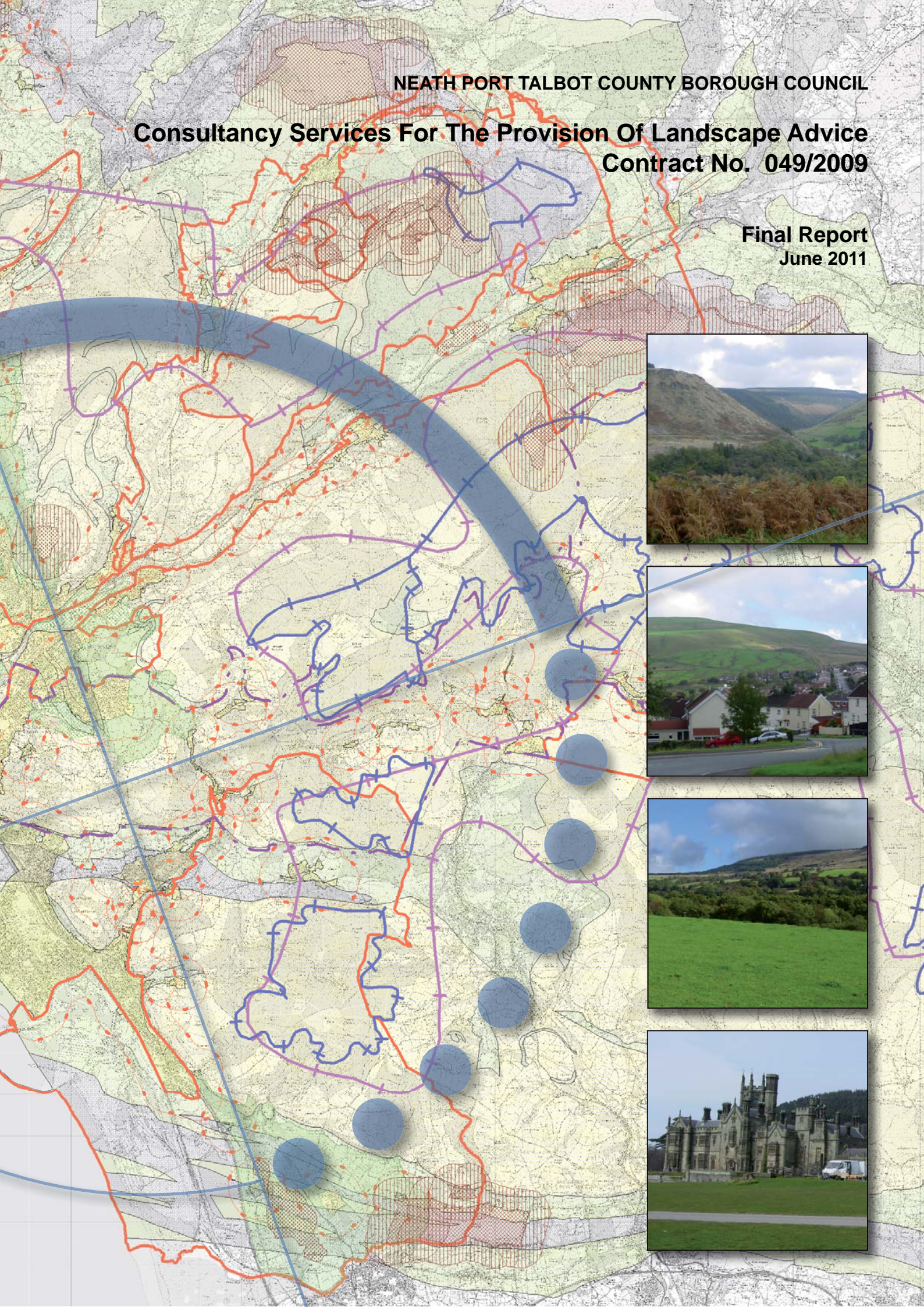


NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Consultancy Services For The Provision Of Landscape Advice
Contract No. 049/2009**

**Final Report
June 2011**



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**CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE PROVISION OF
LANDSCAPE ADVICE**

CONTRACT NO 049/2009

FINAL REPORT

JUNE 2011

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCBC	Bridgend County Borough Council
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
EA	Environment Agency Wales
EIP	Examination in Public
GIS	Geographic Information System
IPG	Interim Planning Guidance
LDP	Local Development Plan
MTAN	Mineral Technical Advice Note
NPTCBC	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
RCTCBC	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
RWP	Regional Waste Plan
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TAN	Technical Advice Note
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
WG	Welsh Government

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TACP Environmental Consultants were commissioned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) in January 2010 to provide landscape advice to assist with the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

1.2 The brief and scope of services states that *“it is expected that through the assessment of the landscapes in Neath Port Talbot, the appointed consultants will help guide the preparation of both strategy and specific policies.”* It outlines a number of tasks to be covered through the contract. These are as follows:

- **Task 1**

The identification of areas of ‘countryside’ (defined as those areas outside the settlement limits and allocations identified in the existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP)) where the following types of development would be unacceptable:

- Wind farm
- Coal extraction and workings (deep mines and open cast)
- Aggregates/stone extraction and workings
- Waste landfill

- **Task 2**

An assessment of the need of, and justification for, the identification of areas of countryside as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) – and the identification of those areas concerned;

- **Task 3**

An assessment of Green Wedges identified in the existing UDP; the need to redefine those boundaries – and the identification of further areas where appropriate;

- **Task 4**

An assessment of the appropriate distance for mineral buffer zones around settlements or designated landscape features that should be protected (eg Ancient Monuments/Country Parks/Historic Landscapes.)

1.3 The results of the study are presented in two reports phased as follows:

- **Strategic Findings Report:** sufficient to identify the approach and the general location of any areas covered, this is required to inform the preparation of the Pre-Deposit Draft Plan.
- **Final Report:** to contain a level of detail of assessment, identification of areas of land concerned and their boundaries sufficient to identify detailed boundaries that can be illustrated on the LDP Proposals Map and can be defended at Examination in Public (EIP).

1.4 This report forms the Final Report and has been prepared in two volumes:

Volume 1: contains the main report in A4 format and

Volume 2: contains the figures in A3 format.

The report follows a similar format as the Strategic Findings Report for ease of reference. It provides a greater level of detail following the ground truthing exercise

and the more detailed assessments for the individual components of Task 1. In addition, it includes the Statement of Value for the proposed SLAs.

The figures are all based on Geographic Information System (GIS) information which provides datasets for the information shown on the figures contained in Volume 2. Therefore the figures are only a diagrammatic representation of the information and the actual GIS database and datasets should be viewed and interrogated to gain a more detailed understanding of both the data and the sieve mapping exercises undertaken. The database forms an important component of the Final Report documentation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Neath Port Talbot stretches from the coast of Swansea Bay in the south to the Brecon Beacons National Park to the north covering over 442km². It contains within it a range of landscape forms and features that have evolved over thousands of years.
- 2.2** The majority of land is upland or semi-upland in character and nearly half the county (43%) is covered by forestry which includes major conifer plantations in upland areas. The uplands are dissected by five river valleys including the Vale of Neath, Dulais Valley, Afan Valley, Swansea Valley and the Upper Amman Valley. An extensive dune system, including Margam Burrows, Margam Sands, Aberavon Sands and the Neath Estuary, stretches along much of the coast. This is being eroded by industry, development and the mouths of the rivers.
- 2.3** Another key land use throughout the county is pasture, with arable being confined to a small area of well-drained land in the extreme south-east. There are large expanses of open upland to the north and east. Much of them are designated as Common Land or Open Access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000. More sheltered and productive areas of lowland and upper slopes have been extensively improved resulting in fragmented and reduced semi-natural habitats.
- 2.4** Modern settlement patterns reflect the industrial history of the area, having initially developed around copper and coal industries and then they extended further up the valleys with the development of the coal industry. Urban development has mainly occurred along the flatter areas of the valleys and along the coast. The majority of the population live in the coastal plain around Port Talbot and the land around the River Neath in the vicinity of Neath.
- 2.5** The historic importance of the County Borough's landscape is recognised through the inclusion of the two Historic Landscape Character Areas of Merthyr Mawr, Kenfig and Margam Burrows; and Margam Mountain in the CADW/ICOMOS Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, 1998. In addition, Margam Country Park is designated as a Grade 1 Park in the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales, 2001. Gnoll Park is designated as a Grade II*; and Jersey Park, Victoria Gardens, Talbot Memorial Park and Rheola are designated as Grade II in the same Register. There are also over 90 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) within the County.
- 2.6** The County has a wealth of natural resources which are significant on a UK scale and which have helped shape its industrial and mining past. Nearly all NPT is underlain by coal resources with anthracite in the north and steam coals in the SE. Sandstone, sand and gravel within and above the coal measures are extracted for aggregates, construction and industrial uses.
- 2.7** The County continues this tradition of energy production with its opencast and deep coal mining, forestry and more recently its wind resource. The importance of the County's potential for wind power is demonstrated in the Welsh Government's location of two of its Strategic Search Areas (SSA E and F), both partly covering the County. Disturbance and spoil heaps have been extensive as a result of mineral workings over the past two centuries, but natural re-vegetation and more active reclamation and restoration have now reclaimed much of the industrial legacy, and

they may now be significant in terms of cultural history and their ecology. There are sites protected under the European Habitat Directive at Crymlyn Bog, Kenfig Dunes and woodland at Pontneddfechan.

- 2.8** The value of the landscape of the County is reflected in the LANDMAP Information System which is a complete all-Wales GIS based landscape assessment database. LANDMAP is explained in more detail in Section 3.16 below. Approximately half the county is evaluated as “high” or “outstanding” for its Geological Landscapes reflecting the importance of the Coal Measures and its glacial past; there are “high” and “outstanding” values for the Landscape Habitats mainly associated with moorland, the Neath Valley and coastal marsh. Much of the Visual and Sensory aspect layer is evaluated as “moderate” or of local importance although “high” values relate to plateau and coastal areas. The majority of the County Borough is designated as “high” or “outstanding” in terms of its Cultural Landscapes aspect layer and in terms of Historic Landscapes approximately half the County Borough is evaluated as “outstanding” and much of the remainder is “high”, which reflect the importance of Neolithic tombs and Bronze Age ritual sites as well as the industrial sites of Neath Abbey, the Gnoll and Melincwrt.
- 2.9** A critical component of the LDP will be to ensure that proposed developments fit within the landscape and are acceptable in terms of “countryside”. When reviewing the constraints in order to develop potential criteria for unacceptability the current UDP policies were reviewed and tested against the LDP Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Appraisal Scoping Report.
- 2.10** Key issues identified from these documents include the following:
- Flooding. The SEA acknowledges “*one of the main risks associated with climate change is the increased risk of flooding*”. Environment Agency (EA) flood zones have been used for the assessments as follows: Zone B: 1:1000 year flood; Zone C1 1:100 year flood where there are flood defences; Zone C2 1:100 where there are no flood defences.
 - Mineral Planning Policy Wales, together with Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTAN1 and MTAN2)) identify the need to protect resources of coal, rock, aggregates (sand and gravel) that may be important resources for future generations.
 - TAN8 identifies Strategic Search Areas that are of national importance for generating power from wind energy.
 - Issues of improving air quality and addressing noise issues including the protection and enhancement of Quiet Areas are highlighted in the SEA framework in terms of achieving “*a community free from significant air, noise and light pollution*”. These are included in the criteria of community impacts which include air quality and noise impacts.
 - The need to address health and wellbeing issues within the LDP is acknowledged. Opportunities for recreation within the countryside have been identified within the criteria for tourism, recreation and leisure impacts.
 - Cumulative impacts which refer to changes resulting from the development together with other developments, arising from intervisibility or other combined effects eg erosion of a setting, sub-urban encroachment.

3.0 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** The first phase of the commission comprised the preparation of a Strategic Findings Report. This was followed by more detailed assessment and ground truthing where required and the preparation of the Final Report. The methodology outlined in this section relates to that followed in both phases of the study.
- 3.2** The strategic level assessment was primarily a desk based exercise through the use of a series of sieve mapping exercises based on criteria agreed with NPTCBC and as outlined in the TACP submission of January 2010.
- 3.3** Following the submission of the draft Strategic Findings Report, a ground truthing exercise was undertaken, together with a more detailed review of LANDMAP data to define boundaries and confirm desk top assessments. NPTCBC also confirmed that they wished to proceed with the preparation of SLAs and the scope of the study was adjusted accordingly. NPTCBC officers accompanied TACP on the site review of Green Wedges and SLA boundaries undertaken in January 2011.
- 3.4** There has been close liaison with NPTCBC throughout the study through meetings and email correspondence. In addition, during the strategic level assessment, a meeting was held with the wider planning team to review the UDP policies and obtain guidance in the preparation of the LDP. There has also been ongoing liaison with CCW and WG with regards obtaining data and information.
- 3.5** The assessments for Task 1 have been undertaken at two levels –
- **Strategic level assessment** where the LANDMAP information has been used to help identify areas of unacceptability. This type of assessment has been carried out for the following:
 - WG Wind farm SSAs E and F
 - Strategic Coal Resources: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels
 - Open Air Areas of Search for waste management and resource recovery facilities: 2nd Areas of Search.
 - **Site specific assessment** where a detailed proforma has been prepared for each site, through a review of criteria of unacceptability and a review of LANDMAP data. This type of assessment has been carried out for the following:
 - Refined SSAs
 - Landfill sites
 - Aggregates
- 3.6** Criteria of “unacceptability” for development in the countryside (Task 1) were developed with NPTCBC. This was undertaken by means of a thorough review of the current UDP policies; the LDP Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report and relevant WG policies and guidance. The same criteria have been used for all the components of Task 1 to ensure a consistent approach throughout the assessment. Consideration has also been given to cumulative impacts of more than one type of resource use in an area and opportunities for post operational rehabilitation and landscape restoration to improve the surrounding landscape.
- 3.7** The data upon which the criteria of “unacceptability” are derived form GIS layers and are contained in a database which is an integral component of this study. LANDMAP criteria have been reviewed as part of the process and the aspect layers are included in the database. High value landscapes have been determined using the Special

Landscape Area (SLA) methodology (refer to chapter 5.0). The proposed SLAs have been included in the database to represent high value landscapes and as such are considered to be areas of “unacceptability” unless an overriding need is identified. It is recommended that outside of these areas any application would be considered individually and would be subject to the EIA process. Should the government determine that the use of any resource overrides the value of the landscape then a high quality of rehabilitation/remediation should be agreed from the outset to reflect the quality and character of the surrounding landscape.

Although sandstone resources have not been assessed in detail in this report the approach will be similar to that for other mineral resources such as coal and aggregates. Refer to chapter 4 of this report.

- 3.8** Task 2 followed the stages of the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) approved methodology as outlined in the CCW Guidance Note 1: June 2008 for the identification of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). The first two stages of the methodology were outlined in the Strategic Findings Report :
- Stage 1: Strategic Criteria and review of need, coherence and consensus
 - Stage 2: Establish broad search areas

Stage 1 was undertaken with the Local Planning Authority primarily through the meeting on 12th February 2010. Stage 2 was then carried out using a LANDMAP sieve approach in accordance with CCW methodology. Refer to chapter 5.0 of this report.

- 3.9** The remaining stages of the CCW methodology have been carried out as part of the preparation for this report and are outlined in Chapter 5. These stages comprise:
- Stage 3 – Establish specific SLAs
 - Stage 4 – Statement of Value

- 3.10** Task 3 reviewed the requirement for, and effectiveness of, the five Green Wedges as identified in policy ENV2 of the UDP to protect the setting of built-up areas and prevent urban coalescence.

At the Strategic stage, the existing Green Wedges were reviewed in liaison with the NPTCBC planning officers to determine their effectiveness and whether there is justification for including them in their existing form in the LDP. Consideration was then given to the existing boundaries, and whether any amendments to the Green Wedges could enhance their effectiveness. Plans were prepared indicating proposed changes and extensions for each Green Wedge. The boundaries and effectiveness of the changes as proposed in the Strategic Findings Report have been reviewed as part of the ground truthing exercise and the proposals are presented in chapter 6.0 of this report.

- 3.11** The existing mineral buffer zones were reviewed in Task 4. NPTCBC recommended that a 500m buffer zone as identified in the MTAN 2 for coal should be considered for the mineral buffer zones thus replacing the 200m buffer zones identified in the UDP. Sieve maps were prepared based on the criteria developed for Task 1 above and LANDMAP criteria. These were reviewed against more detailed LANDMAP data and where relevant the sites were considered further during the ground truthing/refinement process. Refer to chapter 7.0 of this report.

- 3.12** In addition to all the specific task orientated assessments and plans, Figure 5.1 has been produced to indicate the areas of potential overlap especially in terms of the

potential for wind farms and mineral extraction and where both of these fall within proposed SLAs. The plan is a composite of the main resource layers included in the assessment, however, for detailed information the GIS database should be interrogated directly.

3.13 The following information has been received from NPTCBC as part of this study, this formed the basis for the sieve mapping exercises.

- 10k and 50k Ordnance Survey Raster baseplans
- NPT County Boundary
- Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Country Parks
- Conservation Areas
- Cycle Routes, Footpaths and Public Rights of Way
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Landslip Areas
- NPT Canals
- Flood Zones B, C1, C2
- Air Quality Management Areas
- Deposit Minerals (Aggregates)
- Deposit Minerals (Aggregate) Buffers 200m superseded by 500m Buffer to Operation Opencast and Aggregate Sites
- Landfill Sites: Pwllfawtkin: existing, south and north, Giant's Grave Contingency Landfill site
- Working Green Wedges
- WG Wind Farm Strategic Search Areas E and F
- Refined SSA boundaries
- UDP Settlement Limit
- 200m Buffer to Settlement Limit – this was superseded by a 500m Buffer to Settlement Limit
- Operational Opencast Sites
- WIMD 2008 Physical Environmental region plan
- Open Air 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, Areas of Search for waste management (3rd area unable to open)
- Strategic Coal Resource: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary
- Key Candidate Sites for housing
- Swansea University Campus Planning Application Boundary
- Maes-gwyn and Pen-y-Cymoedd Application Boundaries
- CCW Tranquil Areas 1997 and 2009

TACP also obtained LANDMAP data, tranquillity mapping and ecological designations from CCW and produced the following baseline information:

- Settlement Limits for additional small groups of houses based on hard copies provided
- 500m Buffer to Settlement Limits for those drawn from hard copies

3.14 It should be noted that the latest LANDMAP Quality Assured (QAed) information available from CCW has been used for the study. Since the preparation of the Strategic Findings Report CCW has updated the Historic Landscapes (HL) layer. The updated information has been used for the preparation of this report and relevant changes have been made to the assessments where necessary to take into consideration this updated information.

3.15 Noise mapping, air quality mapping and agricultural maps have been requested from the Welsh Government (WG) but had not been received at the time of writing this report. From preliminary observations of a hard copy extract of the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification plan for the NPT area it appears that there is very little Grade 1 or 2 land and small areas of Grade 3 land along the Neath and Swansea valleys. Whilst this information will provide additional baseline information to help define the areas of “unacceptability”, they are not fundamental to this study. Therefore it was agreed with NPTCBC that these criteria would not be populated as part of this study but would be considered as part of the sieve mapping for interrogation by the Council as required.

3.16 This study has utilised the LANDMAP Information System which is a complete all-Wales GIS based landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. LANDMAP has been adopted throughout Wales (refer to Planning Policy Wales (2002) - Section 5.3.13). This approach comprises five spatially related datasets known as aspect topic layers as follows:-

- **Geological Landscape:** this is the study of the geology, geomorphology and hydrology of the area.
- **Landscape Habitats:** looks at the distribution of vegetation and habitats and the basis for landscape ecology.
- **Visual & Sensory:** this aspect identifies those landscape qualities that are perceived through the senses. It deals with the individual physical attributes of landform and land cover, as well as their visual patterns of distribution and sensory characteristics, and the relationships between them in a particular area.
- **Historic Landscape:** focuses on how archaeological and historical sites relate to each other and to the surrounding landscape.
- **Cultural Landscape:** this considers the relationship that exists between people and places; how people have given meaning to places, how the landscape has shaped their actions and their actions have shaped the landscape

For each of these aspect topic layers, discrete geographical units known as aspect areas are identified and mapped and a data set is developed that includes a description classification and evaluation of quality. In addition other, non-evaluated data sets are developed including a Form and Function layer (ie: landscape type and use) together with the carrying out of a Public Perception Study. This latter exercise brings together the findings from focus group and questionnaire exercises.

The aspect topic layers are evaluated as follows:

- Outstanding:** of international or national importance
- High:** of regional or county importance
- Moderate:** of local importance
- Low:** of little or no importance
- Unassessed/unknown:** insufficient information exists to evaluate the area.

The evaluation criteria numbers used on the proformas relate to the specific LANDMAP sub criteria for each aspect layer and are as shown in the table below. For more detailed information on LANDMAP refer to <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

Table 1 : LANDMAP Aspect Area Sub Criteria Key to Proformas

Aspect Layer	LANDMAP Sub criteria
Geological Landscapes	(1) Research Value
	(2) Historical Value
	(3) Rarity/Uniqueness
	(4) Classic Example
Landscape Habitats	(1) Priority Habitats
	(2) Significance
	(3) Opportunity
	(4) Decline Rates
	(5) Threat
	(6) Fragmentation
	(7) Habitat Evaluation
	(8) Importance for Key Species
Historic Landscapes	(1) Rarity
	(2) Survival/Preservation
	(3) Cohesiveness
	(4) Potential
	(5) Amenity Value
Visual and Sensory	(1) Scenic Quality
	(2) Integrity
	(3) Character
	(4) Rarity
Cultural Landscapes	(1) Recognition/Transparency
	(2) Period
	(3) Rarity
	(4) Documentation
	(5) Group Value
	(6) Survival
	(7) Vulnerability
	(8) Diversity
	(9) Potential

4.0 TASK 1 – AREAS OF UNACCEPTABILITY

4.1 The brief required “*the identification of areas of countryside (defined as those areas outside the settlement limits and allocations identified in the existing UDP)*” where the following types of development will be unacceptable:

- Wind farms
- Coal extraction and workings
- Aggregates/stone extraction and workings
- Waste landfill

4.2 A two tier approach has been used:

- **Strategic review** for the landscape scale wind farm strategic search areas, strategic coal reserves and open air areas of search. This review was based on the relevant LANDMAP evaluations and the potential for designation of areas as SLAs. It is underpinned by the criteria of unacceptability outlined below and the relevant data is included in the GIS database. It was reported in the Strategic Findings Report.
- **Site specific review** for the specific locations. This review comprised a detailed pro forma and a review of the environmental constraints relevant to each site. The proformas also provide the framework for NPTCBC to review any planning applications on an application specific basis.

4.3 For the sake of completeness this report includes the results of the Strategic Findings Report where assessments have been undertaken on the strategic resource such as:

- WG Strategic Search Areas;
- Strategic Coal Resources and
- Open Air Areas of Search

It also includes the results of any further review carried out through the ground investigations phase of the study together with the site specific reviews.

4.4 The environmental constraints or criteria of “unacceptability” agreed with NPTCBC include the following:

- Location within settlement buffer
- Landscape value
- Landscape sensitivity
- Landscape impacts
- Ecological impacts
- Historic impacts (effect on Scheduled Ancient Monuments)
- Community impacts (to include noise and air quality issues)
- Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts
- Effects on mineral resources
- Effects on water and drainage resources (EA Flood zones)
- Ground stability
- Land use and agricultural land quality
- Cumulative impacts
- Potential for restoration/rehabilitation

4.5 Wind Farms

TAN 8 identifies seven Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) across Wales for the development of large wind farms (over 25MW), two of which, namely SSA E and

SSA F fall partially within NPT. The two SSAs are identified as having a combined indicative capacity of some 247 MW which equates to about 23% of the total for all Wales. The county borough's wind resource is therefore significant due to its location and the extent of upland and moorland areas suitable for turbines.

It should be noted however that in TAN 8 WG outline the defining characteristics of the SSAs. Two of the most important characteristics are that they are sparsely populated and have a flat plateau landform. This is not the case for SSA E or SSA F as there are significant communities in close proximity to the defined areas and much of the landform is elevated ridge.

These areas have been further reviewed by the Local Authority through the Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development to identify refined SSAs within which wind farm developments are likely to be acceptable.

As stated previously the study has adopted a two tier approach namely a review of strategic large scale areas and more detailed site specific areas. In terms of wind farms this relates to the following:

- Strategic review for the WG Strategic Search Areas (SSA E and F) and
- Site specific review for the refined search areas as defined within the Interim Planning Guidance.

