



Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough

Final Report
Prepared by LUC
July 2013

Project Title: A Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough

Client: Bridgend County Borough Council

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July 2013

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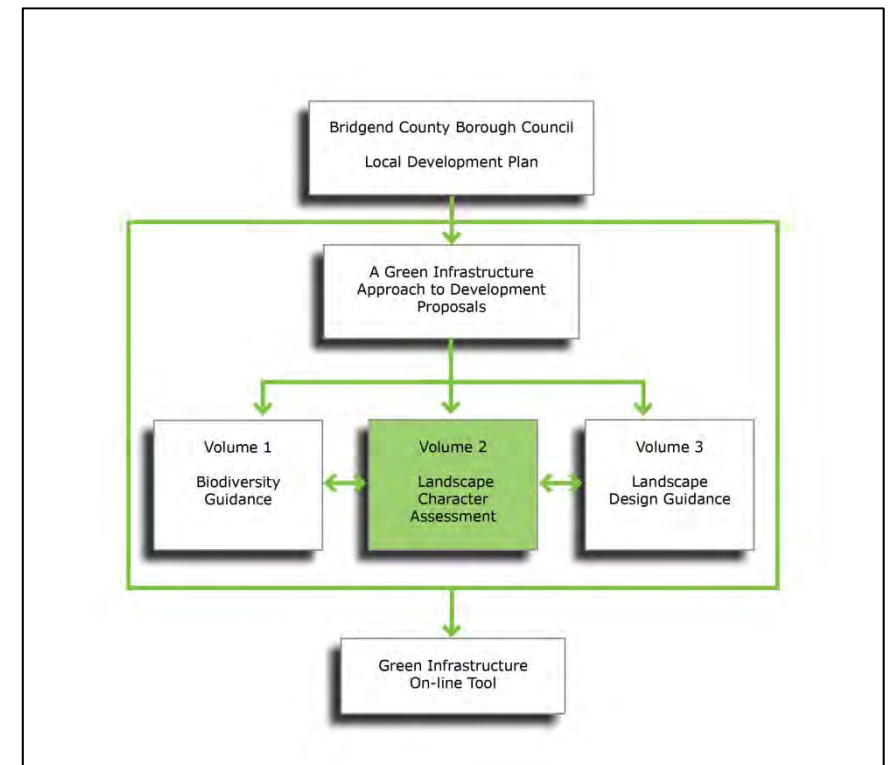
1 Introduction

Background and purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment

Background

- 1.1 This Landscape Character Assessment and accompanying Design Guide form two elements of Bridgend County Borough Council's Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). See **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.2 This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) provides a sound evidence base for planners and developers to consider the character and sensitivity of the different landscapes of the County Borough when considering new developments. It also promotes an understanding of how the landscapes of the County Borough are changing (as a result of a combination of natural, economic and human factors), and how they can be strengthened in response.
- 1.3 The overarching philosophy of the SPG is to echo the emerging principles of Natural Resources Wales: promoting the strategic management and planning of landscapes to deliver multiple (social, economic and environmental) benefits.
- 1.4 The SPG forms a significant element of an online Green Infrastructure (GI) tool being developed by the Council to promote the health, educational and social benefits of the environment to local communities.

Figure 1.1: Context of this study and wider SPG



Local policy context

- 1.5 This Landscape Character Assessment and the accompanying Design Guide support the strategic policies contained in the Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP), 2013.
- 1.6 Strategic policies of key relevance to this work are *SP2: Design and Sustainable Place Making*, and *SP4: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment*. These policies are described below:
Strategic Policy SP2: Design and Sustainable Place Making
- 1.7 This strategic policy represents the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications which are received by the Local Planning Authority. It states that:

'All development should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places which enhance the community in which they are located, whilst having full regard to the natural, historic and built environment'.

- 1.8 The policy introduces 15 criteria which will be applied to all development proposals across the County Borough and specifically, Criterion 2 states that all development proposals should have:

'a design of the highest quality possible, whilst respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness and landscape character'.

Strategic Policy SP4: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

- 1.9 In addition to SP2, this policy makes specific reference to the fact that:

'development which will conserve and wherever possible, enhance the natural environment of the County Borough will be favoured'.

- 1.10 Development proposals will not be permitted where they will have an adverse impact upon:

- The integrity of the County Borough's countryside;
- **The character of the landscape¹**;
- Its biodiversity and habitats; and
- The quality of its natural resources including water, air and soil.

- 1.11 This Landscape Character Assessment is designed to strengthen the evidence base used by Bridgend County Borough Council in respect of the above Strategic Policies.

Purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment

Compliance with the European Landscape Convention (ELC)

- 1.12 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.

- 1.13 It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies. This is particularly relevant to the broader Bridgend SPG, within which this LCA sits.

- 1.14 The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:

"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors".

- 1.15 The Convention puts emphasis on the whole landscape and all its values and is forward looking in its approach, recognising the dynamic and changing character of landscape. Specific measures promoted by the Convention, of direct relevance to this study include:

- the identification and assessment of landscape, and analysis of landscape change, with the active participation of stakeholders;
- setting objectives for landscape quality, with the involvement of the public; and
- improved consideration of landscape in existing and future sectoral and spatial policy and regulation.

- 1.16 This LCA is designed to be compliant with the key principles of the ELC. The method used for completing the assessment is outlined in the next chapter.

Who is this Landscape Character Assessment aimed at?

