderate-minor**, **neutral**.

Visual Receptors & Sensitivity	Reference Viewpoints	Magnitude of change:	Degree & nature of effects during construction	Degree & nature of effects during operation	Degree & nature of effects during decommissioning
Footpath users within or close to the site with open views of the site: **moderate sensitivity**	**01 Footpath within the site** **03 Public footpath at Twyn Eithinog**	Construction: **great** or **medium** Operation: **great** or **medium** Decommission: **great** or **medium** reducing to **medium-small** or **small**	Effects would be **moderate-major** or **moderate adverse** due to the great or medium change for moderately sensitive receptors.	Effects would be **moderate-major** or **moderate adverse** due to the great or medium-great change for moderately sensitive receptors.	Effects would be **moderate-major** or **moderate adverse** due to the great or medium change for moderately sensitive receptors. Once decommissioning is completed effects would be **moderate-minor** or **minor**, **beneficial.**
Footpath users within or close to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** Or footpath users at medium distance to the site, in or near to the town of Seven Sisters in the SLA, with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity**	**02 Footpath to the southwest of the site at Hengaer** **08 Footpath east of Seven Sisters**	Construction: **small** Operation: **small** Decommission: **small** reducing to **negligible**	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to small change or visual intrusion experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to small or small change experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to small or small change or visual intrusion experienced by moderately sensitive viewers. Once decommissioning is completed effects would be **minor, beneficial** or **minor neutral.**
Footpaths users at medium distance to the site, in or near to the town of Seven Sisters in the SLA, with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **moderate sensitivity** Or footpath users at medium distance to the site, in the Dulais Valley and SLA with open views of the site: **moderate sensitivity**	**06 Footpath south of Seven Sisters** **09 Bridleway near Coed Ddu**	Construction: **medium-great** or **medium-small** Operation: **medium** or **medium-small** Decommission: **medium-great** or **medium-small** reducing to **small**	Effects would be **moderate, adverse** due to medium-great or medium-small change experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be **moderate, adverse** due to medium-great or medium-small change or visual intrusion experienced by moderately sensitive viewers.	Effects would be **moderate, adverse** due to medium-great or medium-small change experienced by moderately sensitive viewers. Once decommissioning is completed effects would be **minor, neutral.**

Visual Receptors & Sensitivity	Reference Viewpoints	Magnitude of change:	Degree & nature of effects during construction	Degree & nature of effects during operation	Degree & nature of effects during decommissioning
Road users on residential streets within Seven Sisters, at close or medium distance to the site with partial, filtered or oblique views of the site: **lesser sensitivity**	**04 Dulais Road, Seven Sisters** **05 South Seven Sisters, Nant-y-Cafn** **07 Heol Hen, Seven Sisters**	Construction: **medium-small** or **medium** Operation: **small** or **medium-small** Decommission: **medium-small** or **medium,** reducing to **small**	Effects would be **moderate-minor, adverse** due to medium-small or medium change, experienced by lesser sensitivity viewers.	Effects would be **minor, adverse** due to small or medium-small change or visual intrusion experienced by lesser sensitivity viewers.	Effects would be **moderate-minor, adverse** due to medium-small or medium change, experienced by lesser sensitivity viewers; Once decommissioning is completed effects would be **minor**, **neutral**.

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