Although the wind farm search areas have been refined, it is understood that TAN8 is being reviewed and therefore as part of the Strategic component of the study NPTCBC requested TACP undertake a review of the WG SSAs to provide an understanding of the issues relating to them. Therefore the strategic component of the report outlines the landscape considerations of the Strategic Search Areas based on those described by WG in TAN8. The strategic review of the SSAs was based on LANDMAP evaluations and in particular any areas of high quality landscape that has the potential for designation as an SLA. The results of the strategic review of the WG Strategic Search Areas is as follows. Refer also to Figures 1.1-1.4

The refinement exercise undertaken by NPTCBC for SSAs E and F was based upon a number of criteria including landscape and visual assessment. The relative environmental and landscape performance of specific zones was assessed, resulting in a rank order. This process drew in part on LANDMAP data and was concerned with Visual and Sensory evaluations, landscape sensitivity/capacity, potential for additional visual impact and the likelihood of major effects upon visual amenity and setting on adjacent villages, settlements and the Brecon Beacons National Park.

This section does not aim to replicate the refinement exercise previously undertaken and therefore provides an overview in terms of landscape considerations and quality. Proformas have been prepared which outline the detailed criteria of unacceptability and recommendations for further modifications. The proformas also form a check list for the Local Authority in reviewing applications for smaller windfarm proposals.

4.6 Strategic Search Area E - Pontardawe

SSA E covers an area of approximately 7,180ha and lies to the north of the county borough, stretching from Mynydd y Gwair in Swansea to the Upper Clydach Valley and Pontardawe in the west of NPT to Mynydd Marchywel and Seven Sisters in the east.

Whilst much of the SSA covers the forested ridges to include Crynant Forest on Mynydd Marchywel and Hirfynydd mountain, it also includes open upland plateau of Mynydd y Garth, regular and irregular fieldscapes, deciduous and ancient woodland and settlements in the river valleys.

Unlike the majority of SSAs proposed in Tan 8, SSA E extends across extensive and complicated landforms comprising a series of ridges within NPT, the main plateau being Mynydd y Gwair in Swansea. TAN 8 sets out an indicative capacity for the SSA of 100 MW. This relates to an installed capacity of 71MW.

Task 2 of this study identifies the potential for Special Landscape Areas (SLA) within the County Borough and defines six proposed SLAs. These areas are “high value” landscapes and the character of these landscapes could be compromised by large wind farm development. It is recommended that these areas are excluded from windfarm development.

The LANDMAP data for the aspect areas within NPT contained within the SSA E is shown in Table 2 below.

Recommendations for SSA E

The areas of overlap with the proposed SLAs which are recommended for exclusion from windfarm development and thus are identified as areas of “unacceptability” include the following:

- The area of overlap between the Mynydd y Garth SLA and SSA E includes the area south of Ystalyfera to Godre'r-graig and stretches west to include Mynydd y Garth and Cwm Gors and to the county boundary with Swansea. The area also includes the open plateaux of Bryn Mawr and Mynydd Carnllechart – refer to Fig 1.2. The area of overlap with Mynydd y Garth SLA is approximately 1500ha. It should be noted that the open plateaux continue westward to include Mynydd y Gwair and Pentwyn Mawr in Swansea which could form an extension to the Mynydd y Garth SLA should Swansea consider this appropriate.
- The main area of overlap with the Dulais Valley SLA lies to the east of Crynant Forest on Mynydd Marchywel from Crynant north to the County Boundary; and on the east slopes of the Dulais valley to the SLA boundary along Sarn Helen. This area includes a number of open cast mining sites and the forested slopes of Hirfynydd. The area of overlap with the Dulais Valley SLA is approximately 1500ha.
- There is a small area of overlap between SSA E and the Vale of Neath SLA to the east of Sarn Helen along Hirfynydd to include Aber-pergwm Wood in the east. The area of overlap with the Vale of Neath SLA is approximately 615ha.

The remaining areas of SSA E within NPT that are outside of the proposed SLAs include the following areas:

- To the east of the SSA to include the forested ridge of Nant Ysgwrfa, Aberpergwn Mine and opencast workings on Seven Sisters. This area is only 1.8km from the BBNP boundary at its nearest and therefore could significantly impact on the National Park.
- In the middle of the SSA to include Crynant Forest and the western slopes of Mynydd Marchywel to include Varteg Hill on the County Boundary with Powys to the north. The SSA extends northwards to include a small area of Powys in this location.
- A small area to the south of Cwmgors which covers the Pwllfawatkin Landfill site.

Whilst those areas covered by the proposed SLAs should be excluded from windfarm development, within the remaining areas of the SSA careful consideration must be given to individual applications in terms of the EIA process and the NPTCBC Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development with a detailed review/assessment of the criteria of unacceptability contained within the GIS database, the landscape character and visual impact to settlements, impacts on skyline, views and panoramas and on the Brecon Beacons National Park. The cumulative impact of other smaller windfarms must be considered to prevent unintended coalescence and a windfarm landscape especially with respect to medium sized windfarms and very high individual turbines.

Management Guidelines

In addition to the areas recommended for exclusion as outlined above it is essential that all development within the SSA take into consideration the following guidelines:

- Conserve large periglacial landslip settings
- Monitor levels of afforestation (Crynant Forest) to retain landscape integrity
- Maintain field patterns and boundaries
- Enhance field pattern of hedges and stone walls maintaining the altitudinal distinction between them
- Maintain the open character of the plateau
- Enhance edges of forest to improve integration with adjacent open landscape
- Prevent development other than appropriate small scale development near to existing settlements/farms
- Ensure protection of rare habitats of fauna and flora and maintain the grazing pattern where appropriate
- Encourage sensitive felling and replanting to include deciduous species.

There are areas of existing or potential mining within the SSA and NPTCBC should consider strategically how these two variant forms of energy provision will develop within the County Borough. This is considered further in Chapter 8.

LANDMAP Data

The above is supported by the LANDMAP data which was reviewed to determine the areas of high landscape value and identify specific management or planning recommendations or guidelines. The LANDMAP data for SSA E within NPT is shown in Table 2 below. The tables show all the aspect areas or parts of aspect areas within NPT that fall within the SSAs. The evaluation criteria relate to LANDMAP aspect area

sub criteria as stated in Table 1. The colour coding relates to the overall evaluation of each aspect area as follows:

- Red – outstanding (O)
- Green – high (H)
- Blue – moderate (M)
- Yellow – low (L)
- White – unassessed (U)

Table 2: LANDMAP Data for SSA E within NPT

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Geological Landscapes	GL 007	M	M	M	L						Moderate	
	GL 008	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 009	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High	
	GL 011	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 012	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 013	L	M	M	L						Moderate	
	GL 014	M	M	H	H						High	
	GL 015	M	M	M	H						High	
	GL 016	U	M	M	L						Moderate	
	GL 017	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 018	H	M	M	M						High	
	Landscape Habitats	LH 003	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High
		LH 005	M	M	M	L	L	L	M	M		Moderate
		LH 006	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High
		LH 007	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	L		Low
		LH 008	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
		LH 009	H	H	L	L	M	L	H	H		High
LH 010		H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High	
LH 011		M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate	
LH 013		H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High	
LH 014		M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate	
LH 015		H	H	L	L	M	L	H	H		High	
LH 017		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate	
LH 018		L	L	M	H	H	H	L	L		Low	
LH 019		M	M	L	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate	
LH 024		H	H	M	L	M	M	H	M		High	
LH 030		H	H	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate	
LH 031		H	M	M	L	M	L	H	M		High	
LH 036		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate	
LH 076		L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low	
LH 078		L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low	
LH 092	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low		
LH 093	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	U		Moderate		
LH 094	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low		
LH 095	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low		
LH 096	U	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate		
Historic Landscapes	HL 020	L	M	U	M	U					Moderate	

	HL 027	H	O	U	O	U						Outstanding
	HL 028	M	H	U	O	U						High
	HL 029	H	O	U	O	U						Outstanding
	HL 040	H	O	U	O	U						Outstanding
	HL 041	M	H	U	H	U						High
	HL 044	H	H	U	O	U						High
	HL 046	H	M	U	H	U						High
	HL 048	M	M	U	M	U						Moderate
	HL 063	L	H	U	H	U						Moderate
	HL 064	M	O	U	O	U						High
	HL 065	L	M	U	H	U						Moderate
	HL 066	H	O	U	O	U						Outstanding
	HL 072	M	H	U	O	U						High
	HL 073	M	M	U	M	U						Moderate
	HL 074	M	H	U	H	U						Moderate
	HL 075	L	M	U	M	U						Moderate
	HL 076	M	M	U	M	U						Moderate
Visual and Sensory	VS 184	L	L	M	L							Low
	VS 188	M	H	H	H							High
	VS 286	M	M	M	H							Moderate
	VS 357	M	M	M	L							Moderate
	VS 359	M	M	M	L							Moderate
	VS 422	M	M	H	M							Moderate
	VS 430	M	M	H	M							Moderate
	VS 458	M	M	M	M							Moderate
	VS 485	M	M	H	M							Moderate
	VS 541	H	H	H	M							High
	VS 575	M	L	M	M							Moderate
	VS 581	M	M	M	M							Moderate
	VS 612	H	H	M	M							High
	VS 751	M	H	M	M							Moderate
	VS 846	H	M	H	H							High
	VS 951	H	M	H	M							High
Cultural Landscapes	CL 002	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	H		High
	CL 015	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	O		Outstanding
	CL 026	H	H	H	H	M	H	O	H	H		Outstanding
	CL 035	M	H	M	H	H	H	L	U	L		High
	CL 038	H	H	M	H	H	O	L	L	M		Outstanding
	CL 039	H	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	H		High
	CL 042	H	H	M	M	H	U	U	U	H		High
	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L		High
	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U		High
	CL 047	H	H	U	O	O	H	L	H	O		Outstanding

4.7 Strategic Search Area F – Coed Morgannwg

SSA F covers approximately 15,990ha within the west and south of the county borough and continues into Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend. The strategic search area is located to the south of the Vale of Neath predominantly on forested uplands surrounding the Afan valley. The SSA includes the open plateau of Mynydd Fforch-

dwm to the west, the forested Mynydd Resolven to the north and extends to the open plateau of Mynydd y Gelli and Mynydd Margam to the south. This is a large area of varied landscape and includes areas of high geological, cultural and historic and visual quality and is in close proximity to settlements. TAN 8 sets out an indicative capacity for it of 290MW. This would relate to an installed capacity of 207MW.

Task 2 of this study identifies the potential for Special Landscape Areas (SLA) within the County Borough and defines six proposed SLAs. These areas are “high value” landscapes and the character of these landscapes could be compromised by large wind farm development. It is recommended that these areas are excluded from windfarm development.

The LANDMAP data for the aspect areas within NPT contained within the SSA F is shown in Table 3 below.

Recommendations for SSA F

SSA F covers a large area within NPT which is not compromised by the proposed SLA designations. The main areas that are recommended for exclusion from windfarm development due to the proposed SLAs include the following:

- The main area of overlap between the SSA F and the Vale of Neath SLA is in the vicinity of Mynydd Resolven and Rheola forest, extending into Selar opencast site to the north. There are also two small areas of overlap south of Resolven: an area to the north of Cefnmawr and an area including Troed-y-rhiw. The total area of overlap with this SLA is approximately 750ha.
- The SSA covers a large part of Margam Mountain which forms part of the proposed Margam SLA. This is an area of approximately 4370ha and extends up to the county boundary.
- Approximately half of the proposed Foel Trawsnant SLA (approximately 125ha) lies within the SSA and should be excluded from windfarm development. This SLA lies along the county boundary and is adjacent to the Foel y Dyffryn SLA in Bridgend CBC which is also covered by the SSA.
- Approximately 450ha of the Mynydd y Gelli SLA lies within the SSA and again this abuts the county boundary and lies adjacent to the Western Uplands SLA in Bridgend CBC.

Whilst the areas covered by proposed SLAs should be excluded from windfarm development, within the remaining areas of the SSA careful consideration must be given to individual applications in terms of the EIA process and the NPTCBC Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development with a detailed review/assessment of the criteria of unacceptability contained within the GIS database, the landscape character and visual impact to settlements, impacts on skyline, views and panoramas and on the Brecon Beacons National Park. The cumulative impact of other smaller windfarms must be considered to prevent unintended coalescence and a windfarm landscape especially with respect to medium sized windfarms and very high individual turbines.

Management Guidelines

In addition to the recommended areas to be excluded as outlined above it is essential that all development within the SSA take into consideration the following guidelines:

- Enhance access to the Craig y Llyn geological SSSI, retain exposure and integrity of glacial cirques
- Monitor land reclamation from mining and conserve landslip settings
- Preserve landscape features of truncated valleys
- Maintain and preserve historic patterns and elements
- Maintain open character/nature of the uplands
- Maintain field pattern of hedges and stone walls and enhance landscape features
- Increase vegetation diversity eg heath on unenclosed land
- Maintain grazing regime where possible to protect permanent pasture
- Better integrate into landscape through planting and development control
- Develop guidance for new development in terms of location and design
- Monitor afforestation, encourage diversity of species for increased visual and ecological interest
- Plant deciduous trees on edge of coniferous forest to improve integration
- Enhance landscape features within forestry by selective thinning and felling
- Improve access through the valley, improve waymarkers etc. to encourage access
- Screen residential development

Areas of existing and potential open cast mining exist within the SSA and again NPTCBC will have to consider the relationship between the different forms of energy production, this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 of this report.

LANDMAP Data

The above is supported by the LANDMAP data which was reviewed to determine the areas of high landscape value and identify specific management or planning recommendations or guidelines. The LANDMAP data for SSA F within NPT is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: LANDMAP Data for SSA F within NPT

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 021	U	O	O	M						Outstanding
	GL 022	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
	GL 024	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 025	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 026	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 027	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 028	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 024	H	H	M	L	M	M	H	M		High
	LH 027	L	L	M	H	O	H	L	L		Low
	LH 028	O	O	L	L	L	L	H	H		Outstanding
	LH 032	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 034	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 038	H	M	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 039	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 040	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
LH 042	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate	

	LH 043	H	H	M	L	M	M	H	H	High
	LH 044	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M	Moderate
	LH 045	H	M	L	L	M	L	H	H	High
	LH 046	M	M	L	L	M	L	M	M	Moderate
	LH 047	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Moderate
	LH 060	M	M	L	L	L	L	M	M	Moderate
	LH 061	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M	Moderate
	LH 066	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M	Moderate
	LH 069	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	M	Low
	LH 070	M	M	L	L	M	L	M	M	Moderate
	LH 088	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L	Low
	LH 098	L	M	M	U	L	L	M	L	Moderate
	LH 100	L	L	L	U	L	L	L	L	Low
	LH 101	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L	Moderate
	LH 107	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L	Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 013	M	O	U	O	U				High
	HL 016	O	O	O	O	O				Outstanding
	HL 021	O	O	U	O	U				Outstanding
	HL 026	O	O	U	O	U				Outstanding
	HL 031	M	H	U	H	U				Moderate
	HL 039	O	O	U	O	U				Outstanding
	HL 045	M	O	U	O	U				High
	HL 052	H	H	U	O	U				Outstanding
	HL 055	O	O	U	O	U				Outstanding
	HL 060	M	H	U	H	U				High
	HL 062	L	M	U	M	U				Moderate
	HL 068	L	M	U	M	U				Moderate
	HL 069	H	O	U	O	U				Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 103	M	M	M	M					Moderate
	VS 215	L	L	L	L					Low
	VS 358	M	M	M	M					Moderate
	VS 366	M	M	M	L					Moderate
	VS 422	M	M	H	M					Moderate
	VS 448	M	L	M	L					Low
	VS 465	L	L	M	L					Low
	VS 547	M	H	H	M					High
	VS 624	M	M	H	M					Moderate
	VS 897	M	M	M	M					Moderate
	VS 916	H	M	H	H					High
	VS 920	M	M	M	M					Moderate
	VS 927	M	M	M	L					Moderate
	VS 936	M	M	H	H					Moderate
	VS 962	M	M	M	L					Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 002	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	High
	CL 027	O	O	O	O	O	O	L	O	Outstanding
	CL 028	L	O	H	M	U	H	H	U	Outstanding
	CL 031	H	U	U	U	M	M	H	U	High
	CL 033	L	H	U	U	U	H	U	U	Outstanding
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	High

4.8 Refined Search Areas

In accordance with paragraph 2.3 of TAN 8 a consortium of South Wales Valley Planning Authorities, including NPTCBC, jointly commissioned Arup consultants to undertake a refinement exercise for SSA E and F with a view to providing an evidence base for subsequent planning policy formation and decision making.

The refined areas are included in NPTCBC UDP Interim Planning Guidance (IPG) which notes that the “*areas identified would deliver WAG’s target and are considered by the Authority to represent **the maximum that could be reasonably accommodated without causing unacceptable impacts on communities, visitors and the landscape.***”

Although the refinement process reviewed a range of criteria of unacceptability, this study has tested the refined search areas against the criteria of “unacceptability” within the countryside agreed for this study and against the five LANDMAP aspect layer data especially in terms of high quality landscapes/SLAs. These criteria form GIS layers which can be interrogated by NPTCBC as required.

The results of the strategic review of the refined SSAs are outlined below. Refer also to the specific proformas at the end of this section and Figures 1.5-1.14.

4.8.1 Refined SSA 1

The refined SSA 1 lies on an upland plateau to the north of Glynneath. It is one of two refined areas which fall partially within the WG SSA E. It is currently a productive landscape through its forestry operations and although the Geological Landscapes and Cultural Landscapes aspect evaluations are evaluated as ‘high’ the evaluations for Visual and Sensory and Landscape Habitats aspect areas are mainly ‘moderate’ reflecting the land cover. There are no protected ecological or archaeological sites within the area. The landscape sensitivity is moderate and the landform is simple and can accommodate development. This area is not included in a proposed SLA.

Recommendation: Although the refined SSA 1 does not fall within proposed SLAs careful consideration must be given to individual applications in terms of the EIA process (where appropriate) and the NPTCBC Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development with a detailed review/assessment of the criteria of unacceptability contained within the GIS database, the landscape character and visual impact to settlements, impacts on skyline, views and panoramas and on the Brecon Beacons National Park. The cumulative impact of other smaller windfarms must also be considered to prevent unintended coalescence and a windfarm landscape especially with respect to medium sized windfarms and very high individual turbines. Turbines should be sited carefully to minimise visual impact on local settlements especially Glynneath and settlements along the Neath Valley. In the west of refined SSA 1 there is potential conflict with opencast mining.

Management Guidelines

In addition to the above all proposed development within the refined SSA 1 should take into consideration the following guidelines:

- Monitor reclamation of opencast area, possible enhancement of outcrop
- Manage forest areas to improve integration with open landscape
- Maintain grazing regime on open areas and control bracken and gorse

4.8.2 Refined SSA 2

The refined SSA 2 is the largest of the refined SSAs within NPT and it crosses the county boundary into BCBC. SSA 2 falls generally within WG SSA F. It is located predominantly within upland forestry around Glyncorrwg and contains areas of open cast mining. The LANDMAP aspect evaluations within NPT are 'high' and 'moderate' for Geological Landscapes with a small section of a large 'outstanding' aspect area to the north. Values for the Visual and Sensory layer are 'moderate'; Landscape Habitats values are generally 'moderate' with one 'high' aspect area to the south of the refined SSA. The Cultural Landscape aspect areas are evaluated as 'high', with one 'outstanding' aspect area, again to the south of the SSA, which relates to the existing Fynnon Oer Wind Farm. This area is not included in a proposed SLA and there are no protected areas contained within it.

Recommendation: Although the refined SSA 2 does not fall within proposed SLAs careful consideration must be given to individual applications in terms of the EIA process (where appropriate) and the NPTCBC Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development with a detailed review/assessment of the criteria of unacceptability contained within the GIS database, the landscape character and visual impact to settlements, impacts on skyline, views and panoramas and on the Brecon Beacons National Park. The cumulative impact of other smaller windfarms must also be considered to prevent unintended coalescence and a windfarm landscape especially with respect to medium sized windfarms and very high individual turbines. Turbines should be sited carefully to minimise visual impact on local settlements especially from Glyncorrwg, along the Neath valley and small river valleys. To the north of the SSA there is potential conflict with opencast mining.

Management Guidelines

In addition to the above all proposed development within the SSA should take into consideration the following guidelines:

- Enhance access to and conserve Geological SSSI
- Maintain grazing regime where possible to protect permanent pasture and retain open nature of moorland and exposed rock
- Manage forestry to retain geological and visual integrity and character
- Monitor land reclamation from mining and conserve landslip settings
- Ensure protection of varied archaeology during felling or development operations

4.8.3 Refined SSA 3

Refined SSA 3 covers an area of approximately 709 hectares and is directly adjacent to the refined SSA 2 to the south west. It falls within WG SSA F. The LANDMAP aspect areas for Geological Landscapes, Landscape Habitats and Visual and Sensory are predominantly 'moderate' reflecting both the forestry cover and also the recognised local level importance of the area. The Cultural Landscapes layer is evaluated as 'high' and the Historic Landscapes layer is "outstanding". It contains two listed buildings and is near to the Roman Camp SAM. The area is important for tourism given its proximity to Afan Country Park and long distance routes. A small area is located within the proposed Vale of Neath SLA which should be excluded from windfarm development.

Recommendation: A small area of the refined SSA 3 near Cefnmawr is included within the proposed Vale of Neath SLA and should be excluded from windfarm

development. Elsewhere within the refined SSA careful consideration must be given to individual applications in terms of the EIA process (where appropriate) and the NPTCBC Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development with a detailed review/assessment of the criteria of unacceptability contained within the GIS database, the landscape character and visual impact to settlements, impacts on skyline, views and panoramas. The cumulative impact of other smaller windfarms must be considered to prevent unintended coalescence and a windfarm landscape especially with respect to medium sized windfarms and very high individual turbines. Turbines should be carefully sited to minimise visual impact on local settlements, SAMs and areas of historic and cultural heritage.

Management Guidelines

In addition to the above all proposed development within the refined SSA 3 should take into consideration the following guidelines:

- Monitor land reclamation from mining and conserve landslip settings
- Manage forestry to maintain geological and visual integrity and character
- Manage moorland to retain open nature of moorland
- Ensure protection of varied archaeology during felling or development operations

4.8.4 Refined SSA 4

The refined SSA 4 is located on forested upland on Mynydd Penhydd, adjacent to Afan Forest Park. It falls predominantly within the WG SSA F and crosses into BCBC. The LANDMAP evaluations for the aspect areas within NPT are 'high' for Geological Landscapes, 'moderate' for Landscape Habitats and Visual and Sensory and both 'high' and 'outstanding' for the Cultural Landscapes and 'high' for the Historic Landscapes layer. The area includes two SAMs and is within an area important for tourism.

Recommendation: Approximately one third of the refined SSA 4 falls within the proposed Foel Trawsnant SLA and should therefore be excluded from windfarm development. Elsewhere within the refined SSA careful consideration must be given to individual applications in terms of the EIA process (where appropriate) and the NPTCBC Interim Planning Guidance: Wind Turbine Development with a detailed review/assessment of the criteria of unacceptability contained within the GIS database, the landscape character and visual impact to settlements, impacts on skyline, views and panoramas. The cumulative impact of other smaller windfarms must be considered to prevent unintended coalescence and a windfarm landscape especially with respect to medium sized windfarms and very high individual turbines. Turbines should be carefully sited to minimise visual impact on local settlements, SAMs and areas of historic and cultural heritage and the setting of the proposed SLA both within NPT and its extension within Bridgend CBC.

Management Guidelines

In addition to the above all proposed development within the refined SSA 4 should take into consideration the following guidelines:

- Monitor land reclamation from mining and conserve landslip settings
- Manage forestry to maintain geological and visual integrity and character
- Manage moorland to retain open character
- Enhance field pattern through hedge planting where appropriate
- Ensure protection of varied archaeology during felling or development operations

4.8.5 Refined SSA 5

The refined SSA 5 is located on Mynydd Margam. It covers an area of approximately 877 ha within the south western limits of the WG SSA F and includes a small area of BCBC. It is forested upland within a culturally important setting with SAMs to the south and it forms part of the Margam historic and cultural landscape. There are additional considerations in terms of ground stability and flood risk in some areas of the SSA.

Recommendation: The majority of the refined SSA 5 lies within the proposed Margam SLA and should therefore be excluded from windfarm development.

Management Guidelines

If any windfarm development is considered acceptable, possibly in terms of small scale proposals, consideration should be taken of the following guidelines:

- Monitor land reclamation from mining and conserve landslip settings
- Manage forestry to increase ecological diversity and visual quality
- Manage moorland to retain open character
- Enhance field pattern through hedge planting where appropriate
- Ensure protection of varied archaeology during felling or development operations
- Avoid inappropriate development
- Develop and implement a conservation plan for statutorily protected structures

Site Name:	Refined SSA 1										
Site Location:	Seven Sisters										
Grid Reference:	SN 860080										
Site Area:	295.70ha										
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within an identified SSA Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>											
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	Both V&S aspect areas moderate									
Landscape sensitivity high	N	V&S moderate, LH low. GL and CL form part of large aspect areas. Mitigation measures possible. Area can accommodate carefully designed and sited development.									
Visual impacts	MD	1.8km from Seven Sisters with direct views outside of forestry areas. Potential views from the Neath valley eg 2.1km from Pen Common									
Landscape impacts	N	Predominantly forestry, plateau, productive landscape									
Ecological impacts	MD	2km from Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SSSI and SAC, 2.1km from Cwm Gwrelych and Nant Llyn Fach SSSI									
Historic impacts		Contains no SAMs or listed buildings, 1.1km from SAM at Onllwyn, approximately 1.5km from listed buildings in Glynneath.									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	No apparent issues									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	MD	2.1km from Pen Common falls, 2km from Afon Pyrddis which runs along the BBNP boundary. Long views from BBNP.									
Effects on mineral resources		Existing and potential impacts									
Effects on water and drainage resources	N	No apparent issues									
Cumulative impacts	MD	Mineral workings to the west of the area and mineral buffer zones cover a third of the area.									
Initial Assessment: wind farm development is generally acceptable in landscape terms, Careful location of turbines is required due to potential visual impact.											
Recommendation: Consider revising western boundary to reflect existing and potential mineral working.											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 015	M	M	M	H						High
	GL 018	H	M	M	M						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 018	L	L	M	H	H	H	L	L		Low
	LH 023	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	L		Low
	LH 096	U	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 019	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 027	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 357	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 970	M	M	M	L						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High

Site Name:	Refined SSA 2
Site Location:	Glyncorwg
Grid Reference:	SS 851995
Site Area:	2,723.00ha
Proposed Capacity	
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):	

Within an identified SSA Yes No On boundary

Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	V&S aspect areas moderate
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Predominantly upland forestry, includes 1 area of LH high. Half of area high for GL and includes CL outstanding at Cefn Mawr
Visual impacts	MD	Generally within forestry plantation however potential for visual impacts along the Neath valley and smaller the river valleys of Cwm Afon, Afon Corrwg, Melin Court Brook. Boundary falls less than 500m from Glyncorwg.
Landscape impacts	N	Upland forestry, productive landscape
Ecological impacts		100m from Mynydd Ty-Isaf SSSI, 0.4km from Craig-Y-Llyn SSSI which crosses into RCTCBC
Historic impacts	N	No SAMs or listed buildings within the area. Listed buildings within Glyncorwg.
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Potential impacts especially in Glyncorwg during construction.
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	MD	Coed Morgannwg Way runs through the site, St Illtyd's Walk crosses to the west of the area
Effects on mineral resources	Y	Nant y Glo and Bwch Ffos open cast within the area
Effects on water and drainage resources	Y	Includes zone C2 along Afon Corrwg
Cumulative impacts	MD	Area includes some mineral workings. Includes the existing Fynnon Oer wind farm

Initial Assessment: Wind farm development is generally acceptable.

Recommendation: Ensure EIA for any proposed windfarm development to prevent wider windfarm landscape or visual impact with respect to SSA3.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 021	U	O	O	M						Outstanding
	GL 022	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
	GL 024	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 025	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 032	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 034	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 098	L	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 026	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 039	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding

	HL 045	M	O	U	O	U							High
Visual and Sensory	VS 103	M	M	M	M								Moderate
	VS 624	M	M	H	M								Moderate
	VS 962	M	M	M	L								Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 002	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	H			High
	CL 033	L	H	U	U	U	H	U	U	U			Outstanding
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U			High

Site Name:	Refined SSA 3
Site Location:	Mynydd Fforch-dwm
Grid Reference:	SS 821977
Site Area:	709.90ha
Proposed Capacity	
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):	

Within an identified SSA Yes No On boundary

Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	Moderate V&S values
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Mainly moderate evaluations with high for CL. Small area of predominantly upland forestry. Landscape form and cover can generally accept development
Visual impacts	MD	Approximately 50% within forestry surrounding open plateau of Mynydd Fforch Dwm. Potential for visual impacts from settlements to the south and west and especially settlements along the Afon Afan. It is 0.7km nearest settlements
Landscape impacts	N	Partially productive upland forestry, within a largely forested area.
Ecological impacts	MD	0.75km from Afan Country Park
Historic impacts	MD	Contains 2 listed buildings: Scotch Fald and Cwm Pelenna ventilation stack. Blaen-Cwmbach camp SAM 0.6km to the north west.
Community impacts (including noise and air)	N	Potential construction impacts on small settlements
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts		0.75km from Afan Country Park, Coed Morgannwg Way and St Illtyd's Walk follow southern boundary
Effects on mineral resources	N	None
Effects on water and drainage resources	MD	Nant Blaenpelenna zone C2
Cumulative impacts	N	None identified

Initial Assessment: This is a small area abutting SSA2 to the south west within a landscape generally of local level value. Wind farm development in the area is generally acceptable.

Recommendation: Consider minor revisions to the boundaries in terms of potential visual impacts and tourism.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
	GL 024	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 039	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 040	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 045	H	M	L	L	M	L	H	H		High
	LH 046	M	M	L	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 098	L	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 013	M	O	U	O	U					High
	HL 026	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 045	M	O	U	O	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 624	M	M	H	M						Moderate
	VS 962	M	M	M	L						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High

Site Name:	Refined SSA 4
Site Location:	Mynydd Penhydd
Grid Reference:	SS 828937
Site Area:	392.70ha
Proposed Capacity	
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):	

Within an identified SSA Yes No On boundary

Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	V&S aspect evaluations are all moderate
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Whilst the GL layer includes a high evaluation and the CL layer includes high and outstanding evaluations, the landscape is moderate in terms of V&S and LH. Due to the landform and forestry cover it is not considered to be highly sensitivity in terms of wind farm development, however it is has visual and setting links to Margam historic landscape.
Visual impacts	MD	Partially contained within forestry, potential visual impacts from settlements along the Afan valley approx 0.7km from the area and B4282 road corridor, eg Bryn 1km from the area.
Landscape impacts	N	Upland plateau partially covered with forestry
Ecological impacts	MD	Afan Country Park 300m.
Historic impacts	MD	Contains 2 SAMs
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	None apparent
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts		Afan Country Park 300m and Afan Forest Park possibly covers the area. Area crossed by Coed Morgannwg Way.
Effects on mineral resources	N	None apparent
Effects on water and drainage resources	N	None apparent
Cumulative impacts	MD	Potential cumulative impacts with other wind farms. Abuts potential Bridgend SLA.

Initial Assessment: Moderate landscape value visually but partially within proposed SLA due to its geological and cultural associations and link to Margam historic landscape, it forms part of a landscape extending into the adjacent Bridgend SLA. However there is synergy between the concepts of Afan Forest Park and renewable energy and potential also to add interest to Coed Morgannwg Way.

Recommendation: Consider amendments to boundaries to reflect proposed SLA and its link to Margam historic landscape.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
	GL 026	U	M	M	L						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 044	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 047	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 101	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 031	M	H	U	H	U					Moderate
	HL 045	M	O	U	O	U					High
	HL 060	M	H	U	H	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 358	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 366	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 920	M	M	M	M						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 028	L	O	H	M	U	H	H	U	U	Outstanding
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High

Site Name:	Refined SSA 5
Site Location:	Margam
Grid Reference:	SS 817896
Site Area:	877.50ha
Proposed Capacity	
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):	

Within an identified SSA Yes No On boundary

Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	Overall VS assessment moderate
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Although CL outstanding, the other aspect areas are moderate.
Visual impacts	MD	Farmsteads within 0.5km, Bryn 0.4km to north, Maesteg 1.3km E, Port Talbot and M4 1.4km SW, Margam Park 0.5km to S
Landscape impacts	N	Located within a large area of forestry
Ecological impacts	MD	No designated sites within, potential impacts on SSSI/SAC/ NNR/LNR sites to the south
Historic impacts	MD	Contains 3 small tumuli SAMs. Roman Camp SAM located adjacent to the SE boundary. Margam Park 0.5km S
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Farmsteads and settlements surrounding and Margam Park to S
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	MD	Margam Park to S, Coed Morgannwy Way and St Iltys Way and PROW within area
Effects on mineral resources	N	None known to date
Effects on water and drainage resources	MD	Zone C2 within area at Cwm Wenderi, follows Ffrwd Wyllt to N
Ground stability	MD	Two landslips at Cwm Wenderi, one partially in area at Cwm y Garn
Land use and agricultural land quality	N	Forestry
Potential for landscape restoration	N/A	N/A
Cumulative impacts		Potential for conflict with Margam SLA and Margam historic landscape

Initial Assessment:

Generally moderate landscape, but with outstanding cultural heritage and connection to Margam historic landscape. It covers Margam SLA.

Recommendation: Consideration of the boundary should be undertaken, especially in relation to Margam SLA and historic landscape, SAMs and water resources at Cwm Wenderi.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 027	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 028	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 107	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 021	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 031	M	H	U	H	U					Moderate
	HL 068	L	M	U	M	U					Moderate
	HL 069	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 927	M	M	M	L						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 027	O	O	O	O	O	O	L	O	H	Outstanding
	CL 028	L	O	H	M	U	H	H	U	U	Outstanding

4.9 Coal Extraction and Workings

Nearly all the County Borough is underlain by coal resources with anthracite in the north and steam coals in the south-east. The review of the coal resources is strategic and has been based on the WG Strategic Coal Resources map provided by NPTCBC which identifies primary, secondary and tertiary coal resources. Refer to Figures 1.15-1.18. The review has been undertaken in accordance with MTAN 2 Coal which states that “*where relevant, MPAs should set out their strategy for the sustainable management of the coal resource in their LDP, directing coal working away from sensitive locations and ensuring that any environmental or community impacts can be mitigated.*”

It should be noted that the GIS database contains all the constraints used for the Task 1 assessment, this allows for detailed interrogation by NPTCBC as required. Following the ground truthing and preparation of proposed SLAs the database has been updated to include the SLA boundaries. These are used in this review and therefore the strategic coal resources have been updated from the Strategic Findings Report as appropriate.

4.9.1 Primary Coal Resource

The main areas of the primary coal resource lie to the north of the county borough, into adjacent counties, along the south of the county from Margam Sands to Pyle and across to Bridgend. There is also a narrow strip from Swansea through Baglan towards Maesteg. As anticipated, there are existing and potential mining operations throughout this resource. The LANDMAP evaluations are shown on Figure 1.15, and the key constraints are shown on Figure 1.16.

The main areas of overlap with the proposed SLAs are as follows:

- A key area of the primary coal resource lies within the proposed Margam SLA in a west-east band lying predominantly south of Coedhirwaun but which includes Margam Park, existing opencast mining and potential deep mining operations.
- There is a band stretching from Baglan across Mynydd Bychan and across the north of the proposed Margam SLA to the south of Bryn.
- There is a band of primary coal resource that covers an area to the east of the proposed Vale of Neath SLA south of the river and which includes the Selar opencast site. This band continues to the east of the proposed Dulais Valley SLA and into the Brecon Beacons National Park.

In addition to the existing and potential mining operations, the areas of primary coal resource contain a number of settlements and their associated buffer zones. A very small area to the east of WG SSA E and over half of refined SSA 1 falls within the primary resource zone. A small area of the primary resource zone falls within WG SSA F east of Maesteg, although it does not coincide with refined SSAs in this area.

Recommendation: In accordance with MTAN 2 there should be no mining in areas with criteria of “unacceptability”. In terms of landscape quality there should be no mining in the proposed SLAs as outlined above unless the operations are small and effective landscape enhancement through mitigation can be demonstrated. Where the mining of a specific resource is considered to be of overriding public interest then appropriate mitigation should be implemented to minimise the impacts during extraction and to enhance the landscape following completion of the mining operation.

4.9.2 Secondary Coal Resource

The main areas of secondary coal resource lie adjacent to the primary resource as discussed above. These are larger areas, covering approximately one third of the county, refer to Figure 1.17. A number of settlements are located within the resource, especially parts of Port Talbot and Neath and settlements along the main river valleys.

Given the size of the resource within the County Borough there are numerous areas which fall within the proposed SLAs especially along the Neath valley, the upper region of the Dulais valley and around Glynneath, around Neath and Port Talbot and to the south of Margam SLA.

Whilst some areas do coincide with the WG SSAs the main conflict in terms of the refined SSA boundaries is within Refined SSA 1 and a small isolated area of the secondary coal resource which falls within Refined SSAs 2 and 3. The resource falls within the key settlements of Neath, Port Talbot and Glynneath and also smaller settlements predominantly along the river valleys.

Recommendation: As stated above, extraction should be limited to those areas outside of the criteria of “unacceptability” including high value landscapes. Consideration should be given to the relative importance of the areas for alternative resource extraction or use. Detailed consideration must be given to the size, type and impact of specific mining operations. Given the extent of the resource throughout the county appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented to minimise impact during operation and to ensure that the final landscape is of similar landscape character and of similar or improved quality once extraction is completed.

4.9.3 Tertiary Coal Resource

The tertiary coal resource covers the remainder of the County Borough which equates to approximately two thirds of the whole area, thus indicating the importance of NPT in terms of coal. It covers the proposed SLAs especially around Mynydd y Garth to the north west, along the Neath and Dulais valleys, Mynydd Margam and covers the whole of Mynydd y Gelli and Foel Trawsant SLAs.

All the refined SSAs, excluding Refined SSA1, fall within the tertiary resource as does much of the settlement of Neath.

Recommendation: In accordance with MTAN 2 mining should be restricted to areas outside of those covered by the criteria of “unacceptability”, including high value landscapes. As much of the tertiary coal resource covers area designated for alternative resource extraction consideration should be given to the value of particular areas to different resources and the time line of resource extraction or use. Detailed consideration must be given to the size, type and impact of specific mining operations. Given the extent of the resource throughout the County Borough appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented to minimise impact during operation and to ensure that the final landscape is of similar landscape character and of similar or improved quality wherever extraction is undertaken.

4.10 Aggregates/Stone Extraction and Workings

Within the County Borough, there are mineral resources which are significant on a UK scale. Sandstone, sand and gravel within and above the coal measures are extracted for aggregates, construction and industrial uses as stated in LDP SEA. Two major quarries in the County Borough, namely Gilfach and Cwmnant Lleici supply high specification aggregates which are seen as being of strategic importance.

The SEA notes that marine and land based sand and gravel resources are also important, and two areas (between Rheola and Glynneath and between Pyle and Margam) have been identified in MTAN1. The TAN requires these resources to be safeguarded.

The specific aggregate resources reviewed as part of this study include the following:

- Cwmnant Lleici
- Eglwys Nunydd – potential sand and gravel
- Gilfach Quarry
- Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry
- Pentreclwydau – potential sand and gravel

The results of the review are shown on Figures 1.19-1.28, within the proformas at the end of the section and are outlined below. These are site specific based on data provided by NPTCBC.

4.10.1 Cwmnant Lleici

Cwmnant Lleici hard rock quarry is situated to the North West of the Swansea valley on the edge of Mynydd y Garth, Cefn Gwrhyd upland. The quarry falls within the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA (refer to chapter 5). This is reinforced by the LANDMAP evaluations: Geological Landscapes to the north east (High), Visual and Sensory (High), Culture Landscapes (High), Landscape Habitats (High) and Historic Landscapes (High and Outstanding). In addition it is surrounded by SSSIs to the north, east and west.

This area has a high scenic quality with its mosaic landscape, mixture of boundaries and deciduous tree cover. The feeling of isolation from minimal access to the area adds to its character. Panoramic views are afforded from higher elevations within the valleys, while in the lower valleys there is an intimate character. The area has a relatively unspoilt upland mosaic valley character, with a strong sense of place.

Any extension to the quarrying activity should be restricted given the high value and special character of its landscape. Should an extension be required it should take into consideration its impact on the water resources, visual impact on local settlements, ecology and the landscape character. A buffer zone of 500m is appropriate in this location although there is potential for increasing the buffer up to the boundary of the SSSI which has protection under other policies. The mineral buffer is discussed in more detail in section 7.0 of this report.

Recommendation: Given the value of the existing landscape appropriate and achievable rehabilitation should be undertaken to the existing quarry in accordance with the existing landscape character and environmental quality. Opportunities exist for enhancing the biodiversity of the site and should be considered in relation to the existing SSSIs. An extension to the quarry is not recommended.

4.10.2 Eglwys Nunydd

The Eglwys Nunydd potential sand and gravel resource is located in the south of the county between the M4/B4283 to the west, the A48 to the east and the railway to the south. It is just south of Margam Park, to the east of Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir (SSSI) and north east of Kenfig Pool and Dunes SAC. It lies just to the south of the boundary to Margam SLA and is in close proximity to visual receptors in terms of residents, recreational users, road and rail travellers.

Recommendation: There is little opportunity for expansion of the resource extraction due to the physical constraints of the site. However, given its location in terms of its ecological, cultural heritage and residential setting, careful and appropriate rehabilitation and restoration should be carried out. Opportunities exist for the development of a lake and associated wetland habitats and amenity resource.

4.10.3 Gilfach Quarry

Gilfach Quarry is an existing extraction site and lies to the south of Mynydd Marchywel upland and to the east of Bryncoch. It falls within the 500m settlement buffer for Gilfach Goch but is screened from the settlement by forestry. The landscape is generally evaluated as 'moderate' although it is part of a large cultural aspect area which is evaluated as 'high'.

Recommendation: There are no particular landscape constraints to this quarry although given its elevation and aspect any expansion should carefully consider its landscape and visual context, especially if expansion is considered to the north and north east. Restoration will be required following operations and these should be in keeping with the wider landscape especially in terms of land form and vegetation cover.

4.10.4 Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry

The Gwrhyd quarry lies to the north east of the Cwmnant Lleici quarry on Cefn Gwrhyd. The site is over 2km from the nearest settlement with only isolated farmsteads in the surrounding area, which are partially screened by forestry. It is located in the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA (refer to chapter 5).

Recommendation: Given the high value of the landscape as a proposed SLA detailed consideration should be given to the landscape and visual impacts for any potential expansion of the quarry which should be restricted to small scale expansion related to its existing land area. Careful restoration should be undertaken ensuring that it reflects the wider landscape character, land form and vegetation.

4.10.5 Pentreclwydau

Pentreclwydau is a potential sand and gravel resource and lies in the flood plain of the River Neath to the south west of Glynneath. It is located between the B4242 and the A465 and Neath Canal. The site is partially within the EA Flood Zone C2 and partially within Zone B, much of the site is within settlement buffer zones and it may impact upon the Rheola Park SAM. The site lies within the proposed Vale of Neath SLA indicating its importance in terms of landscape quality.

Recommendation: Given the constraints of the location, extraction from this area should be restricted and the site should be carefully restored post operation taking into consideration the landscape and historic setting.

Site Name:	Cwmnant Lleici	
Site Location:	Cwmnant Lleici	
Grid Reference:	SN 731069	
Site Area:	25.23ha	
Proposed Capacity		
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):		
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>		
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	Overall assessment high
Landscape sensitivity high	MD	Generally high quality landscape
Visual impacts	MD	Settlements along the Afon Tawe and Upper Clydach River, closest residential area 0.7km to SE, farmsteads within 0.08km
Landscape impacts	MD	High assessments for Scenic Quality, Integrity and Character, if extension to existing operation change from rural to industrial
Ecological impacts	MD	Coed Cwm Du SSSI overlaps site in NE corner, overlaps with buffer elsewhere as does Gwrhyd Meadows SSSI to north and Cefn Gwrhyd to west, "high" assessments for Landscape Habitats.
Historic impacts	N	No known sites within or in the immediate area
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Settlements within 0.7km, potential impacts on noise and air quality
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	MD	PROW through part of the site
Effects on mineral resources		Active quarry
Effects on water and drainage resources	MD	Zone C2 along Cwm Du 0.1km E
Ground stability	N	None in area
Land use and agricultural land quality	N	Existing extraction
Cumulative impacts		Within high quality landscape identified as proposed SLA. It falls on the boundary of WG SSA E but not within any of the refined SSAs
Potential for restoration/ reclamation	Y	Potential for landscape restoration of existing mineral workings especially in terms of surrounding landscape and ecology, opportunities exist to enhance the biodiversity of the site especially with respect to the adjacent designations
<p>Initial Assessment: Existing mineral extraction. Any proposed extension should consider visual, ecological, cultural and geological issues, especially in terms of revision of north east boundary around Coed Cwm Du SSSI. The use of a 500m buffer is appropriate in this location due to the nature and quality of the surrounding landscape, the floodzone and its proximity to farmsteads.</p> <p>Recommendation: Aftercare plans should recognise the potential for ecological and landscape quality enhancement, all rehabilitation should take into consideration recommendations made within the LANDMAP assessments. Given the high value of the landscape any extension to the current working should take into consideration the opportunities for effective and appropriate rehabilitation and the potential impacts on the landscape, ecological and historic designations.</p>		

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 009	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 013	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High
Historic Landscapes	HL 041	M	H	U	H	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 541	H	H	H	M						High
Cultural Landscapes	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L	High

Site Name:	Eglwys Nunydd	
Site Location:	Eglwys Nunydd	
Grid Reference:	SS 812840	
Site Area:	160.44ha	
Proposed Capacity		
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):		
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>		
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	V&S "moderate" with "high" rarity value.
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Generally aspect area evaluations are low or moderate although CL is outstanding
Visual impacts	Y	0.225km from Coedhirwaun, 0.5km from Pyle, adjacent to Eglwys Nunydd, Kenfig House farm, Caegarw and Llanmihangel.
Landscape impacts	N	High for rarity value and moderate overall for V&S. Located within an area constricted by the railway to the south, B4283 to the west and A48 to the north/east.
Ecological impacts	MD	0.62km from Eglwys Nunydd reservoir SSSI, 0.5km from Kenfig SSSI, 1.18km from Kenfig Pools and Dunes SAC, NNR and LNR, and 2.5km from Penycastell, Cefn Cribwr SSSI and Glaswelltiroedd SAC. All LH criteria Low
Historic impacts	Y	150m from Margam Park. No listed buildings or SAMs within area but 5 within 200m.
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Consideration should be given to operations near to existing properties, roads and railway
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	Y	150m from Margam Park, Golf Club along Water Street, recreational activities on Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir
Effects on mineral resources	Y	Existing mineral working
Effects on water and drainage resources	MD	Contains Zone C2
Cumulative impacts	MD	Within Baglan Green Wedge and to the south of proposed Margam SLA
Potential for restoration/reclamation		Potential for restoration for recreational resource, water body etc. consideration should be given to its setting in terms of ecology, cultural history and settlement
<p>Initial Assessment: Within 500m of Coedhirwaun and Pyle and located in close proximity to small settlements and farmsteads. The site is within the Baglan Green Wedge and due to its location in terms of roads and railway there is very limited opportunity for expansion to the site. Working will affect the visual, historic and cultural setting to Margam Park and potentially other historic features. Whilst ecological value of site is low there is potential impact on the integrity of surrounding sites.</p> <p>Recommendation: There is little opportunity for extension to the resource extraction due to the overall size of the site. Given its location to the south of Margam Park, east and north of sites of ecological importance and its visibility from settlements, roads and railway restoration/rehabilitation of the site is very important and should be undertaken with cognizance to its cultural, ecological and visual context.</p>		

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 030	U	M	M	L						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 074	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L		Low
Historic Landscapes	HL 052	H	H	U	O	U					Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 543	M	M	M	H						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 027	O	O	O	O	O	O	L	O	H	Outstanding

Site Name:	Gilfach Quarry												
Site Location:	Gilfach												
Grid Reference:	SN 754000												
Site Area:	30.73ha												
Proposed Capacity													
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):													
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land											Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments											
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	V&S moderate											
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Aspect areas moderate with CL high but all other aspect areas are moderate. The site is located on open upland. Whilst the site is on elevated land to the north of Bryn Coch and Rhydding there is higher land to the north west which provides screening the works from the Neath Valley. Existing extraction site able to accommodate development.											
Visual impacts	Y	0.5km from Bryn Coch, adjacent to Gilfach farm and approx 100m from Cefnvaes farm, Cenvaes fach, Blaen-Hondan farm											
Landscape impacts	N	On high ground approx 190m with higher ground to north and east. Existing quarry. Forestry screening to the east and to south west. All moderate V&S aspect criteria											
Ecological impacts	N	All moderate LH layer.											
Historic impacts	N	No listed buildings or SAMs within site, 0.4km from listed building limekiln											
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Blasting may impact upon local community											
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts		Approx 0.5km from golf club but screened in some part by forestry, 0.6km from national trust Aberdulais Falls and adjacent amenity/wildlife area											
Effects on mineral resources	Y	Existing extraction site											
Effects on water and drainage resources	N	150m from Zone B which lies to west.											
Cumulative impacts	N												
Potential for restoration/reclamation	Y	Given its elevation restoration will be important and should reflect the wider landscape character.											
<p>Initial Assessment: An existing extraction site. The site forms a small element of much larger aspect areas, all of which are moderate except cultural which is high. There is visual impact from properties within Bryn Coch, Gilfach and isolated farmsteads although the location of forestry helps reduce the visual impact on Gilfach. Given the topography and existing farms there is generally limited potential for expansion.</p> <p>Recommendation: Any proposed expansion should consider the landscape and visual impact especially if the proposals are to extend into the higher land to the north and east. Restoration/rehabilitation is important on this site and should reflect the wider landscape especially in terms of landform and vegetation cover.</p>													
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Geological Landscapes	GL 007	M	M	M	L						Moderate		
Landscape Habitats	LH 036	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate		
Historic Landscapes	HL 040	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding		
Visual and Sensory	VS 340	M	M	M	M						Moderate		
Cultural Landscapes	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High		

Site Name:	Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry										
Site Location:	Gwrhyd										
Grid Reference:	SN 737089										
Site Area:	6.30ha										
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>											
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	High V&S evaluations									
Landscape sensitivity high	Y	This is a high value landscape with all LANDMAP layers evaluated high. Careful consideration should be given to the impact on landscape character and setting									
Visual impacts	Y	Site includes farmstead of Uchaf, other isolated buildings and farmsteads in the locality but 2.2km from nearest settlement									
Landscape impacts	MD	Rural upland area flanked to the E by small woodland									
Ecological impacts	Y	0.4km from Gwrhyd Meadows SSSI, 0.9km from Cefn Gwrhyd SSSI.									
Historic impacts	N	None identified									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Blasting may impact local farmsteads.									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	N	None known									
Effects on mineral resources	Y	Existing extraction site									
Effects on water and drainage resources	N	Does not impact any flood zones									
Cumulative impacts	MD	Within proposed SLA, proximity to Cwmnant Lleici quarry to the south									
Potential restoration/reclamation	Y	Given the high landscape quality of the area the reclamation/restoration should be undertaken to reflect the wider landscape especially in terms of landform and vegetation cover.									
Initial Assessment: The small quarry is located in an isolated area towards the highpoint of the Cefn Gwrhyd ridge and falls within the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA.											
Recommendation: The quarry is located within a high value landscape and therefore restoration should be undertaken to reflect the landscape character and vegetation. There is potential to extend the quarry especially to the north however, any proposed extension should consider the landscape impact and the certainty of appropriate rehabilitation.											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 003	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High
	LH 013	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High
Historic Landscapes	HL 029	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 041	M	H	U	H	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 188	M	H	H	H						High
	VS 541	H	H	H	M						High
Cultural Landscapes	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L	High

Site Name:	Pentreclwydau - potential sand and gravel quarry										
Site Location:	Pentreclwydau										
Grid Reference:	SN 851048										
Site Area:	35.16ha										
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>											
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	V&S Moderate									
Landscape sensitivity high	MD	This linear site lies along the flood plain of the River Neath with the steep scarp to the north west and overlooked by Mynydd Resolven to the east. The area has high LANDMAP values for GL and LH, and it is located within the flood zone. Therefore the area is of medium to high landscape sensitivity									
Visual impacts	Y	Along river valley surrounded by forestry. Dwellings within Pentreclwydau within proposed site, majority of site falls within 500m settlement buffer zone, 500m from Blaengwrach									
Landscape impacts	MD	Situated in open flood plain of river Neath and Neath canal.									
Ecological impacts	N	No known ecological designations									
Historic impacts	Y	Adjacent to 5 listed buildings, 150m from Rheola Park SAM, 1.6km from Glynneath Woolen Mill Conservation Area									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Proximity to settlement, issue of flood plain, area of high noise from the existing A465									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	MD	Adjacent to Neath Canal									
Effects on mineral resources		Potential quarry									
Effects on water and drainage resources	Y	Within River Neath floodplain zone C2 and zone B.									
Cumulative impacts	MD	Western area within landslip area, lies within proposed SLA,									
Restoration/reclamation	Y	Potential for restoration for recreational resource									
Initial Assessment: The site is located within the Vale of Neath SLA reinforcing the high value of the landscape. It falls within the setting to Rheola Park SAM, and within outstanding CL aspect areas, which reflect the importance of the Neath Canal and the Vale of Neath more generally. The site lies within Vale of Neath fault zone and exhibits qualities and character of a typical glaciated U shaped valley.											
Recommendation: Given the constraints of the site any expansion to the resource extraction activities should be limited. Restoration should be undertaken in accordance with the wider landscape character and quality of the valley. There is potential for creating a lake and water resource in the area.											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria								Overall Evaluation	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscape	GL 017	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 020	H	M	H	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 026	H	H	M	M	M	M	H	H		High
Historic Landscapes	HL 043	M	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 431	M	M	H	M						Moderate
Cultural Landscape	CL 047	H	H	U	O	O	H	L	H	O	Outstanding

4.11 Waste Landfill

The review considered both the strategic level of potential provision for waste management which was considered in the Strategic Findings Report and the specific sites of Pwllfawtkin and Giants Grave which are assessed in more detail.

The Regional Waste Plan (RWP) 1st Review, 2008, was prepared by the South West Wales Regional Waste Group to assist the region in developing an integrated and adequate network of waste management facilities by providing strategic information on the types of waste facilities required and the types of location likely to be acceptable. The outcome of the RWP 1st Review forms the basis for the strategic component of this study. NPTCBC provided GIS layers for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th (or exclusion areas) open air areas of search for new waste management facilities and confirmed that there are no 1st open air areas of search within NPT. It was agreed that this review would consider only the 2nd open air area of search in detail although the GIS database contains all the relevant information to interrogate the location and constraints for the remaining open air areas of search. Proposed SLAs which are outlined in chapter 5 form a layer of “unacceptability” within the database.

4.11.1 2nd Open Air Area of Search

The RWP 1st Review 2nd open air areas of search have combined a number of constraint criteria to locate Areas of *No Constraint and Some Potential* and Areas of *Some Constraint and High Potential*. Refer to Figures 1.29 and 1.30. In a similar way to the strategic coal resource a) above, it should be noted that the GIS database contains all the constraints (or criteria of “unacceptability”) used for the assessment of Task 1, this will allow for detailed interrogation by NPTCBC as required.

The areas of the 2nd Open Air Areas of Search are predominantly located along the valleys of the Afan, Neath and Dulais; in a band along the A474 from Rhyd to Glanaman and to Brynmawr and along the A4068 to Gurnos; with small areas around Margam Park and Margam Sands.

Figure 1.30 indicates where these areas fall within settlement buffers, and where there is conflict with SSAs. It also identifies the locations where these areas fall within the proposed SLAs. These include the following:

- to the east of the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA;
- through much of the lower slopes of the proposed Dulais valley SLA;
- along the lower slopes of the proposed Vale of Neath SLA;
- through much of proposed Foel Trawsnant and Mynydd y Gelli SLAs and;
- along the western edge of the proposed Margam SLA.

Recommendation: The 2nd Open Air Area of Search falls within bands throughout the County Borough. Waste landfill should be restricted to areas outside of those covered by the criteria of “unacceptability”, which include the proposed SLAs. Outside of these areas sites should be considered in terms of other NPTCBC policies and the EIA regulations as appropriate. There is little conflict with possible windfarm development with only a small amount of the area of search falling within refined SSAs, however there will be potential conflict with the secondary and tertiary coal resources. Where waste landfill sites are approved, appropriate and effective mitigation is required during operation and on completion to restore or enhance the landscape character of the area.

4.11.2 Landfill Sites

Currently the main active licensed operational landfill site is located at Pwllfawatkin. In addition, Giants Grave in Neath has been designated as a contingency site and is currently not operational. There are other landfill sites within NPT including Morfa within Corus and small civic amenity landfill sites which were not considered as part of this study. The LDP SEA Scoping Report notes that there is a significant amount of disposal of waste to landfill which may increase the need for additional waste disposal sites.

The study reviewed the following landfill sites:

- Pwllfawatkin (North and South)
- Giants Grave Contingency Site

4.11.3 Pwllfawatkin

The Pwllfawatkin Landfill Site is located along the Upper Clydach River to the south of Cwmgors, an area which has a history of use for landfill. The existing landfill site is on the edge of the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA. The proposed south extension is contained within the proposed SLA confirming the high value of the landscape within which it is located. Another key constraint to expansion into the southern section is its location with respect to the Flood Zone C2. Refer to Figures 1.31 and 1.32.

Recommendation: The sites fall within a high value landscape and the east of both sites lie within a flood zone. Options for expansion are restrictive due to the topography of the slopes of Bryn Mawr to the west and the Clydach river floodplain to the east. Access is available to the area and there is a history of landfill in the Pwllfawatkin site. If these sites are required for landfill then consideration should be given to slight revision to the site layouts to ensure that they do not fall within the floodzone and adequate mitigation is undertaken to restore the area appropriate to its surroundings.

4.11.4 Giants Grave Contingency Site

Giants Grave is located within the urban area of Neath between the Neath canal and the Neath River, with the M4 to the west and the A465 to the north. The use of the site for landfill could have implications of flooding and water quality given its proximity to the river and it is partly covered by Zone B and C2. The LANDMAP landscape habitats and cultural aspect areas are evaluated as “outstanding” with geology and historic aspect areas evaluated as “high”.

Recommendation: Given the high quality of the landscape and its ecology, the proximity of the urban area and the value of the site in terms of green and blue infrastructure developments further consideration should be given to the overall suitability of the site for landfill. If proposals go ahead for landfill on the site it is essential that suitable and appropriate mitigation measures are implemented. These proposals could include screening through earth bunding or planting and possible amenity facilities on the periphery during the use of the site in addition to restoration of the site post use. Proposals for long term restoration should reflect the site’s importance for recreation, amenity, ecological connectivity and setting to sites of historical and cultural importance.

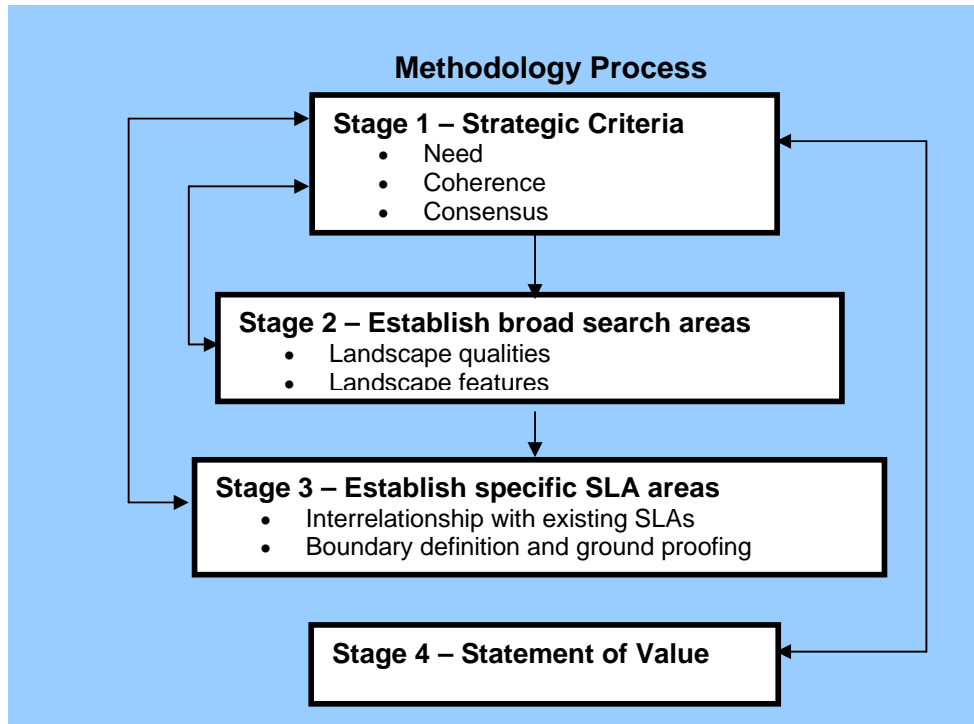
Site Name:	Pwllfawtkin North and South Extensions										
Site Location:	Pwllfawtkin										
Grid Reference:	SN 698089										
Site Area:	27.33ha										
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land			Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On boundary	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	High values for scenic quality and integrity for part of the site, remaining area overall assessment moderate									
Landscape sensitivity high	Y	High quality landscape but area of existing landfill operations.									
Visual impacts	Y	Small settlement of Cwmgors 0.3km to NE, scattered farmsteads surrounding									
Landscape impacts	Y	Rural land adjacent to existing landfill, southern section on rural land adjacent to forestry to the west of Upper Clydach river. Mainly "moderate" V&S criteria but includes small area of "High" value to the west.									
Ecological impacts	Y	High evaluations for Landscape Habitats, 1.9km from Hafod Wennol grasslands SSSI and 2.5km from Cefn Gwrhyd SSSI.									
Historic impacts	N	1.6km from listed building at Pen yr Esgym									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Impact on nearby properties									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	N	0.5km from St Iltydds Way									
Effects on mineral resources	N	No known sites within or in immediate area									
Effects on water and drainage resources	Y	Zone B through middle of site and along eastern boundary, southern section within flood zone C2									
Ground stability	N	No known landslip areas									
Land use and agricultural land quality	MD	Currently rural, adjacent to existing landfill									
Cumulative impacts	MD	Partially within a proposed SLA									
Restoration/reclamation		As the sites are exposed and lie in a high value landscape appropriate mitigation and restoration is necessary and should be in keeping with the wider landscape character									
<p>Initial assessment: The two sites will create extensions of the existing Pwllfawtkin landfill site to the north and south along the Upper Clydach River. They lie 0.3km to the nearest settlement with scattered houses and farmsteads in closer proximity. Flooding of the Upper Clydach is likely to be an issue to the extensions.</p> <p>Recommendation: There is access to the existing site and whilst there are constraints to developing these sites there is a history of landfill in the area. If they are required for operations then the potential for slight relocation out of flood zone should be considered together with appropriate restoration measures.</p>											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 009	H	H	L	L	M	L	H	H		High
	LH 013	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High
Historic Landscapes	HL 041	M	H	U	H	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 575	M	L	M	M						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L	High

Site Name:	Giant's Grave Contingency Site										
Site Location:	Neath										
Grid Reference:	SS 733957										
Site Area:	63.05ha										
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>											
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	Overall assessment low									
Landscape sensitivity high	Y	Within an urban area, potential for urban degradation. GL high, CL and LH outstanding									
Visual impacts	Y	Site located within Neath, closest residential area 0.1km									
Landscape impacts	Y	Visual and Sensory criteria low and moderate but site within a flood plain, will change character of the landscape									
Ecological impacts	Y	Landscape habitats "outstanding" Crymlyn Bog SAC/Ramsar/SSSI /NNR/LNR 1.2km to SW									
Historic impacts	Y	No historic sites within boundary, but two Listed Buildings adjacent to N boundary									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	Y	0.1km from nearest residential area and within flood zone.									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	Y	Neath Canal and NCN Route 4 along the eastern boundary									
Effects on mineral resources	N	None known within area									
Effects on water and drainage resources	Y	Zone B and C2 within site									
Ground stability	N	No known landslip areas									
Land use and agricultural land quality	N	Waste land									
Cumulative impacts	Y	Residential development									
Restoration/reclamation	Y	If landfill operations occur then suitable site restoration is essential to take into consideration the amenity, recreational, ecological, cultural and historic issues and the proximity to urban settlement.									
Initial Assessment: The site lies along the river Neath and is surrounded by residential areas of Neath, partly covered by Zone B and C2, and it contains the Neath Canal and NCR 4. It is within a high quality landscape with potential for green and blue infrastructure development.											
Recommendation: The site contains a number of constraints and is within a high value landscape and therefore its overall suitability for landfill should be revisited. If the site is used then operational screening and post operational restoration will be required. This should be in keeping with the surrounding landuses and reflect the value of the site and its location in the wider landscape.											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 020	H	M	H	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 053	O	O	M	L	M	M	O	H		Outstanding
Historic Landscapes	HL 007	M	H	U	O	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 891	L	L	M	M						Low
Cultural Landscapes	CL 048	U	O	U	U	U	H	L	L	U	Outstanding

5.0 TASK 2 – SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

- 5.1 The brief required “*an assessment of the need of, and justification for, the identification of areas of countryside as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) – and the identification of those areas concerned.*”
- 5.2 The use of non-statutory designations such as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) to protect areas of landscape value has long been a policy tool within the UK planning system. They have been seen by local planning authorities as a means of protecting sensitive landscapes and in developing an understanding and awareness of those features and characteristics that give a locality its sense of place. This designation differs from that of Green Wedge which is primarily a planning tool to prevent urban coalescence and protect the setting of built-up areas rather than specifically protecting high quality landscapes.
- 5.3 The methodology used for this exercise was the Special Landscape Area Designation Criteria originally developed for the South East Wales Local Authority Consortium, and now included within the Countryside Council for Wales Guidance Note 1 (June 2008). It also reflects the guidance within Planning Policy Wales (2002) of which Section 5.3.11 states “*...Non Statutory designations such as Special Landscape Areas.... Should be based upon a formal scientific assessment of the landscape value of the site ... Local Planning Authorities should only apply these designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary level of protection.*”
- This methodology utilises the comprehensive data set associated within the LANDMAP Information System landscape assessment methodology.
- 5.4 It should be noted that the methodology essentially derives SLAs from groupings of *Outstanding* and *High* evaluations from the underlying LANDMAP data. At the progress meeting on 9th July 2010 the view was expressed by NPTCBC officers that the ‘*one size fits all*’ stance was not necessarily appropriate and that there was justification in (1) acknowledging the importance of and (2) incorporating groupings of *Moderate* evaluations into the methodology for deriving SLAs – particularly as *moderate* evaluations are classed as being “*...of local importance*”. It was agreed that this issue will be considered in more detail at the ground-truthing stage and in the development of the final report.
- 5.5 As part of the strategic findings for this study, Stages 1 and 2 of the four stage process, were undertaken. Stages 3 and 4 have been carried out as part of the ground truthing and refinement process. Refer to Table 4 below.

Table 4 – SLA Methodology Process



5.6 The first stage of this process involved a meeting with the NPTCBC on 12th February 2010 which considered the initial stage of the methodology – the review of the strategic issues, namely Need, Consensus and Coherence. The discussion reviewed the value and merits of SLA designation in terms of both policy and landscape management scenarios. The outcome of the meeting was the agreement to proceed with the review and to identify Broad Search Areas.

Strategic Criteria		Response
1.	<i>Need</i> – to what extent will designation be more effective in safeguarding, managing or providing for the special attributes of the area.	Although NPTCBC does not have designated SLAs within the county, the potential value of SLAs was recognised especially in terms of protecting the high quality landscapes of the county borough especially from extraction and renewable energy activities.
2.	<i>Coherence</i> – ensure that areas considered for designation make it practical to develop policies for its protection, management or promotion.	It was noted that BCBC is currently developing SLAs and there are broad search areas which abut the county boundary. RCTCBC have accepted SLAs within the county although they do not wholly conform to the CCW agreed methodology. It is currently unknown whether Swansea will adopt SLAs but it is a requirement of PPW Companion Guide that SLAs are reviewed.
3.	<i>Consensus</i> - agreement and sufficient support for designation, and must include all stakeholders including community as well as professional groups.	It was agreed that the first stages of the SLA process should be undertaken in accordance with CCW methodology to identify broad search areas. This will provide the evidence base required by WG and consistency with adjacent authorities even if the eventual decision is not to proceed with the SLA designation.

Conclusion

It was acknowledged that there is a potential value in the provision of SLAs depending on how they relate to existing designations such as Green Wedge and the need to protect valuable landscapes within the county from resource use and extraction. It was therefore agreed that the broad search areas should be developed. Coherence with Swansea was considered important although NPTCBC is further advanced that Swansea in terms of preparing their LDP, however as BCBC has SLAs abutting the county boundary these should be considered. NPTCBC will review the criteria once the broad search areas have been identified.

5.7 When considering the need for SLAs it is important to highlight that the following questions need to be asked when assessing “need”:

- Are normal countryside development controls and design policies adequate to protect the character and features that make the landscape special?
- If a need is identified for added landscape protection, what will the SLA offer in addition to other Town & Country Policies?
- What would be the added value?
- Are SLAs robust and justifiable in relation to other policies within the Authority?
- Is the SLA locally distinct enough to be included in the LDP?

5.8 Stage 2 - Establish Broad Search Areas

The broad search areas were established from a desk review and analysis of the LANDMAP Information System data. In line with the CCW methodology guidance this took the form of an iterative process, adding and reviewing aspect topic layers to establish where clustering of ‘Outstanding’ and ‘High’ evaluation levels occurred. The boundaries identified cover a broader appreciation of the area and allow for revision of the candidate SLAs in a later stage of the process. The guidance methodology does not specify the number of ‘outstanding’ and ‘high’ aspect area evaluations required for the designation of an SLA. It is obvious that the greater the number, the stronger the rationale for designation will be. Conversely, the fewer the number, the more clearly the designation has to be justified. This is where reference to the three strategic criteria – Need, Consensus and Coherence – has to be made and the professional judgement of the assessor is important.

In reviewing the LANDMAP data for the County Borough, it is apparent that whilst much of the County Borough is evaluated as ‘moderate’ or of ‘local’ value for Landscape Habitats and Visual and Sensory aspect layers, ‘high’ or ‘outstanding’ evaluations cover most of the Cultural Landscapes layer, which is reinforced by the Historic Landscapes layer and approximately 50% of the Geological Landscapes layer is also evaluated as ‘high’. Care was taken to ensure that large search areas were not driven by the ‘high’ and ‘outstanding’ evaluations of the Cultural Landscapes layer alone. To have done this would have led to a bias in terms of which areas of landscape fall within potential SLAs.

The Geological Landscapes layer was overlain with the Landscape Habitats layer, this identified a cluster of ‘high’ evaluations along the Vale of Neath, to the NW of the County on Mynydd y Garth and between Neath and the coast. With the Visual and Sensory layer overlain it further reinforces the Mynydd y Garth area and locations between Neath and the coast. In addition, it highlights the Dulais Valley, Mynydd y Gelli which borders Bridgend County Borough to the south west, and Margam Park.

Given that the cultural layer comprises mainly 'high' and 'outstanding' evaluations throughout the County the overlaying of this layer further reinforces the areas previously identified. It also extends the area around Margam due to the large area evaluated 'outstanding' in that area. The Neath valley, Dulais valley, the area around Neath to the coast and the Corus works and Port Talbot coast are evaluated as 'outstanding' which further reinforces and expands upon the areas previously identified. Therefore the following Broad Search Areas have been identified based on the aspect area boundaries and the county boundaries. The broad issues of need and coherence have been addressed for each broad search area.

Since the preparation of the Strategic Findings Report the latest QAed LANDMAP data for the Historic Landscapes layer has become available. This data has been incorporated into the assessment and the broad search areas have been revised to include relevant evaluations. Refer to Fig 2.1 and Fig 2.2.

The inclusion of the evaluated Historic Landscapes layer served to reinforce the value of the Margam, Mynydd y Garth and Mynydd y Gelli Broad Search Areas and to extend the Vale of Neath Broad Search Area to the south east to include the forested uplands.

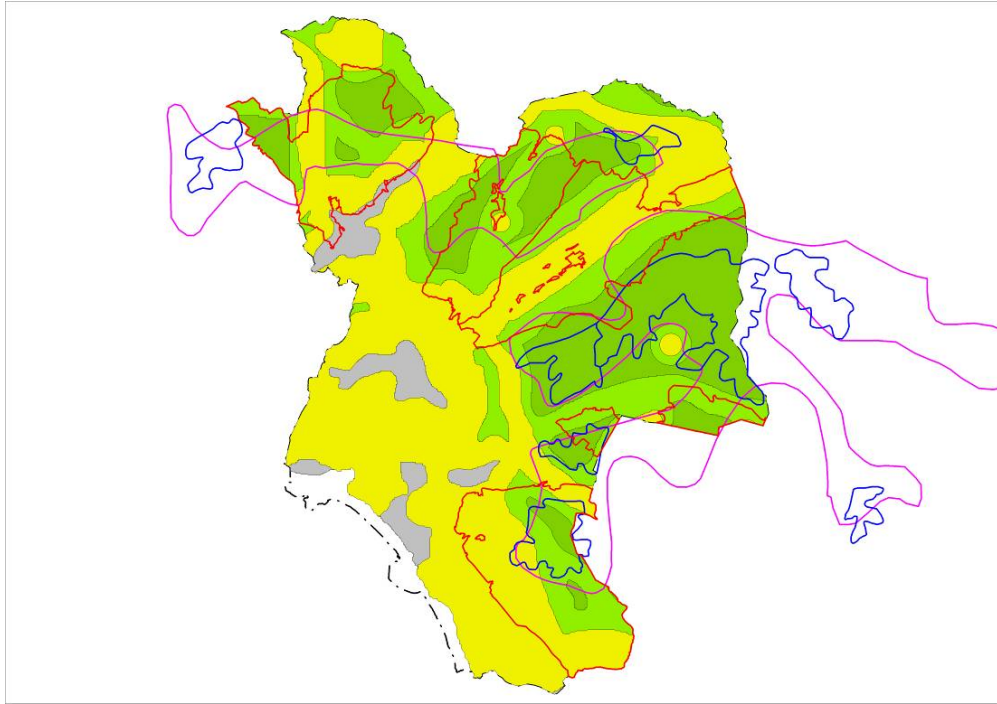
5.9 Tranquillity Mapping

As part of the review of the broad search areas, LANDMAP data has been interrogated, site visits have been carried out to identify defensible boundaries for the proposed SLAs and to assess additional potential SLAs identified as important by NPTCBC. To support these potential additional SLAs an examination of the CCW Tranquillity mapping was undertaken. CCW have prepared tranquillity maps for Wales and the results of an extensive mapping and analysis are detailed in Wales Tranquil Areas Map 2009 Final Report from which SEA Guidance has been prepared.

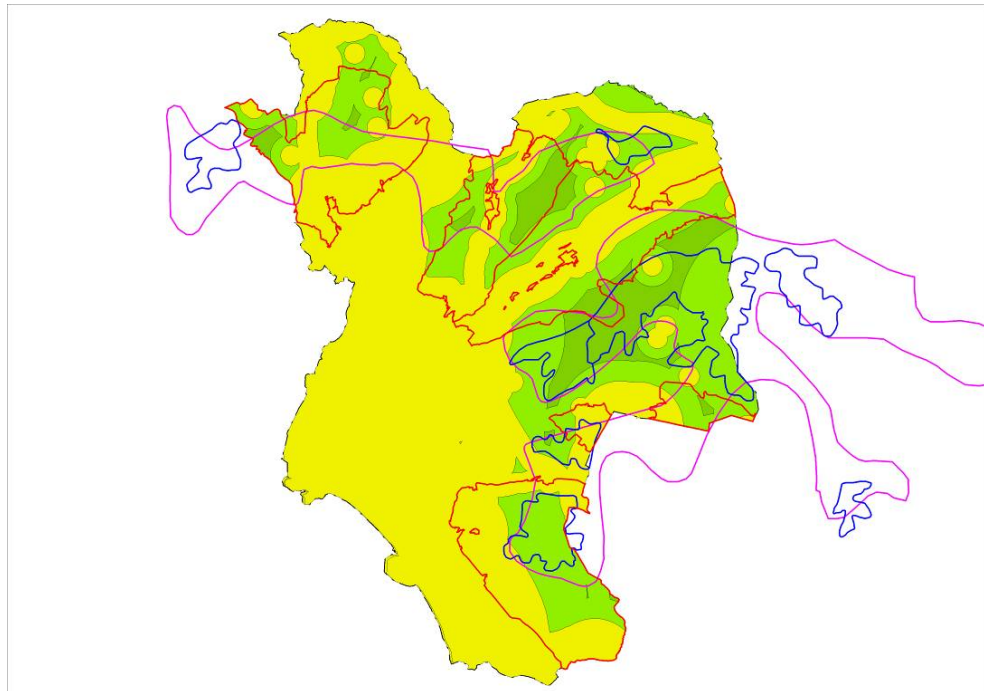
In summary, the overall changes in levels of tranquillity are identified on the Plans below. The colour coding is as follows:

- Dark green - tranquil areas
- Light green – Zone C
- Yellow – Zone B
- Grey – urban (1997 only)

Within NPT the coverage of tranquil areas has reduced from 21.84% of the county in 1997 to 7.3% of the county in 2009. The main urban and transportation corridors are Zone B or urban. The main tranquil areas in 2009 relate to the forested uplands, Mynydd y Garth and Margam.



Extract from Tranquillity Map for NPT 1997



Extract from Tranquillity Map for NPT 2007

5.10 Special Landscape Areas

Stage 3 of the methodology relates to the refinement of the broad search areas and the identification of specific SLAs with clear, defensible boundaries. This was undertaken through a combination of desk and field work. The key strategic issues relating to this stage of the exercise relates to those of Consensus and Coherence.

Following the review of the Broad Search Areas and ground truthing the following SLAs are proposed:

SLA 1 - Mynydd y Garth

SLA 2 – Dulais Valley

SLA 3 – Vale of Neath

SLA 4 – Margam

SLA 5 – Mynydd y Gelli

SLA 6 – Foel Trawsnant

In addition to these proposed SLAs we have reviewed the following at the specific request of NPTCBC, the fourth was included following the ground truthing and relates to Margam SLA:

Mynydd Dumau (Dummond Mountain)

Mynydd Marchywel

Afan Valley

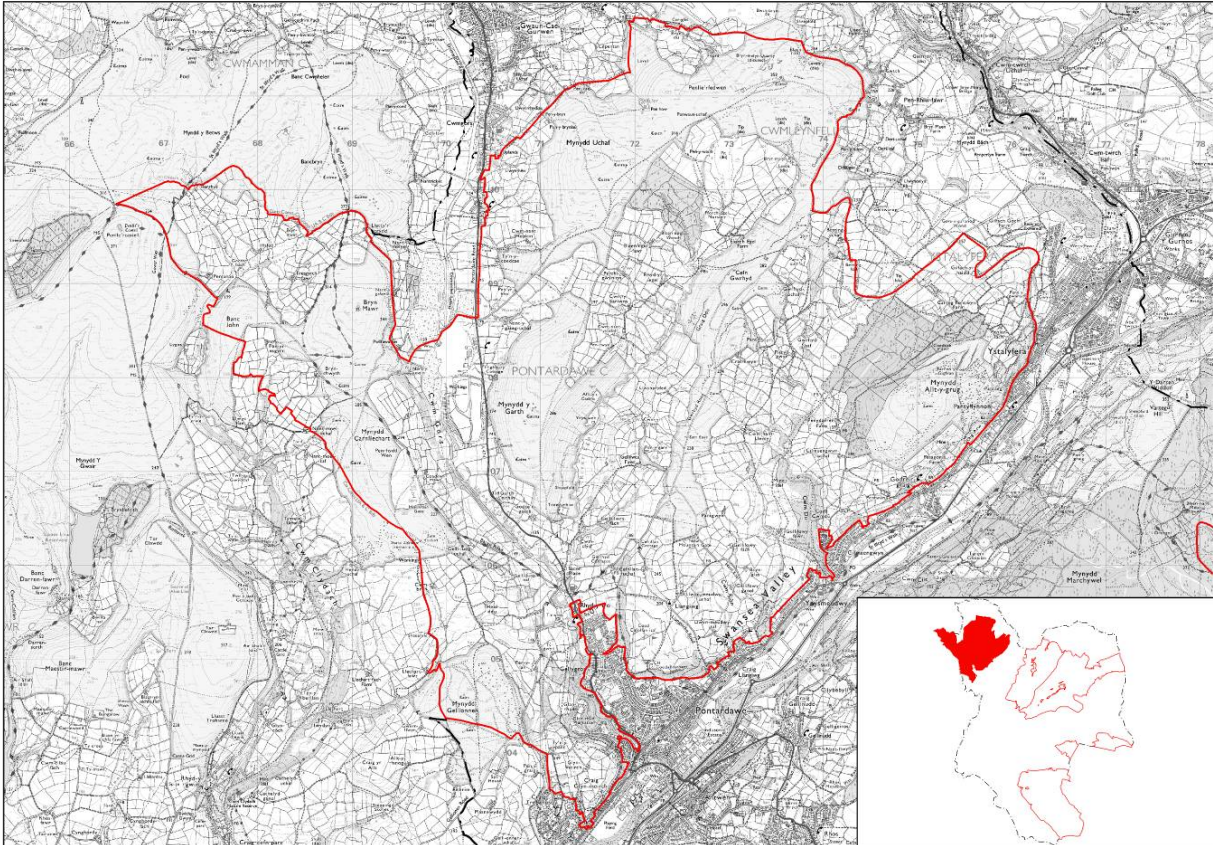
Mynydd Dinas

5.11 Proposed SLAs and Statements of Value

See overleaf for details of SLAs.

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 1 – Mynydd y Garth

Location Plan



Photographs



Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

Need

This is a high value landscape in terms of its underlying geology, cultural and historical heritage, ecology, visual amenity, tranquillity and sense of place. It has a distinctive character and relates in landform and cover to the Brecon Beacons National Park to the north. SLA designation in this area will help prevent the erosion of its landscape value through development, extraction activities and resource use.

Coherence

It is a coherent upland plateau which continues into Swansea to the west and is defined to the south east by the Vale of Neath and the Brecon Beacons National Park to the north

Consensus

SLA designation offers the potential for retaining an important high quality landscape within the County Borough. Consensus will be confirmed with other stakeholders through the LDP process

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

- The proposed SLA includes the upland moorland plateau of Mynydd y Garth, Cefn Gwrhyd and Mynydd Carnllechart.
- The upland plateau is dominated by pennant sandstone and underlying Productive Coal Formation, up to 357m AOD.
- The land cover is predominantly grazed pasture with deciduous tree cover especially along riparian corridors.
- Restricted access to the area provides a remote, exposed yet settled and tranquil feel.
- It has a high scenic upland mosaic landscape quality with panoramic views out from higher elevations. It is relatively unspoilt with a strong sense of place which adds to the integrity and coherence of the landscape.
- The landscape bears evidence of evolution over millennia to include: prehistoric cairns, ancient field systems, trackways, industrial spoil heaps and small pockets of afforestation which combine to evoke a timeless quality of great scenic, cultural value and strong cultural identity. Gwrhyd road has a local dialect meaning the Long Man which is a possible reference to a prehistoric burial site.
- The post medieval boundary stones and sheep folds are features of the upland which is one of the three most important and significant funerary and ritual landscapes in south Wales.
- It is one of the key non forested areas within the County Borough that is classified as “tranquil” but which has seen considerable erosion in area of tranquillity since 1997.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Preserve essence of the landscape
- Prevent development other than small scale near to existing settlements and farmsteads
- Enhance edges of forestry to improve integration with adjacent open landscape
- Maintain grazing regime
- Enhance existing field boundaries – stone walls, hedges etc
- Promote as low key leisure destination for walkers etc

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries, subject to agreement by NPTCBC, are as follows:

The boundary follows the County boundary to the west and north of the SLA. For the remainder of the northern boundary and eastern boundary it follows access tracks and settlement edges. The southern boundary largely follows Godre'r-graig and Pontardawe settlement edges.

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

No	Geological Landscape (GL)	Landscape Habitats (LH)	Visual & Sensory (VS)	Historic Landscape (HL)	Cultural Landscape (CL)
1	Research/Educational Value	Priority habitats	Scenic Quality	Rarity	Recognition/transparency
2	Historical Value	Significance	Integrity	Survival/preservation	Period
3	Rarity/uniqueness	Opportunity	Character	Coherence	Rarity
4	Classic Example	Decline rates	Rarity	Potential	Documentation
5		Threat		Amenity value	Group value
6		Fragmentation			Survival
7		Habitat Evaluation			Vulnerability
8		Importance for key species			Diversity
9					Potential

Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/>

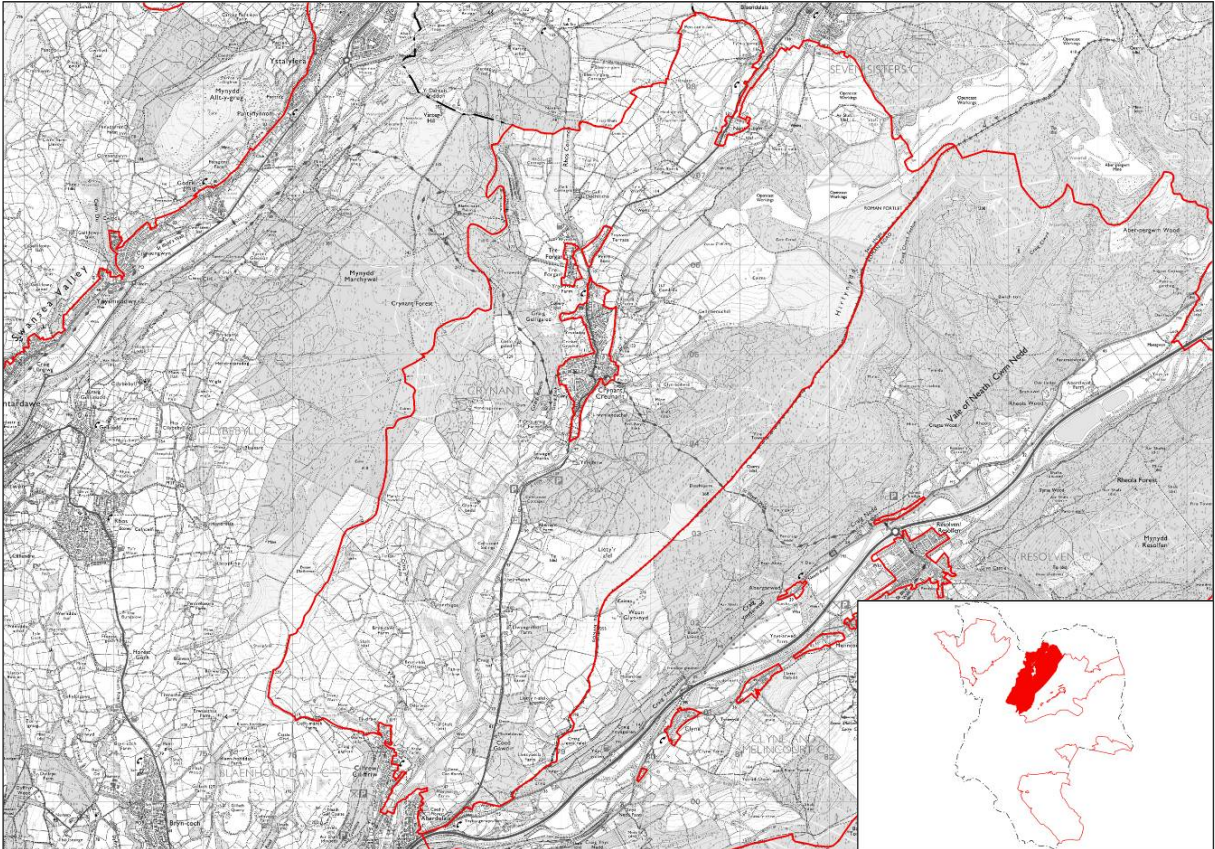
Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Geological Landscapes	GL 009	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High	
	GL 011	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 012	U	M	M	M						Moderate	
	GL 013	L	M	M	L						Moderate	
Landscape Habitats	LH 003	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High	
	LH 005	M	M	M	L	L	L	M	M		Moderate	
	LH 006	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High	
	LH 007	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	L		Low	
	LH 008	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	M		High	
	LH 009	H	H	L	L	M	L	H	H		High	
	LH 010	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High	
	LH 012	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate	
	LH 013	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High	
	LH 078	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low	
	LH 091	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low	
	LH 092	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low	
	Historic Landscapes	HL 029	O	O	M	H	O					Outstanding
		HL 041	H	H	M	M	H					High
HL 063		H	H	M	L	H					Moderate	
HL 064		O	O	M	M	O					High	
HL 065		H	M	M	L	H					Moderate	
HL 066		O	O	H	H	O					Outstanding	
HL 067		H	M	M	L	M					Moderate	
HL 073		H	M	M	M	M					Moderate	
Visual and Sensory	VS 184	L	L	M	L						Low	
	VS 188	M	H	H	H						High	
	VS 485	M	M	H	M						Moderate	
	VS 541	H	H	H	M						High	
	VS 575	M	L	M	M						Moderate	
	VS 581	M	M	M	M						Moderate	
	VS 612	H	H	M	M						High	
	VS 951	H	M	H	M						High	
Cultural Landscapes	CL 039	H	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	H	High	
	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L	High	

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 2 – Dulais Valley

Location Plan



Photographs



Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

Need

Visually the Dulais Valley is one of the most significant upland valleys in NPT. This enclosed heavily wooded pastoral mosaic valley has high scenic qualities, presents attractive views both within the valley at an intimate scale and also long views out from the higher ground. Although there is forestry on the higher slopes, the dominant landform on both sides of the Dulais Valley reinforces its significance within the landscape. The valley has been subject to extensive mineral extraction and associated infrastructure in the past and the upper slopes are partially forested. There is potential for landscape enhancement through effective forestry and landscape management and restricted development which will enhance the overall landscape character of the area.

Coherence

The SLA includes the ridgelines to the north east and south west of the valley as they form a distinctive visual backdrop to the valley. To the south the SLA directly links to the Vale of Neath SLA and the boundary between them is contiguous along the Sarn Helen Roman road which generally runs along the ridgeline of Hirfynydd and provides a defensible boundary.

Consensus

SLA designation offers the potential for retaining a visually important landscape within the County Borough and would provide protection against further inappropriate development. In addition it will ensure that management of existing land uses is enhanced. Consensus will be confirmed with other stakeholders through the LDP process.

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

- 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 (refer to SLA 3 below).
- 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 north east – south west 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.
- The Cefn Coed Colliery Museum, located to the south of Crynant, is an example of the mining industry which until the 1980s visually dominated the visual and social landscape of the S Wales Valleys and provided a strong sense of place and cohesion to the valley.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Preserve the tranquillity of the area by restricting development
- Prevent encroachment by open cast mining activity or other development that will detract from the landscape quality
- Maintain grazing regime on lower slopes to retain open aspect and biodiversity
- Maintain field patterns and appropriate boundaries dependant upon altitude
- Manage forestry to enhance scenic quality through selective thinning felling and planting of deciduous
- Maintain outgrown hedges and mature deciduous field trees
- Enhance edge of forestry to improve integration with open landscape

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries, subject to agreement by NPTCBC, are as follows:

Boundaries follow access tracks along the western boundary to include the south east facing slopes of Mynydd Marchywel. Whilst the landscape quality within the forestry areas is lower than the surroundings there is ongoing felling and management to improve the visual and ecological amenity of these areas. The western boundary follows the break of slope.

The eastern boundary follows the Sarn Helen Roman Road between Aberdulais and Seven Sisters, the northern and southern boundaries follow the settlement boundaries of these two areas.

The settlements of Treforgan Road, Ynyswen Terrace and Crynant have been excluded from the SLA.

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

No	Geological Landscape (GL)	Landscape Habitats (LH)	Visual & Sensory (VS)	Historic Landscape (HL)	Cultural Landscape (CL)
1	Research/Educational Value	Priority habitats	Scenic Quality	Rarity	Recognition/transparency
2	Historical Value	Significance	Integrity	Survival/preservation	Period
3	Rarity/uniqueness	Opportunity	Character	Coherence	Rarity
4	Classic Example	Decline rates	Rarity	Potential	Documentation
5		Threat		Amenity value	Group value
6		Fragmentation			Survival
7		Habitat Evaluation			Vulnerability
8		Importance for key species			Diversity
9					Potential

Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/>

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

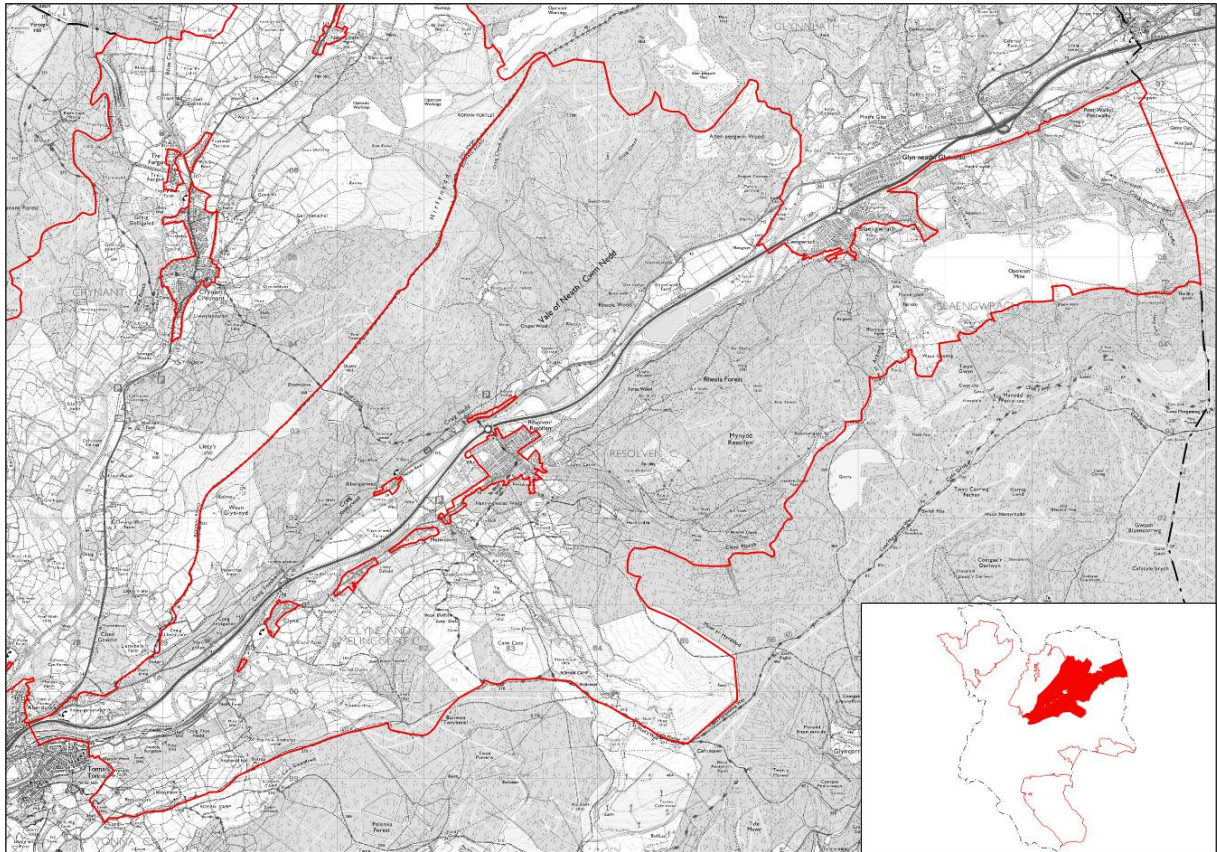
- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 007	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 008	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 015	M	M	M	H						High
	GL 016	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 020	H	M	H	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 015	H	H	L	L	M	L	H	H		High
	LH 017	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 018	L	L	M	H	H	H	L	L		Low
	LH 019	M	M	L	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 030	H	H	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 031	H	M	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 036	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 086	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 093	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	U		Moderate
	LH 094	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low
Historic Landscapes	LH 096	U	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
	HL 020	H	M	M	L	M					Moderate

	HL 027	H	O	H	H	O						Outstanding
	HL 028	M	H	M	M	O						High
	HL 043	O	O	H	M	O						Outstanding
	HL 046	H	M	M	H	H						High
	HL 048	H	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	HL 054	O	O	H	O	O						Outstanding
	HL 074	M	H	M	M	H						Moderate
	HL 075	M	M	M	L	M						Moderate
	HL 076	H	M	M	M	M						Moderate
Visual and Sensory	VS 340	M	M	M	M							Moderate
	VS 357	M	M	M	L							Moderate
	VS 359	M	M	M	L							Moderate
	VS 422	M	M	H	M							Moderate
	VS 720	L	L	M	L							Low
	VS 751	M	H	M	M							Moderate
	VS 846	H	M	H	H							High
Cultural Landscapes	CL 024	M	M	H	H	H	H	L	H	M		High
	CL 037	M	H	M	U	H	M	L	H	U		Outstanding
	CL 038	H	H	M	H	H	O	L	L	M		Outstanding
	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U		High

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 3 –Vale of Neath

Location Plan



Photographs



Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

Need

The Vale of Neath is a prominent broad valley of considerable importance within the South Wales Coalfields and it has a different character to other narrower valleys of the County Borough. This is a high value landscape in terms of its underlying geology, cultural and historical heritage, ecology, visual amenity and sense of place. It has visual links with the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Coherence

The SLA includes the ridgelines to the north east and south west of the valley as they form a distinctive visual backdrop to the valley. To the south west the upper ridgeline forms the boundary as visually this is the main ridgeline as seen from the valley. To the north west the SLA directly links to the Dulais Valley SLA and the boundary between them is contiguous along the Sarn Helen Roman Road which generally runs along the ridgeline of Hirfynydd and provides a defensible boundary.

Consensus

SLA designation offers the potential for retaining a well renowned, high value landscape within the County Borough and provides protection against further inappropriate development. In addition it will ensure that management of existing land uses is enhanced. Consensus will be confirmed with other stakeholders through the LDP process

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

- The Vale of Neath is similar to the south east valley side of the Dulais valley with its NE-SW fault controlled U-shaped broad glacial valley floodplain and channel, flanked by steep valley slopes. The area is a pastoral and deciduous mosaic providing diversity within the valley and contrasting with the heavily coniferous wooded nature of the upper slopes.
- The broad floodplain makes the Neath valley distinctive from the Tawe or the Dulais. The topography and woodland cover on the northern and southern slopes of the Neath valley is a significant and dominant feature and provides coherence and integrity to the SLA.
- The landscape contains many examples of prehistoric land use alongside the Roman camps and fortlets. The high ridge conveys the sense of the terrain having formed the ancient tribal frontier between the Silures and Demetae. Although now heavily forested in the east, open cast mining in the north demonstrates a geological "frontier" between surface outcrops and the deep mines of the Tawe, Dulais and Neath Valleys. To the north-east of the SLA it is geologically and topographically dominated by sundry small rivers and waterfalls, suggesting a natural boundary between the County Borough and the high moorland of the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- The SLA includes Cwm Gwrelych and Nant Llyn Fach SSSI and to the south east of the Selar opencast is the Graig-y-Llyn geological SSSI.
- A strong sense of place, coherence, local distinctiveness and cultural identity combine to contribute to the special qualities of the Vale of Neath. From Aberdulais to Glynneath the Vale of Neath's topographical beauties have attracted painters including Turner, poets, photographers in large numbers over several centuries.
- The upper reaches of the valley have a tranquil and remote feeling, removed from settlements and dwellings although this contrasts significantly with the valley floor which is an important communications corridor.

- The unforested areas of the valley sides are primarily sheep grazed, and there is evidence of relict post-medieval fieldscapes within the forested areas. Footpaths, long distance paths to include St Illtyds Way and bridleways facilitate views across the valley.
- Cut into the hillslopes of the valley, on both the north and south sides, are many small collieries, levels and quarries and Fynnon Oer windfarm lies to the south east of the SLA.
- The settlements of Resolven, Blaengwrach and Glynneath are not included in the SLA.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Encourage sensitive felling and forest management and enhance edges of forest to improve integration with adjacent open landscape
- Ensure protection of rare habitats of fauna and flora especially in relation to the SSSI
- Prevent encroachment by open cast mining activity or other developments that will detract from the landscape quality
- Enhance field pattern of hedges and stone walls maintaining altitudinal distinction between them
- Maintain grazing regime to retain open aspect and biodiversity
- Ensure historic and cultural landscape context, such as views, representations and history are properly addressed in considering any management proposals

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries, subject to agreement by NPTCBC, are as follows:

The boundary follows Sarn Helen Roman Road along the western boundary which provides a contiguous boundary with Dulais Valley SLA.

To the south east the boundary will follow the break of slope and will be bounded by St Illtyd's Walk and forestry tracks. The Tonna settlement edge forms the southern boundary. Forestry tracks and the Glynneath settlement edge define the northern boundary.

To the south of Glynneath the SLA extends around the Selar opencast site. The boundary follows access tracks to the South of Mynydd Resolven and across Cwm yr Argoed to the County boundary.

Settlements within the SLA have been excluded.

Consideration was given to an extension to the north east to include the forested area to the south of Seven Sisters up to the A4109 or cross the break of slope to the north of Glynneath. It was agreed not to include the area up to the A4109 as the character changes and opens up to the east.

Consideration was also given to an extension to the south east up to the County boundary. This would include Selar opencast and would follow the county boundary to the A465 and follow the Glynneath settlement boundary. This is coherent with the RCT SLA which includes Hirwaun Common and abuts the County boundary in this vicinity. Including Selar would ensure control of extraction and restoration of mining activities. It was agreed that this would be included and the boundaries revised accordingly as described above.

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

No	Geological Landscape (GL)	Landscape Habitats (LH)	Visual & Sensory (VS)	Historic Landscape (HL)	Cultural Landscape (CL)
1	Research/Educational Value	Priority habitats	Scenic Quality	Rarity	Recognition/transparency
2	Historical Value	Significance	Integrity	Survival/preservation	Period
3	Rarity/uniqueness	Opportunity	Character	Coherence	Rarity
4	Classic Example	Decline rates	Rarity	Potential	Documentation
5		Threat		Amenity value	Group value
6		Fragmentation			Survival
7		Habitat Evaluation			Vulnerability
8		Importance for key species			Diversity
9					Potential

Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/>

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

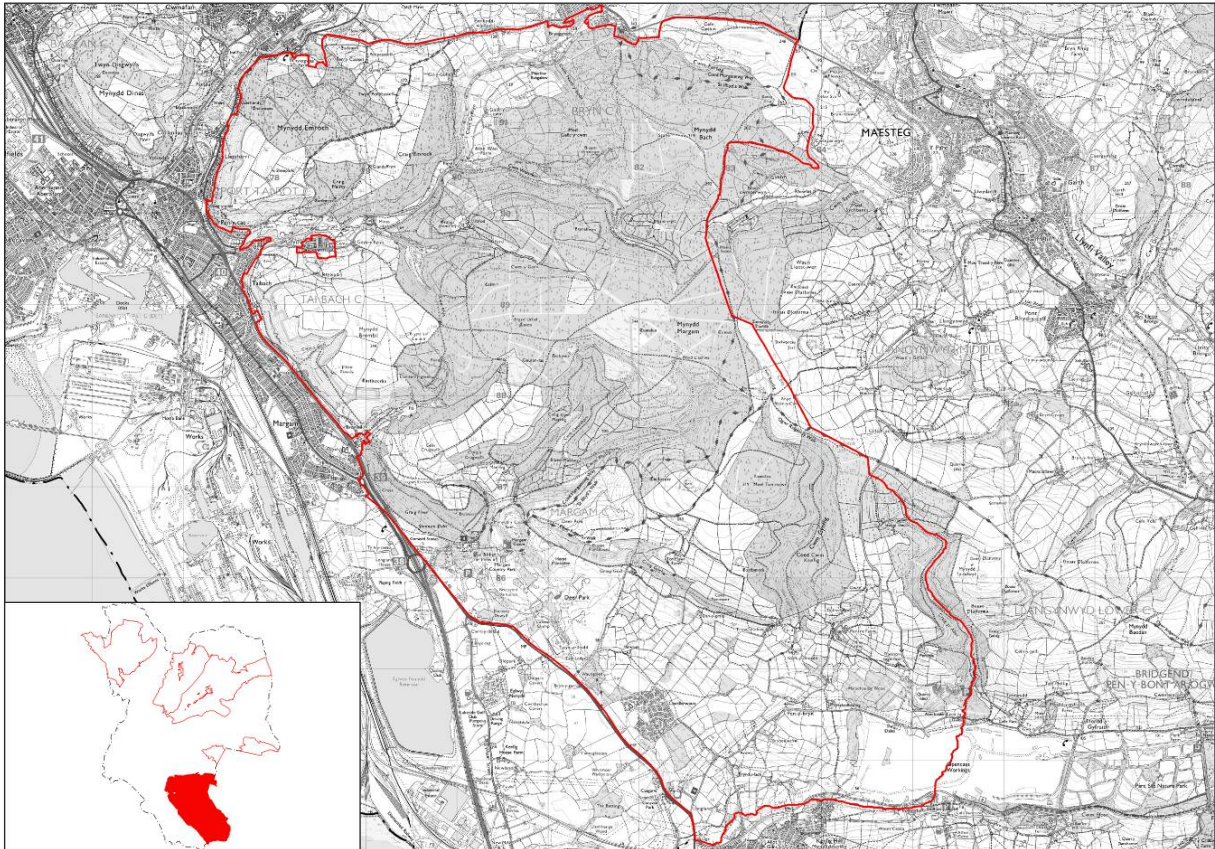
- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 008	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 015	M	M	M	H						High
	GL 017	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 018	H	M	M	M						High
	GL 020	H	M	H	H						High
	GL 021	U	O	O	M						Outstanding
	GL 022	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
	GL 024	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 018	L	L	M	H	H	H	L	L		Low
	LH 024	H	H	M	L	M	M	H	M		High
	LH 026	H	H	M	M	M	M	H	H		High

	LH 027	L	L	M	H	O	H	L	L		Low
	LH 028	O	O	L	L	L	L	H	H		Outstanding
	LH 031	H	M	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 033	H	H	L	L	L	L	H	H		High
	LH 034	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 036	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 037	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 038	H	M	M	L	M	L	H	M		High
	LH 057	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 081	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 082	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 083	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 085	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 096	U	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
	LH 098	L	M	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 026	H	O	M	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 027	H	O	H	H	O					Outstanding
	HL 039	H	O	M	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 042	H	H	H	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 043	O	O	H	M	O					Outstanding
	HL 055	O	O	H	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 072	H	H	M	M	O					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 252	L	L	L	L						Low
	VS 357	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 422	M	M	H	M						Moderate
	VS 430	M	M	H	M						Moderate
	VS 431	M	M	H	M						Moderate
	VS 624	M	M	H	M						Moderate
	VS 703	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 751	M	H	M	M						Moderate
	VS 962	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 967	L	L	M	L						Low
Cultural Landscapes	CL 002	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	H	High
	CL 015	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	O	Outstanding
	CL 016	H	H	L	U	U	H	L	L	H	Outstanding
	CL 026	H	H	H	H	M	H	O	H	H	Outstanding
	CL 034	M	U	U	U	U	M	U	M	U	High
	CL 035	M	H	M	H	H	H	L	U	L	High
	CL 036	M	H	M	L	H	M	L	M	M	High
	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High
	CL 047	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 4 – Margam

Location Plan



Photographs



Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

Need

This SLA provides protection for the high quality landscape with its culturally and historically important associations to Margam Abbey. It is a unique landscape which includes Margam Park and Margam Castle with Margam Mountain as the backdrop and a visually prominent landmark from the M4 and associated transport routes. Whilst the area is partially covered by Green Wedge, refer to chapter 6, SLA designation reflects the landscape quality of the area rather than relying solely on the planning control tool of a Green Wedge.

Coherence

The SLA includes Margam Abbey and its contextural landscape. It also includes the Margam House and Deer Park and its lowland setting. The scarp of Moel Ton-mawr and Mynydd Margam, which reaches 344AOD, are included as they provide an important cultural backdrop for the Abbey and form a prominent entry feature to the County Borough. The County Boundary and the road network form the main boundaries to the SLA. To the east the SLA adjoins the Western Uplands SLA in Bridgend.

Consensus

SLA designation recognises and reflects the high geological, visual, historical and cultural value of the landscape and provides protection against further inappropriate development in a location which serves as an prominent gateway to the County Borough from the east. Consensus will be confirmed with other stakeholders through the LDP process

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

- Mynydd Margam is a broad, low lying plateau of NE dipping Productive Coal Formation mudstones and coals between South Wales Pennant Formation escarpment and E-W Millstone Grit ridge to the South, dissected by shallow, alluvium filled valleys of tributaries and the main Cynfig valley. It includes mine workings and the proposed deep mine.
- Cultural features in the landscape include evidence of prehistoric and later agricultural practices, rural settlements and contemporary forestry activities.
- It is an evolved landscape containing multi-period cultural expressions untrammelled by industrial exploitation - extensive archaeological evidence of land husbandry, now given over to forestry interspersed with some small farms and thus is a comparatively rare example of a surviving relict landscape.
- The SLA, which contains Margam Park, with its exceptional examples of architecture; its history as a major Cistercian Abbey and the wider monastic landholdings, provides a combination of high grade historic visitor attraction and a variety of multi-period pleasure grounds. It contains cultural elements dating from pre-history through every period up to the 21st century.
- Whilst the SLA contains areas of forested upland these are important to the overall historical context of the area and could be managed to enhance the landscape quality of the wider area.
- The scenic quality of the area is enhanced by the historic buildings of the Park and the backdrop of scarp creating a sheltered setting which link visually and provide the integrity of the whole. The sense of place for the park is initially prompted with boundary walls and entrance gates. The historic core and deer park make this area unique within the County.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Prevent development proposals which will impact on the cultural essence of the area
- Encourage sensitive felling and forest management and enhance edges of forest to improve integration with adjacent open landscape
- Develop and implement a conservation plan for statutorily protected structures; and ensure that the cultural integrity of the Park is not compromised by inappropriate promotion or events held there
- Maintain and enhance parkland character and associated features eg walls, gates, trees etc.
- Ensure rehabilitation of opencast workings is appropriate to the surrounding landscape
- Improve street furniture and signs to be in keeping with historic character of the park and give consideration to the wider cultural context of the SLA
- The landscape and visual context must be considered and adequate mitigation, enhancement included if any large scale coal workings are taken forward.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries, subject to agreement by NPTCBC, are as follows:

The boundaries follow defensible lines wherever possible. The southern and eastern boundaries follow the County boundary, the western boundary follows the A48 and a section of the Port Talbot settlement boundary. The northern boundary follows the A4107 between Port Talbot and Cwmafan then the B4282 between Cwmafan and Bryn following the B4282 and joins the County Boundary.

The settlements of Bryn and Goytre have been excluded from the SLA.

Consideration was given to the inclusion of Mynydd Emroch to the north east or retaining the boundary along the minor road between Bryngyros and Taibach. It was agreed that the inclusion of Mynydd Emroch would provide coherence as part of the backdrop to Margam, the boundaries are as described above.

In addition NPTCBC proposed the inclusion of Mynydd Dinas which lies to the west of Mynydd Emroch to the west of the Afan valley. This landform relates to the landform of Mynydd y Gaer and Foel Fynyddau and does not provide coherence to the cultural and historic context of Margam and therefore Mynydd Dinas has been assessed separately for its potential as an SLA at the end of this chapter.

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

No	Geological Landscape (GL)	Landscape Habitats (LH)	Visual & Sensory (VS)	Historic Landscape (HL)	Cultural Landscape (CL)
1	Research/Educational Value	Priority habitats	Scenic Quality	Rarity	Recognition/transparency
2	Historical Value	Significance	Integrity	Survival/preservation	Period
3	Rarity/uniqueness	Opportunity	Character	Coherence	Rarity
4	Classic Example	Decline rates	Rarity	Potential	Documentation
5		Threat		Amenity value	Group value
6		Fragmentation			Survival
7		Habitat Evaluation			Vulnerability
8		Importance for key species			Diversity
9					Potential

Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.cw.gov.uk/>

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

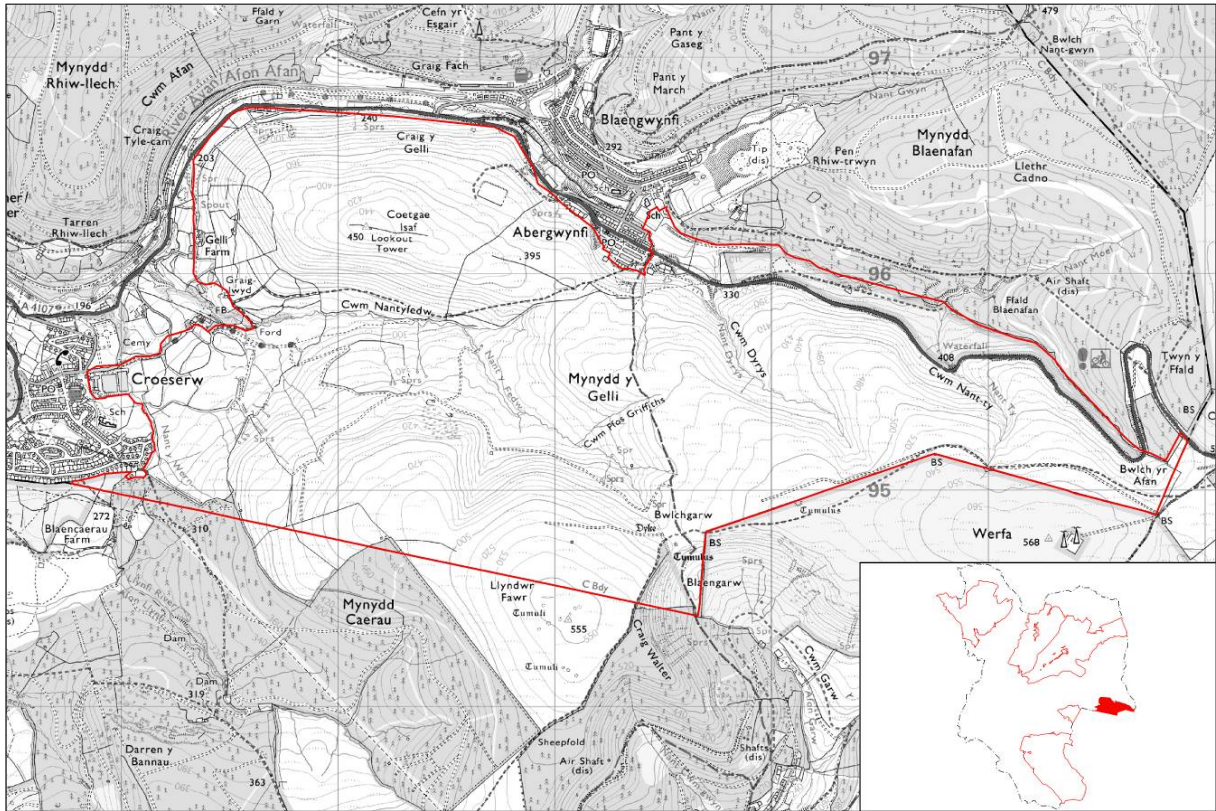
- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 026	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 027	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 028	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 029	H	H	M	M						High
	GL 030	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 031	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 032	L	L	L	L						Low
	Landscape Habitats	LH 058	M	M	M	L	L	L	M	M	
LH 059		L	L	M	L	L	L	L	L		Low
LH 060		M	M	L	L	L	L	M	M		Moderate
LH 061		M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
LH 064		M	M	M	L	L	L	M	M		Moderate
LH 065		L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L		Low
LH 066		M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
LH 067		H	H	M	L	L	L	H	H		High
LH 069		L	L	L	L	L	L	L	M		Low
LH 070		M	M	L	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
LH 071	H	M	L	L	L	L	M	H		High	
LH 087	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low	

	LH 090	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 106	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low
	LH 107	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
	LH 108	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 013	O	O	M	M	O					High
	HL 016	O	O	O	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 021	H	O	M	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 031	M	H	M	M	H					Moderate
	HL 052	O	H	H	H	O					Outstanding
	HL 054	O	O	H	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 068	M	M	M	L	M					Moderate
	HL 069	O	O	M	H	O					Outstanding
	HL 070	H	H	M	M	H					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 139	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 215	L	L	L	L						Low
	VS 397	L	L	L	M						Low
	VS 403	H	H	H	H						High
	VS 448	M	L	M	L						Low
	VS 543	M	M	M	H						Moderate
	VS 811	M	M	H	H						High
	VS 897	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 916	H	M	H	H						High
	VS 927	M	M	M	L						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 001	H	H	L	U	H	H	L	L	M	Outstanding
	CL 002	M	H	L	H	H	H	L	H	H	High
	CL 006	M	U	L	H	U	H	L	L	U	High
	CL 027	O	O	O	O	O	O	L	O	H	Outstanding
	CL 028	L	O	H	M	U	H	H	U	U	Outstanding

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 5 – Mynydd y Gelli

Location Plan



Photographs



Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

Need

Mynydd y Gelli is an open upland up to 555m AOD bounded by Caerau Forest to the south, the forested Mynydd Blaenafan to the north and the river Afan to the north and west. It forms a contiguous landmass with Llangeinwyr across the County boundary in Bridgend. SLA designation will help to protect the integrity and quality of this upland unit.

Coherence

The SLA covers the open upland of Mynydd y Gelli and is contiguous with the Western Uplands SLA in Bridgend.

Consensus

It forms a coherent extension to the Western Uplands SLA in Bridgend reflecting a similar landscape character and quality. Consensus will be confirmed with other stakeholders through the LDP process.

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

- The landform of Mynydd y Gelli is a coherent landscape element and relates to the Western Uplands Bridgend SLA which includes the adjacent Mynydd Llangeinwyr.
- Similar to Foel Trawsnant it forms an open exposed plateau area within the eastern highlands complex.
- The landform and topography creates an imposing presence and with its simple land cover provides a contrast to the more complex landscapes of surrounding areas
- The open remote plateau has a sense of exposure and wilderness in contrast with the adjacent Afan valley.
- It is unspoilt by development or land use and has a coherent distinct character, with topographical and visual unity, high scenic quality and strong sense of place

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Retain simple open nature of area
- Ensure the tranquillity of the area is not compromised
- Monitor afforestation to retain landscape integrity
- Continue upland grazing where appropriate
- Enhance integral landscape features including field boundaries

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries, subject to agreement by NPTCBC are as follows:

This small well defined SLA covers Mynydd y Gelli. The southern and eastern boundaries follow the County boundary, the northern boundary follows part of the A4107 and the Abergwynfi settlement boundary. The western boundary follows the Croeserw settlement boundary and the Gelli Farm access road.

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix. In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

No	Geological Landscape (GL)	Landscape Habitats (LH)	Visual & Sensory (VS)	Historic Landscape (HL)	Cultural Landscape (CL)
1	Research/Educational Value	Priority habitats	Scenic Quality	Rarity	Recognition/transparency
2	Historical Value	Significance	Integrity	Survival/preservation	Period
3	Rarity/uniqueness	Opportunity	Character	Coherence	Rarity
4	Classic Example	Decline rates	Rarity	Potential	Documentation
5		Threat		Amenity value	Group value
6		Fragmentation			Survival
7		Habitat Evaluation			Vulnerability
8		Importance for key species			Diversity
9					Potential

Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

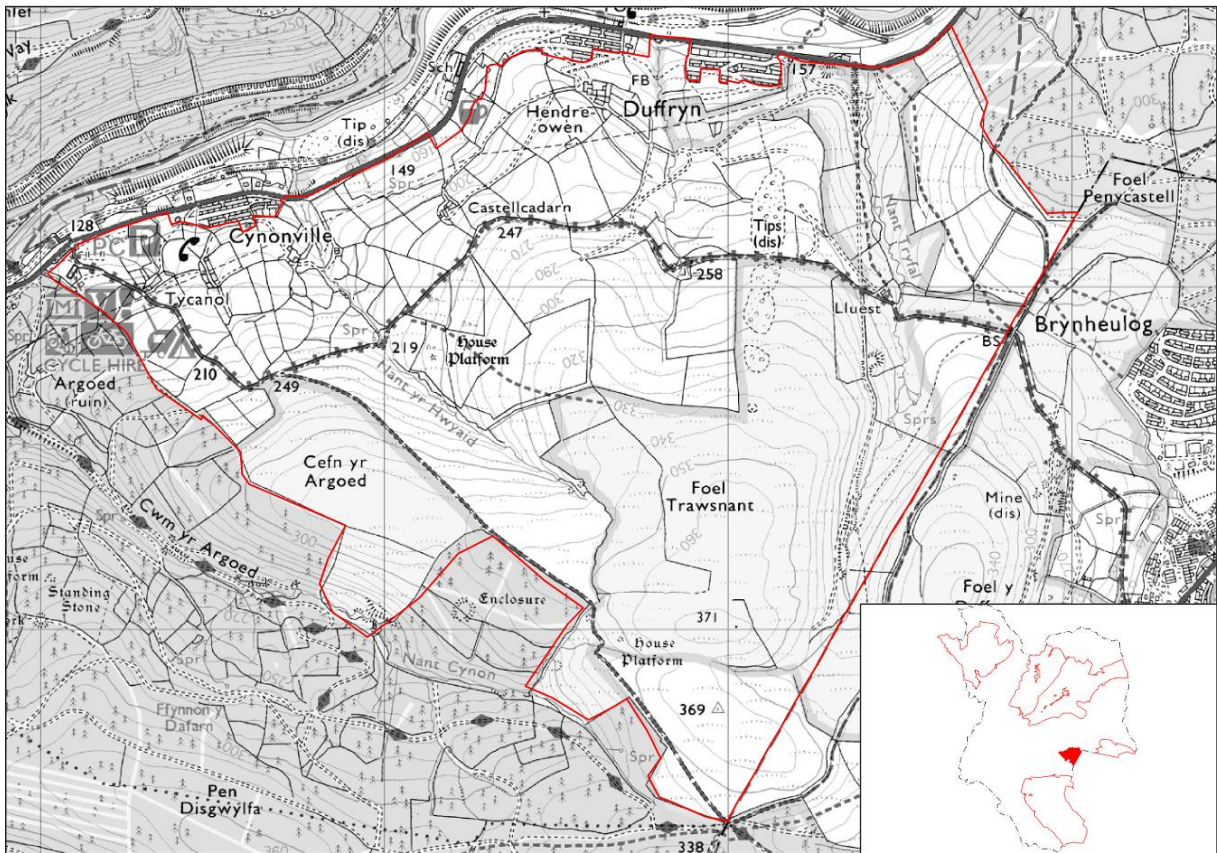
- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 044	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 047	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 100	L	L	L	U	L	L	L	L		Low
	LH 101	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 045	H	O	M	M	O					High
	HL 060	H	H	M	M	H					High
	HL 061	M	M	M	L	M					Moderate
Visual and Sensory	VS 358	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 366	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 465	L	L	M	L						Low
	VS 920	M	M	M	M						Moderate

Cultural Landscapes	CL 028	L	O	H	M	U	H	H	U	U	Outstanding
	CL 030	M	H	L	M	U	H	L	H	O	High
	CL 031	H	U	U	U	M	M	H	U	H	High
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA 6 – Foel Trawsnant

Location Plan



Photographs



Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

Need

Foel Trawsnant is an open upland up to 369m AOD surrounded by forested valley sides. It forms a contiguous landmass with Foel y Dyffryn across the County boundary in Bridgend. SLA designation will help to protect the integrity and quality of this upland unit.

Coherence

The small SLA covers the open upland of Foel Trawsnant and is contiguous with the Foel y Dyffryn SLA in Bridgend.

Consensus

It forms a coherent extension to the Foel y Dyffryn SLA in Bridgend reflecting a similar landscape character and quality. Consensus will be confirmed with other stakeholders through the LDP process

Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

- The SLA covers the steep, exposed, upland slopes in NE-SW striking N and NE dipping sandstones and coals of the South Wales Pennant Formation Llynfi-Brithdir Beds (Lower Pennant Measures).
- It forms part of the eastern highlands complex and is one location within the relict landscape of mixed periods which is not covered in conifer plantations.
- There is no development and the area feels exposed and bleak, access is via foot and bridle paths.
- The simple landscape features and pattern, upland grazing to 271m AOD creates a local sense of place and distinctiveness.

Key Policy and Management Issues

- Monitor land reclamation from mining and conserve landslip settings
- Monitor afforestation to retain landscape integrity
- Continue upland grazing where appropriate
- Enhance landscape features

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries, subject to agreement by NPTCBC, are as follows:

This small SLA centres around Foel Trawsnant. It's eastern boundary follows the County boundary. The northern and southern boundaries determined by tracks on the edge of the adjacent conifer plantation. The western boundary follows A4107 and settlement lines of Dyffryn and Cynonville

Cross Reference to LANDMAP data set.

The validation of the SLA designations has been made against the criteria used to produce the evaluation level for each of the five evaluated aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

In all a maximum of nine criteria exist for any one aspect topic, as follows:

No	Geological Landscape (GL)	Landscape Habitats (LH)	Visual & Sensory (VS)	Historic Landscape (HL)	Cultural Landscape (CL)
1	Research/Educational Value	Priority habitats	Scenic Quality	Rarity	Recognition/transparency
2	Historical Value	Significance	Integrity	Survival/preservation	Period
3	Rarity/uniqueness	Opportunity	Character	Coherence	Rarity
4	Classic Example	Decline rates	Rarity	Potential	Documentation
5		Threat		Amenity value	Group value
6		Fragmentation			Survival
7		Habitat Evaluation			Vulnerability
8		Importance for key species			Diversity
9					Potential

Detailed designations of each of the criteria are available in the LANDMAP handbook or through the LANDMAP website <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/>

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 042	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 043	H	H	M	L	M	M	H	H		High
	LH 044	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 088	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
Historic Landscapes	HL 026	H	O	M	O	O					Outstanding
	HL 045	H	O	M	M	O					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 215	L	L	L	L						Low
	VS 547	M	H	H	M						High
	VS 920	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 936	M	M	H	H						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 031	H	U	U	U	M	M	H	U	H	High
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High

5.12 Other Potential SLAs

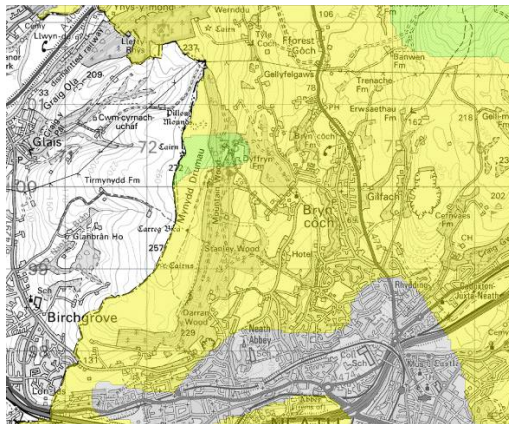
NPTCBC identified three additional areas in terms of need: namely Mynydd Marchywel, Mynydd Drumau (Drummond Mountain) and the Afan Valley. Mynydd Dinas was identified as a potential addition to Margam SLA but it does not fit in terms of coherence. An initial review of these areas has been undertaken and is outlined below.

Whilst it is acknowledged that moderate LANDMAP evaluations are of local value and SLAs are a local level designation the CCW methodology aimed to ensure that there is some consistency of approach to these designations throughout Wales. However it is accepted that all counties have different concerns and landscape parameters and NPTCBC may consider the need for designating areas that would not automatically be identified through the methodology.

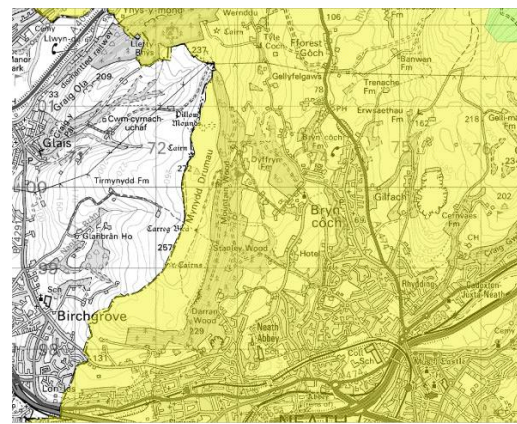
Mynydd Drumau

Mynydd Drumau forms a prominent scarp on the edge of the County Borough with Swansea to the north west of Neath. The landscape quality is generally moderate (or of local importance). The Cultural and Historic Landscapes aspect areas are evaluated as high and outstanding respectively. However, Mynydd Drumau forms a very small component of these large aspect areas which focus on Roman and industrial transportation corridors. There are significant Bronze Age sites on Mynydd y Drumau including burial cairns; a ring cairn and the standing stone "Carreg Bica," which has important local folklore associations.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 005	M	M	M	L						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 036	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 013	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 658	M	M	H	H						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High



Extract from Tranquillity Map 1997



Extract from Tranquillity Map 2007

Recommendation:

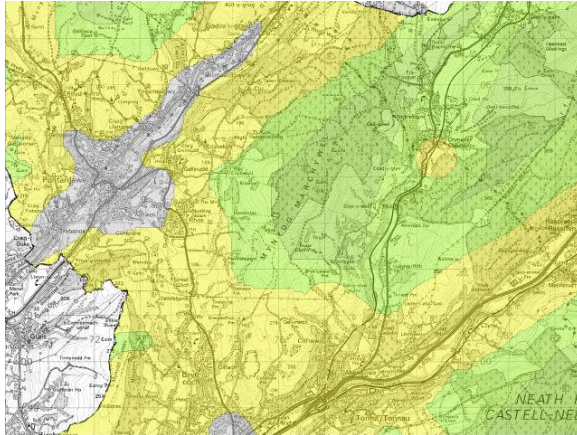
- Whilst the exposed scarp slope is a striking backdrop to the Neath it is not an outstanding landscape in terms of SLAs.
- It was noted that there is a proposal for a windfarm on the Mountain – however, given the prominence of the location any turbines on the scarp are likely to have a significant visual impact on both Neath and Swansea which would be clearly identified through the EIA process.
- The tranquillity mapping indicates that the area is of low tranquillity and given its proximity to urban settlement and transportation corridors this is unlikely to be reversed.
- Further consideration should be given to whether a Green Wedge would be appropriate to include the scarp, this would prevent development pressure and conserve the backdrop to Neath.

Mynydd Marchywel

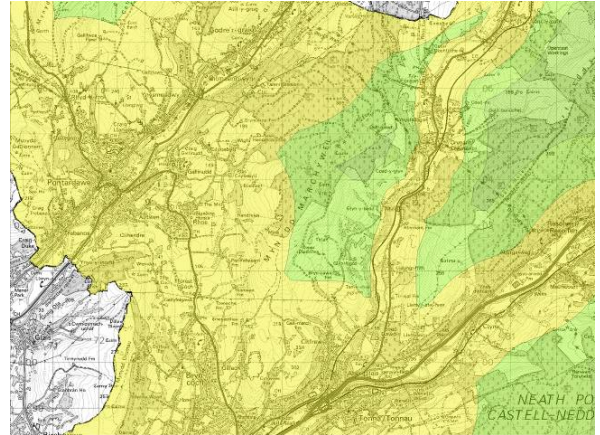
Mynydd Marchywel runs to the west of the Dulais Valley. It is predominantly forested although there has been extensive felling in recent years. The Geological Landscapes layer is evaluated as moderate. The Landscape Habitats layer is predominantly moderate due to the predominance of forest cover. The Historic Landscapes layer includes moderate, high and outstanding aspect areas, mainly due to the importance of the valleys as transportation corridors and for the Roman and Stone Age remains. The Cultural Landscapes layer is high again due to its Roman associations. The Visual and Sensory is predominantly moderate with small areas of low evaluations. There is a high evaluation along the river valley which is included in the proposed Dulais Valley SLA.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 006	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 007	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 008	M	M	M	H						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 011	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 014	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 030	H	H	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 036	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 079	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 093	L	L	M	U	L	M	U	M		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 028	M	H	U	O	U					High
	HL 040	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 044	H	H	U	O	U					High
	HL 074	M	H	U	H	U					Moderate
Visual and Sensory	VS 286	M	M	M	H						Moderate
	VS 340	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 359	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 422	M	M	H	M						Moderate
	VS 458	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 581	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 751	M	H	M	M						Moderate
	VS 846	H	M	H	H						High
VS 878	L	L	L	L						Low	
Cultural Landscapes	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High

In terms of tranquillity, whilst much of the surrounding area is Zone B or urban especially along the Neath and Tawe river valleys, there remains tranquil areas in the forested uplands of Mynydd Marchywel. This may be the result of the land use and cover. Even though the land use and management may change to improve the visual and biodiversity aspects of the land cover, the tranquil nature should be retained.



Extract from Tranquillity Map 1997



Extract from Tranquillity Map 2007

Recommendation:

- As an integral land mass Mynydd Marchywel is predominantly of moderate evaluation and thus of local importance and therefore it does not fit the criteria for inclusion in an SLA Broad Search Area in its own right.
- It should be noted that much of the forested area is assessed as tranquil and this quality should be retained and thus development should be avoided.
- Much of the eastern slopes of Mynydd Marchywel have been included in the Dulais Valley SLA and therefore it is unlikely that Mynydd Marchywel would form a coherent SLA.

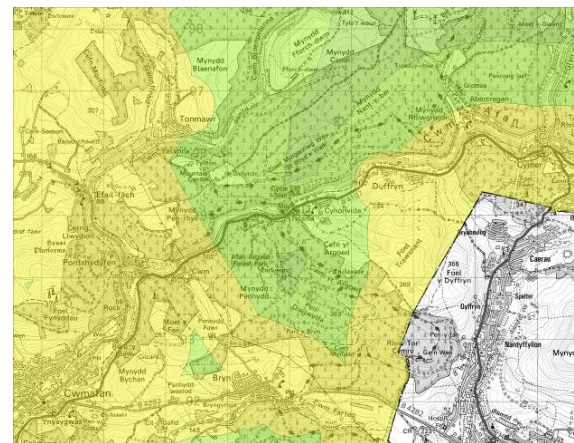
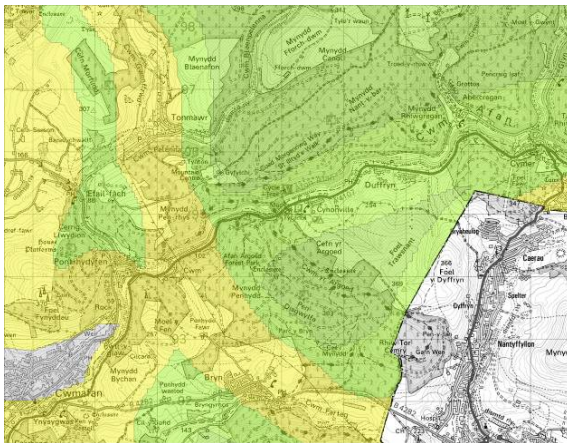
Afan Valley

The Afan Valley is in part contained within the Margam SLA and the Mynydd y Gelli SLA to the east of the County Borough. This review relates specifically to the area along the valley as a potential SLA in its own right. The Afan Valley in this location was identified in the Strategic Findings Report as a potential broad search area due to the high geological and cultural heritage evaluations.

In terms of LANDMAP data the Geological Landscapes layer is high due to the coal measures and the glacial u shaped valley. The Landscape Habitats layer includes high evaluations along the narrow valley corridor though much of the surrounding land is moderate with an area of low evaluation around Cymer reflecting the settlements and poor grazing resource. The Historic and Cultural Landscapes are predominantly high due to the extensive evidence of human occupation in prehistory and through the mediaeval periods to the 19th and 20th centuries, although much of this is now covered in forestry. The Visual and Sensory layer is predominantly moderate mainly due to the enclosed and forested nature of much of the valley with a low evaluation around Cymer.

In terms of tranquillity the valley still retains areas of tranquillity, however this is predominantly in areas of forest cover.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 023	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 042	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 043	H	H	M	L	M	M	H	H		High
	LH 044	M	M	M	L	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 047	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 100	L	L	L	U	L	L	L	L		Low
	LH 101	L	L	M	U	L	L	M	L		Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 045	M	O	U	O	U					High
	HL 060	M	H	U	H	U					High
	HL 061	L	M	U	M	U					Moderate
	HL 062	L	M	U	M	U					Moderate
Visual and Sensory	VS 358	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 366	M	M	M	L						Moderate
	VS 465	L	L	M	L						Low
	VS 920	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 936	M	M	H	H						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 031	H	U	U	U	M	M	H	U	H	High
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High



Extract from Tranquillity Map 1997

Extract from Tranquillity Map 2007

Recommendation:

- Although the Afan Valley does include some high and outstanding evaluations, these have been incorporated in more coherent and justifiable SLAs to include Margam, Mynydd y Gelli and Foel Trawsant.
- The Afan valley itself does not provide a coherent landscape of high value to warrant independent designation.
- There are areas assessed as tranquil and these should be retained even with changes to land cover or management.

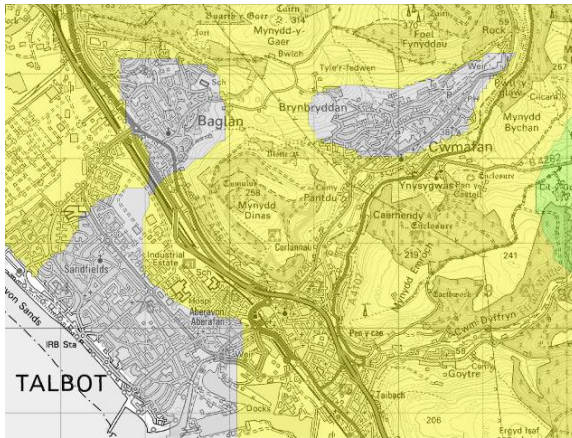
Mynydd Dinas

Mynydd Dinas is a small upland to the north of the Afan valley. This area does not relate to the Margam SLA in terms of coherence with the historic context of Margam Park, Abbey and Mountain. Instead there is a greater coherence with Mynydd y Gaer and Foel Fynyddau to the north.

The LANDMAP Geological Landscapes layer is moderate and the Landscape Habitats are predominantly low. The high Visual and Sensory evaluation relates to a large aspect area that includes the scarp slope, which lies north east of Port Talbot and runs into Afan valley to the south and the Neath valley to the north. The high Cultural and Historic Landscape evaluations relate predominantly to the communications corridors and the evidence of roman and medieval settlement.

The tranquillity maps show that Mynydd Dinas is located close to urban areas and is therefore not identified as tranquil in either 1997 or 2007.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 026	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 027	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 055	M	M	M	L	L	L	M	M		Moderate
	LH 057	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	LH 087	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 089	L	M	M	U	M	H	M	L		Low
	LH 105	L	L	M	U	L	L	L	L		Low
Historic Landscapes	HL 013	M	O	U	O	U					High
	HL 032	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 054	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
Visual and Sensory	VS 187	M	M	H	H						High
	VS 587	L	L	L	L						Low
	VS 703	M	M	M	M						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 006	M	U	L	H	U	H	L	L	U	High
	CL 009	U	M	L	U	M	H	L	L	L	Moderate
	CL 046	L	H	L	U	M	L	H	H	U	High



Extract from Tranquillity Map 1997



Extract from Tranquillity Map 2007

Recommendation:

- Mynydd Dinas does not form a coherent northern boundary to the Margam SLA and therefore has been considered on its merits.
- It relates in land form, cover and historic attributes more to Mynydd y Gaer and Foel Fynyddau to the north than to Mynydd Margam
- Given the LANDMAP evaluations and tranquillity data it does not indicate a coherent entity of high value and therefore should not be taken forward as an SLA.

6.0 TASK 3 – GREEN WEDGES

- 6.1** The brief asks for *an assessment of the Green Wedges identified in the existing UDP; the need to refine those boundaries and the identification of further areas where appropriate.*
- 6.2** The UDP has identified Green Wedges in policy ENV2 to protect the setting of built-up areas and prevent urban coalescence. Five green wedges were designated within the UDP to include the following:
- Margam
 - Alltwen/Rhos/Bryncoch/Neath Abbey/Leiros Park
 - Crymlyn Bog/Crymlyn Burrows/Llandarcy
 - Neath/Tonna/Cimla/Efail Fach
 - Skewen/Birchgrove
- 6.3** This exercise commenced with a meeting with the NPTCBC Planners on 16th February 2010. At the meeting the effectiveness of the existing Green Wedges was discussed together with the need for any additional areas. It was confirmed that the UDP policy for Green Wedges is effective and should be taken forward to the LDP. The planners did not consider any additional ones were required through the LDP plan period, however they acknowledged that refinements would be necessary especially in terms of key candidate sites and other proposed developments.
- 6.4** It was noted that some of the Green Wedges especially Alltwen/Rhos/Bryncoch/Neath Abbey/Leiros Park are large and include the setting and backdrop to settlements. There was a discussion as to whether this approach to designation was fully in accordance with PPW. Whilst PPW promotes the need to incorporate “urban setting” it was considered that the protection of the countryside policies could effectively be used to restrict development outside the settlement boundaries where the countryside does not form part of the urban setting.
- 6.5** During the review of the Green Wedges TACP identified areas where coalescence could occur and recommendations have been made for extension of the Green Wedges. These are shown on Figures 3.1-3.5. It was also noted that some Green Wedges fall within or overlap with the SLA broad search areas. This was reviewed during the ground truthing stage.
- 6.6** The initial review predominantly considered issues of potential coalescence and their relationship to areas of high value landscapes. Issues of urban setting was determined during the second phase of the study whilst undertaking the ground truthing.
- 6.7** Green and blue infrastructure form important components of the Green Wedge designations and it also fits in with the overall green space strategy. Green infrastructure relates to open space and blue infrastructure relates to water – rivers/canals etc. The Green Infrastructure approach analyses the natural environment in a way that highlights its function and subsequently seeks to put in place, through regulatory or planning policy, mechanisms that safeguard critical natural areas. The term “green infrastructure” is sometimes expanded to “multifunctional” green and blue infrastructure. Multifunctionality in this context refers to the integration and interaction of different functions or activities on the same piece of land. This is key to the efficient and sustainable use of land, especially where pressures on land are particularly acute. An example might be an urban edge river

flood plain which provides a repository for flood waters, acts as a nature reserve, provides a recreational green space and could also be productively farmed (probably through grazing). These are important overarching concepts identified within the Valleys Regional Park which helps integrate the S Wales Counties and require partnership working.

6.8 The strategic results of the review of Green Wedges were outlined in the Strategic Findings Report. These results were reviewed and refined during the ground truthing exercise and the final recommendations are as follows:

- **Margam Green Wedge**

This covers an area of approximately 1.28ha between Kenfig Hill and Margam Park in the south of the county. It is bounded by the M4 to the west and the railway line to the south. It protects the setting of Margam Park to the south and prevents expansion of the Pyle urban area into the County from Bridgend. The Green Wedge includes Eglwys Nunydd potential mineral resource and to the west and open cast mining activities (Margam extension) to the east.

Candidate Sites: There are five Key LDP Candidate Sites for housing located within the central part of this Green Wedge around the small residential area of Coedhirwaun. Each of these candidate sites serves to expand the settlement of Coedhirwaun. If all of these sites were developed the settlement would be more than doubled in size. The three sites to the east and north of Coedhirwaun expand the settlement into open country with Moderate (Visual and Sensory and Landscape Habitats), High (Geological Landscapes) and Outstanding (Cultural Landscapes) LANDMAP evaluations. The site to the south and the site to the west are smaller and fit better within the landscape, are closer to the A48 and therefore would be more acceptable in landscape terms.

Initial Recommendations: Further consideration of the setting of the candidate sites within the Green Wedge should be undertaken during the ground truthing exercise, especially relating to the candidate sites to the east and north to ensure that they do not compromise the effectiveness of the Green Wedge and to review the impact in terms of landscape fit. Should these candidate sites be taken forward through the LDP, it is proposed that these areas are excluded from the Green Wedge.

This green wedge is also located completely within a proposed SLA Broad Search Area, acknowledging that it is a high quality landscape. If this area is designated as an SLA it is recommended that there is further consideration of the most appropriate designation for this area.

Results following ground truthing

- There were discussions about the most effective designation of this area and as there is a clear requirement to protect the area from development Green Wedge designation seemed appropriate. However, given the high value of the Margam landscape it has been agreed that SLA is both relevant and desirable. The main overlap between the Green Wedge and the SLA is the area to the west of the Green Wedge that the candidate sites are located. Therefore particular care should be taken in terms of location, style, character and density of any development in this area.
- Five Key Candidate sites for housing are located within the Green Wedge given its location on rising ground with the backdrop of Mynydd Margam and the deer park it is recommended that should any Candidate sites be required in this area that they are restricted to Key Candidate Sites (KCS) 5 and/or 9 which lie to the

east and west of the existing settlement. KCS 5 should be restricted such that the settlement boundary does not extend further upslope than the existing houses. It is not recommended that KCS 6 and 7 are taken forward due to the greater visual intrusion into the Margam setting. KCS 8 is in close proximity to the A48 and it is recommended that this is not taken forward as it will bring the development closer to the road and reduce further the setting.

Proposed changes to boundaries

There are no proposed changes to the existing boundary

○ **Alltwen/Rhos/Bryncoch/Neath Abbey/Leiros Park Green Wedge**

The Alltwen/Rhos/Bryncoch/Neath Abbey/Leiros Park Green Wedge stretches from Neath to Pontardawe and includes Forest Goch. The Green Wedge covers an area of 943ha. It includes Neath Abbey to the south west and extends around the north of Neath. It has an important function of preventing any further expansion of the urban area northwards. It stretches to Gellinudd in the north and Trebanos to the north west whilst excluding the settlements of Rhos and Alltwen. The Green Wedge thereby prevents further expansion southwards from Pontardawe. There is a section around Fforest Goch where the Green Wedge is linear and covers open countryside which is also covered by other Countryside protection policies.

The Green Wedge could form part of a green infrastructure programme and could create a link into the blue infrastructure along the Neath and Swansea valleys, both of which are Primary corridors within the Valleys Regional Park.

Candidate Sites: There are three Key LDP Candidate Sites for housing located within the northern section of this Green Wedge, one is located near to Trebanos and two are located on the northern edge of Rhos. The Trebanos Candidate Site is primarily infill with the A4067 to the north and settlement to the south. The loss of this area from the Green Wedge will have no material impact on its effectiveness in terms of urban coalescence or urban setting. The two sites to the north of Rhos are small and again are primarily infill. However, should these areas be accepted for development, any further development in this area could compromise the effectiveness of the Green Wedge especially between Rhos and Gellinudd. A review of the more easterly site was undertaken as part of the ground truthing exercise to review the impact on the urban setting.

Initial Recommendations: As stated above further consideration should be given to the impact of the candidate site north of Rhos to ensure that it will not impact upon the urban setting of Rhos. Should this be acceptable it is proposed that the three candidate sites are excluded from the Green Wedge should they be taken forward into the LDP.

It is also recommended that the extent of this Green Wedge is considered during the ground truthing exercise, to confirm whether the urban setting of Fforest Goch and its environs warrants protection by Green Wedge policy or whether other countryside protection policies would be adequate to prevent inappropriate development. If the central section of the green wedge can be protected effectively there could potentially be two separate green wedges: One located around the settlements of Rhos, Alltwen and Gellinudd and the other located around the Bryn Coch including Fforest Goch.

Results following ground truthing

- On plan there appears to be the basis for dividing the Green Wedge into two parts:
 1. to north of Bryn Coch to wrap around the top of Fforest Goch and
 2. wrapping around the south of Rhos.The intervening area is predominantly farmland that could be controlled through countryside policies.
- However, on the ground there is very little distance between Fforest Goch and Rhos and no obvious break line. Given the number of candidate sites in this location there is a need for Green Wedge designation to restrict development.
- It is proposed to retain the Green Wedge as it is however, on closer inspection of the Green Wedge boundaries they do not always follow clear defensible boundaries and these have been reviewed.
- The three Key Candidate Sites (13, 15, 16) on the northern edge of the Green Wedge were reviewed and whilst these sites were considered acceptable and would not detract from the purpose or nature of the Green Wedge, any further development in these areas should be restricted.

Proposed changes to boundaries

The western boundary follows B roads and footpaths which function well and should be retained. The northern and southern boundaries follow settlement edge. The eastern boundary follows farm access tracks, River Clydach and Public Rights of Way. Although the set boundaries were reviewed there were no clear preferable alternatives. Therefore it is proposed that the original boundary is retained.

If the Candidate Sites are approved through the LDP process these should be removed from the Green Wedge.

○ **Crymlyn Bog/Crymlyn Burrows/Llandarcy Green Wedge**

This Green Wedge is located to the west of Neath and includes Crymlyn Burrows and Crymlyn Bog. It covers 704ha and extends from the M4 eastwards to the County boundary with Swansea.

Candidate Sites: There are no Key Sites identified within this Green Wedge, however an area to the south west of the Green Wedge, south of the A483 Fabian Way, has been identified as the location for a proposed university campus. The site falls within Crymlyn Burrows with water frontage to Baglan Bay. It is within a high value landscape and SLA broad search area. However, in terms of the integrity of the Green Wedge it is at the most south westerly limit of the Green Wedge and lies directly south of the Jersey marine industrial site. Development in this location will therefore not impact upon the effectiveness of the Green Wedge.

Initial Recommendations: If the development of a proposed university campus is taken forward in this location, it is recommended that this area is removed from the Green Wedge.

It is also recommended that an extension to the Green Wedge is considered, to the north east of the existing boundary. This extension includes the undeveloped area north east of the M4 between the A465 dual carriageway and Briton Ferry and Mount Pleasant. The purpose of the extension would be to prevent coalescence between Skewen in the north and Briton Ferry in the south. The extension would ensure that M4 retains it's relatively open aspect through this section of Neath and it is also ideal

for the provision of blue and green infrastructure due the location of the river Neath, the canal existing cycleway and footpaths and the floodplain and could form an important component of the urban open space network. It is recognised that this includes the Giant's Grave Contingency Landfill Site; however the review has indicated that given the location and constraints, the suitability of the site should be reconsidered. If Giant's Grave is used for landfill then suitable operational restrictions and appropriate restoration and mitigation is essential.

Results following ground truthing

- The same arguments apply to the area which includes Giants Grave as to the area to the east in the Neath – Tonna Green Wedge. This is low lying flood plain and should therefore not be taken forward as part of the Green Wedge but included in an open space strategy and incorporated in green/blue infrastructure proposals. However it should be noted that this area is high value landscape and any activities should be sensitively sited and restored
- The proposed additional area to north east has been removed as it appeared not to enhance the value of the Green Wedge. The potential campus site has been included with the caveat that it will be removed if and when approved.

Proposed changes to boundaries

There are no proposed changes to the existing Green Wedge with the exception of removing the proposed University Campus site should it be taken forward through the LDP.

o Neath/Tonna/Cimla/Efail Fach Green Wedge

This Green Wedge covers an area of approximately 482ha to prevent coalescence between Neath and Tonna to the south of the A465 and prevent expansion of Neath towards Efail Fach.

A significant proportion of the northern section, east of Llantwit, is located within a proposed SLA Broad Search Area. A significant proportion of the southern section, east of Cimla, is located within the Potential Broad SLA Search Area. This indicates that these are areas of high quality landscape.

Given its location in relation to the built up areas of Neath and Tonna and its proximity of the Neath Valley this area is potentially important in terms of urban open space strategies and the potential for enhancing green and blue corridors along the Neath valley, especially as the Neath – Cynon has been identified as a primary corridor within the Valleys Regional Park.

Candidate Sites: There are no Key Sites identified within this Green Wedge.

Initial Recommendations: If the SLA designations are taken forward it is recommended that the boundaries for both the Green Wedge and the relevant SLAs are considered carefully. However, as the Green Wedges are small discrete areas with a clear planning function it would seem appropriate for them to remain as Green Wedges, this will be discussed in more detail with NPTCBC during the ground truthing. Refer to 6.7 below.

There are three areas of potential extension to the Green Wedge that could be beneficial to preventing coalescence and protecting the urban setting. The first is located to the north west of the current green wedge, either side of the A465 dual

carriageway between Cadoxton-Juxta-Neath and Llantwit and Cefn-y-don. This is a high quality landscape and would protect an open aspect from the A465 road corridor. It could provide blue and green infrastructure facilities in accordance with the Valleys Regional Park concept. It would also link into the proposed extension to the Crymlyn Bog/Crymlyn Burrows/Llandarcy Green Wedge discussed above thus further reinforcing and protecting an important lung of urban open space. The second area is located to the north of the existing boundary between Cefn-y-don and Mosshouse Wood. Again this would prevent development to the south of Tonna and would link into the lung of urban open space. The third area is located to the south west of the existing boundary, along the southern limit of Mount Pleasant. This would reduce expansion of Mount Pleasant and Pencaerau and protect its rural backdrop. Each of these areas will be reviewed during ground truthing for appropriateness, integrity to the existing Green Wedge and relevant boundaries.

Results following ground truthing

- The proposed additional area to north of Cemetery which includes A4230 and River Neath was considered but has not been taken forward. This is low lying flood plain land and is unlikely to have development pressure. It would however form a valuable component of an open space strategy and would be ideal for green and blue infrastructure proposals
- It was agreed that there was benefit in including the proposed additional area to south of Cefn-y-don in the Green Wedge, refer to Figure 3.4A.
- The additional areas to north of cemetery and south of Mount Pleasant have not been taken forward as it was not considered essential to the purpose of the Green Wedge
- Following the ground truthing exercise consideration was given to the inclusion of the proposed additional area to south of Cimla which extends the existing Green Wedge east towards Mount Pleasant using Crythan Brook as the southern boundary. However, following further consideration by NPTCBC this has not been included due to development pressure in this area and proposals being taken forward through the LDP process.
- The eastern edge of the Green Wedge was reviewed on site. Given the topography and aspect it was questioned whether the area to the north and west of Efail-Fach was integral to the Green Wedge. The proposed revision to the easternmost boundary could be along the access roads to Gelli-gaer to the south and to Cefn-Saeson to the north. Refer to Figure 3.4.

Proposed Changes to Boundaries

If NPTCBC accept the inclusion of the proposed Cefn-y-don extension the boundary should be revised to follow the settlement edge and if the change to the eastern boundary is accepted this should be revised accordingly.

○ Skewen/Birchgrove Green Wedge

This covers an area of approximately 82ha between Skewen and Birchgrove and acts to prevent coalescence north of the A4230 to the County boundary with Swansea. This Green Wedge lies between Crymlyn Bog/Crymlyn Burrows/Llandarcy Green Wedge to the south and Alltwen/Rhos/Bryncoch/Neath Abbey/Leiros Park to the north. It falls within a high value landscape and SLA Broad Search Area.

Candidate sites: There are no Key Sites or other proposed developments within this Green Wedge.

Initial Recommendations: It is considered that this Green Wedge works effectively at present and does not require any real changes to its boundary.

It should be noted that there is potential for extending the Green Wedge between the M4 corridor and the A4230 carriageway. This will help maintain an open visual characteristic of the M4 corridor. It will further reinforce the green link from Mynydd Drummau to the north of Neath and link into the Crymlyn Bog Green Wedge.

Results following ground truthing

This Green Wedge was considered during the ground truthing and it appeared to function well and the proposed extension was not considered necessary.

Proposed Changes to Boundaries

There are no proposed changes to the existing Green Wedge

7.0 TASK 4 – MINERAL BUFFER ZONES

- 7.1 National and UDP policies safeguard sand and gravel resources and the UDP policies identify the two main stone/aggregates quarries and associated buffer zones.

In accordance with the MTAN and as confirmed at the planning meeting on 16th February 2010 a 500m buffer zone has been used for the protection of land around mineral sites as a buffer between mineral extraction and other land uses. This has increased from 200m as shown in the UDP.

The strategic mineral buffers reviewed through this study included the following:

- o Cwmnant Lleici
- o Gilfach Quarry
- o Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry

A description of the issues and recommendations are outlined below, shown on Figures 4.1-4.4 and detailed in the proformas at the end of the section.

7.2 Cwmnant Lleici Mineral Buffer

Cwmnant Lleici lies to the North West of the Swansea valley on the edge of Mynydd y Garth, Cefn Gwrhyd upland and its resource has been described in section 1 aggregates. The buffer zone falls within the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA highlighting that the area is a high quality landscape.

The site is located 0.27km to the west of Cilmaengwyn, north of Pontardawe, on the slopes of a small valley. This proximity to settlement areas is highlighted by the overlap between the mineral buffer zone and the 500m buffer to the settlement limits of Pontardawe and Godre'r-graig.

Three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located within 500m of the quarry, namely Coed Cwm Du to the east, Gwrhyd Meadows to the north and Cefn Gwrhyd to the west. The presence of these sites is reflected in the Landscape Habitats evaluations for the area with high evaluations given for Priority Habitats, Significance, Habitat Evaluation and Importance for Key Species in all three aspect areas. To the east is Flood Zone C2, which indicates that there is a risk of flooding in this area. Two Public Rights of Way are also located within 500m of the quarry.

Recommendation: Given the value of the landscape, the proximity of SSSIs around 3 sides of the site and its relationship to nearby settlements it is recommended that the mineral buffer zone be extended to 500m. The site is located in a proposed SLA and therefore would benefit from further protection.

7.3 Gilfach Mineral Buffer

Gilfach Quarry is an existing extraction site and lies to the south of Mynydd Marchywel upland and to the east of Bryn Coch. The site is located on a west facing slope immediately to the east of Bryn Coch, between this settlement and that of Cilfrew. The proximity of the mineral workings is reflected in the fact that the site falls within the settlement buffer zone. The site falls predominantly within LANDMAP aspect areas evaluated as 'moderate'.

There are no designated areas within 500m of the area, which is reflected in the moderate evaluations given for Priority Habitats, Significance, Habitat Evaluation and Importance for Key Species given for the two Landscape Habitat Aspect Areas. There is a Limekiln Listed Building within 500m to the south east. A small area highlighted as Flood Zone B is located within the north western part of the buffer, indicating that this area may have some flooding issues.

Recommendation: Given the proximity of the workings to settlements and farmsteads and the nature of the operational requirements on terms of blasting the extension of the mineral buffer zone to 500m is helpful to prevent any further expansion of the resource.

7.4 Gwrhyd Mineral Buffer

The Gwrydd quarry lies to the north east of the Cwmnant Lleici quarry on Cefn Gwrhyd. The quarry falls within the proposed Mynydd y Garth SLA indicating the high value of the wider landscape.

The site is located within a small valley 1.8km to the north of Cilmaengwyn and 0.5km to the north of the Cwmnant Mineral Workings. Given the more rural location it does not overlap with any settlement limit buffers, although there are a small number of farmsteads and rural buildings located in close proximity to the mineral site itself.

Gwrhyd Meadows SSSI lies within 500m to the south and Cefn Gwrhyd SSSI lies 400m to the south west. There are no other designations or features highlighted within 500m.

Recommendation: Given the high quality landscape and the proximity of protected sites a 500m buffer zone would help minimise impact on the landscape.

Site Name:	Cwmnant Lleici		
Site Location:	Cwmnant Lleici		
Grid Reference:	SN 731069		
Site Area:	186.00ha		
Proposed Capacity			
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):			
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments	
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	Overall assessment high	
Landscape sensitivity high	MD	Generally high quality landscape	
Visual impacts	MD	Settlements along the Afon Tawe and Upper Clydach River, closest residential area 0.7km to SE, farmsteads within 0.08km	
Landscape impacts	MD	High assessments for Scenic Quality, Integrity and Character, if extension to existing operation change from rural to industrial	
Ecological impacts	MD	Coed Cwm Du SSSI overlaps site in NE corner, Gwrhyd Meadows SSSI to north and Cefn Gwrhyd to west, "high" Landscape Habitats evaluation where assessed	
Historic impacts	N	No known sites within or in the immediate area	
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Settlements within 0.7km, potential impacts on noise and air quality	
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	MD	PROW through part of the site	
Effects on mineral resources		Active quarry	
Effects on water and drainage resources	MD	Zone C2 along Cwm Du 0.1km E	
Ground stability	N	None in area	
Land use and agricultural land quality	N	Existing extraction	
Cumulative impacts		Within proposed SLA. It falls on the boundary of WG SSA E but not within the refined SSAs	
Potential for restoration/reclamation	Y	Potential for landscape restoration of existing mineral workings especially in terms of surrounding landscape and ecology, opportunities exist to enhance the biodiversity of the site especially with respect to the adjacent designations	

Initial Assessment: Buffer around existing mineral extraction. Any proposed changes to the buffer should consider visual, ecological, cultural and geological issues, especially in terms of revision of north east boundary around Coed Cwm Du SSSI.

Recommendation: The use of a 500m buffer is appropriate in this location due to the nature and quality of the surrounding landscape, the floodzone and its proximity to farmsteads.

Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 009	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 013	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High
Historic Landscapes	HL 029	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 041	M	H	U	H	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 541	H	H	H	M						High
Cultural Landscapes	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L	High

Site Name:		Gilfach Quarry									
Site Location:		Gilfach									
Grid Reference:		SN 754000									
Site Area:		192.5ha									
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>			On boundary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	V&S moderate									
Landscape sensitivity high	N	Aspect areas moderate with CL high but all other aspect areas are moderate. The site is located on open upland. Whilst the site is on elevated land to the north of Bryn Coch and Rhydding there is higher land to the north west which provides screening the works from the Neath Valley. Existing extraction site able to accommodate development.									
Visual impacts	Y	0.5km from Bryn Coch, adjacent to Gilfach farm and approx 100m from Cefnvaes farm, Cenvaes fach, Blaen-Honddan farm									
Landscape impacts	N	On high ground approx 190m with higher ground to north and east. Existing quarry. Forestry screening to the east and to south west. All moderate V&S aspect criteria									
Ecological impacts	N	All moderate LH layer.									
Historic impacts	N	No listed buildings or SAMs within site, 0.4km from listed building limekiln									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Blasting may impact upon local community									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts		Approx 0.5km from golf club but screened in some part by forestry, 0.6km from national trust Aberdulais Falls and adjacent amenity/wildlife area									
Effects on mineral resources	Y	Existing extraction site									
Effects on water and drainage resources	N	150m from Zone B which lies to west.									
Cumulative impacts	N										
Potential for restoration/reclamation		Given its elevation restoration will be important and should reflect the wider landscape character.									
<p>Initial Assessment: Buffer to an existing extraction site. The site falls within large aspect areas, all of which are moderate except cultural which is high. There is visual impact from properties within Bryn Coch, Gilfach and isolated farmsteads although the location of forestry helps reduce the visual impact on Gilfach.</p> <p>Recommendation: Given the proximity of farm buildings, its elevation and the requirement for blasting a 500m buffer zone is recommended</p>											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 007	M	M	M	L						Moderate

Landscape Habitats	LH 036	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 040	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 054	O	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 074	M	H	U	H	U					Moderate
Visual and Sensory	VS 340	M	M	M	M						Moderate
Cultural Landscapes	CL 045	M	H	H	H	H	M	U	M	U	High

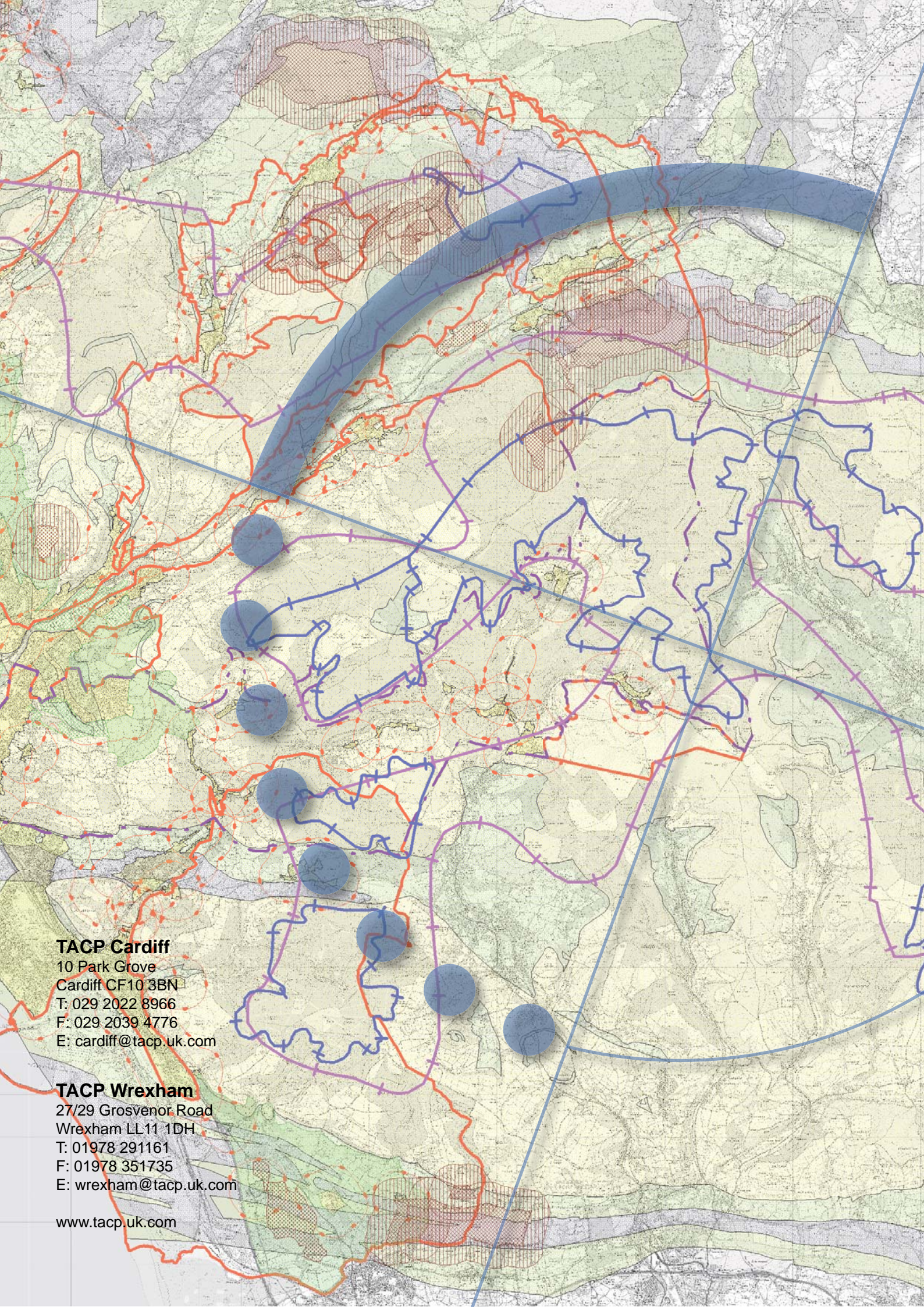
Site Name:	Gwrhyd Specialist Stone Quarry										
Site Location:	Gwrhyd										
Grid Reference:	SN 737089										
Site Area:	6.30ha										
Proposed Capacity											
Proposed Operating Period (yrs):											
Within farm holding/high quality agricultural land Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On boundary <input type="checkbox"/>											
Assessment Criteria:	Yes/No/ More Detail	Comments									
Outstanding Visual and Sensory assessment	N	High V&S evaluations									
Landscape sensitivity high	Y	This is a high value landscape with all LANDMAP layers evaluated high. Careful consideration should be given to the impact on landscape character and setting									
Visual impacts	Y	Site includes farmstead of Uchaf, other isolated buildings and farmsteads in the locality but 2.2km from nearest settlement									
Landscape impacts	MD	Rural upland area flanked to the E by small woodland									
Ecological impacts	Y	0.4km from Gwrhyd Meadows SSSI, 0.9km from Cefn Gwrhyd SSSI.									
Historic impacts	N	None identified									
Community impacts (including noise and air)	MD	Blasting may impact local farmsteads.									
Tourism, recreation and leisure impacts	N	None known									
Effects on mineral resources	Y	Existing extraction site									
Effects on water and drainage resources	N	Does not impact any flood zones									
Cumulative impacts	Y	Potential conflict with SLA designation, proximity to Cwmnant Lleici quarry to the south									
Potential restoration/reclamation	Y	Given the high landscape quality of the area the reclamation/restoration should be undertaken to reflect the wider landscape especially in terms of landform and vegetation cover.									
Initial Assessment: a buffer zone for an existing small quarry in an isolated area towards the highpoint of the Cefn Gwryhyd ridge. LANDMAP evaluations for all layers high.											
Recommendation: Given the high quality landscape and the proximity of protected sites a 500m buffer zone would be help minimise impact on the landscape. T											
Aspect	Aspect Area	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Geological Landscapes	GL 010	H	M	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 003	H	H	M	L	M	L	H	H		High
	LH 013	H	H	H	M	M	L	H	H		High
Historic Landscapes	HL 029	H	O	U	O	U					Outstanding
	HL 041	M	H	U	H	U					High
Visual and Sensory	VS 188	M	H	H	H						High
	VS 541	H	H	H	M						High
Cultural Landscapes	CL 044	L	H	M	U	H	H	U	H	L	High

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1** Neath Port Talbot has a high quality landscape which has a strong industrial history. The County Borough possesses important reserves of coal and aggregates and has the potential for a significant amount of wind turbine development. This study seeks to identify those areas of the countryside that should be protected against resource extraction or use.
- 8.2** The criteria of “unacceptability” have been identified and data has been compiled into a GIS database for interrogation by NPTCBC in respect of acceptability of resource use/extraction for specific locations. Where strategic search areas for windfarms, mineral resources and open air waste include high value landscapes/SLAs then these areas should be removed from the search areas at a strategic level. At a site specific level all criteria of “unacceptability” should be interrogated together with the completed proformas to determine the acceptability of proposals, the potential for cumulative impacts from other resource utilisation in the area and appropriate mitigation and restoration measures. Where appropriate planning applications will be taken through the EIA process which will assess all the impacts in more detail.
- 8.3** The composite plan Figure 5.1 indicates the potential issues of cumulative impacts and raises questions of priority of resource use in specific areas where search areas overlap. Consideration should be given in these instances both to the quality of the specific resources and to the long term impact on the landscape. Whilst open cast mining is considered as a temporary activity it can have dramatic impacts upon the landscape and it might change the landscape character of the area. Similarly landfill will have a pronounced impact upon the landform post operation and whilst it can be rehabilitated to ecological or amenity/recreational value the specific original landscape character can rarely be recreated. Whilst wind turbines change the character and visual amenity over a large area during operation the long lasting impacts tend to be limited to the cable works and ancillary buildings.
- 8.4** Six Special Landscape Areas have been identified within NPT namely Mynydd y Garth, Dulais Valley, Vale of Neath, Margam, Mynydd y Gelli and Foel Trawsant. There are links from these SLAs with adjacent SLAs identified for Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Additional areas have also been considered but are not recommended to be taken forward as SLAs.
- 8.5** The existing Green Wedges were reviewed and the potential impact of key candidate sites on the function of the Green Wedges were assessed. Generally the existing Green Wedges appeared to function well. The only proposal for extension to a Green Wedge was the inclusion of Cefn-y-don within the Neath/Tonna/Cimla/Efail Fach Green Wedge. Where key candidate sites, or the proposed university campus are taken through to the LDP these should be removed from the Green Wedges.
- 8.6** Where Key Candidate sites and the proposed University campus are proposed within existing Green Wedges and they did not undermine the integrity of the Green Wedge designation then they should be removed from the relevant green wedge should they be accepted through the LDP process.
- 8.7** The proposed Margam SLA covers part of Margam Green Wedge. The most appropriate designation for these areas have been considered as part of the ground truthing exercise. Given the difference in function between the Green Wedge and

the SLA it is recommended that both designations are taken forward. The Green Wedge extends to the west of the A48 and prevent coalesce and expansion of Pyle to the north; Margam SLA extends to the A48 in this location and covers Mynydd Margam and associated areas in high value landscape. There are candidate sites within the section of the Green Wedge which falls within the SLA. It is recommended that should any of these be taken forward greater planning control in terms of location, style and density should be imposed.

- 8.8** The review of the mineral buffer zones identified the value of extending the buffer zone from 200m to 500m especially in high quality landscapes or those with important visual, historic or ecological receptors in close proximity to the resource site. Consideration should also be given to joining the Cwmnant Leici and Gwrhyd mineral buffers given their proximity to each other and their location within a high value landscape.



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