- 1.17 This Landscape Character Assessment is designed to provide a robust evidence base for informing future planning and management decisions across the County Borough. The primary aim is to ensure the area's distinctive, varied and dynamic landscapes are considered in the planning of any new development or land uses, and opportunities to enhance and strengthen character are pursued wherever possible. The need for this evidence base is all the more apparent in the context of a changing climate, at a time when action is needed now to strengthen the landscape's resilience to the challenges that lie ahead.

¹ Emphasis added

1.18 The Landscape Character Assessment's primary audiences are decision-makers both within BCBC and its partner organisations, as well as developers considering submitting planning applications for proposals within the County Borough. Land owners and managers across the County Borough are also encouraged to use the information to guide land management activity and collective action (particularly in response to climate change).

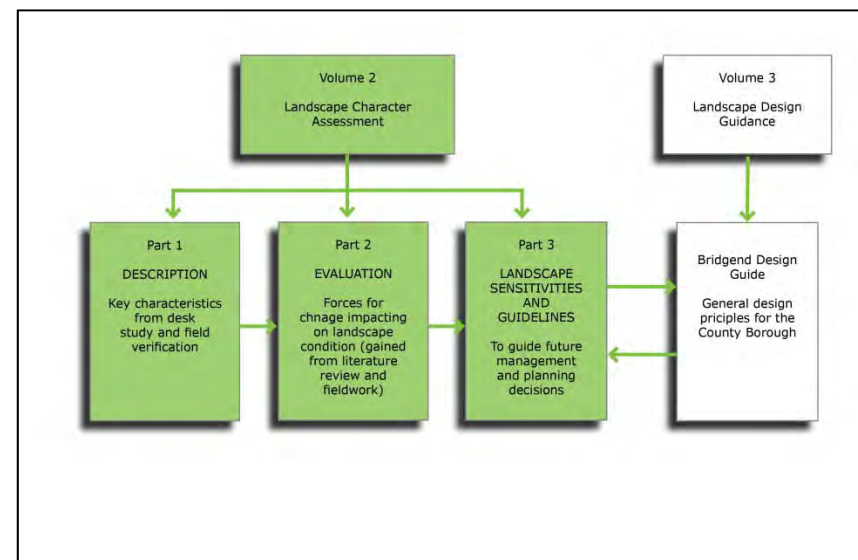
1.19 In addition, it is hoped that the information contained within this report is of wider interest to the local communities of Bridgend; raising the profile of landscape and engendering a sense of pride and ownership in working together to strengthen the landscapes of the future.

Link to the Design Guide for Bridgend County Borough

1.20 Whereas this Landscape Character Assessment provides a strategic-level evidence base on landscape character (and includes guidelines for planning and managing future change at a landscape scale), the accompanying Design Guide provides practical advice and solutions on how to manage change in the landscape, in ways which respond to and enhance its distinctive character (whilst working with other design considerations).

1.21 Links from the guidelines contained within this Landscape Character Assessment are provided, where appropriate, to the relevant 'Themes' of the Design Guide. **Figure 1.2** below shows how the two documents have been produced in parallel.

Figure 1.2: Links between the LCA and Design Guide



2 Understanding the landscapes of Bridgend

Character and qualities of the County Borough

- 2.1 Bridgend County Borough is a small but remarkably diverse area, demonstrating centuries of human interaction with the natural environment. The northern half of the County Borough comprises the steep-sided valleys and commons which form part of the wider coalfield plateau of South Wales, with pockets of pastoral farmland and rough grazing land. The high open plateau is cut dramatically by the three valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore, within which sit characterful mining settlements with rows of workers' terraces spreading ribbon-like up the valley sides. Outstanding examples of industrial heritage also remain, such as the 19th Century Tondy Ironworks, recognised as one of the best preserved Victorian ironworks in Wales. **Figure 2.1** provides an overview of the historic and cultural designations within the County Borough, which illustrates its rich heritage.
- 2.2 To the south the landscapes of the County Borough meet the sea, including part of the Vale of Glamorgan Heritage Coast – the first to be designated in Wales in 1973. This dramatic and wild coastline provides a stark contrast to the nearby settlements with their strong human influence (including the tourist centre of Porthcawl and nearby steelworks at Neath Port Talbot). The coast includes the highest sand dunes in Britain at Merthyr Mawr, part of an internationally important network of coastal habitats which provide a scenic frontage to the County Borough. **Figure 2.2** maps the nature conservation designations within the landscape, covering local to internationally important sites.
- 2.3 The market town of Bridgend itself has evidence of settlement dating back to the Prehistoric period, but the discovery of coal in the valleys north of the town had a dramatic impact on its development. By the







beginning of the 20th century it had become a bustling market town with prosperous valleys to the north, a thriving community and good links to other towns and cities (particularly through the opening of the Great Western Railway). Like other parts of South Wales, the decline of the coal mining and other primary industries had a significant impact on the local economy and the communities which relied on them. In recent years, much investment (e.g. EU Objective 1 funding) has been injected into the area, with regeneration projects and new development breathing new life into the area, including both within the town and the nearby mining settlements in the valleys.

- 2.4 The Landscape Character Study provides a timely opportunity to take stock of where the County Borough's landscape now finds itself in the first quarter of the 21st century. **Celebrating the County Borough's rich cultural and natural heritage, whilst enabling local communities to prosper sustainably into the future, is the overarching theme of this study.**

















Bridgend Landscape Character Area Study

Figure 2.1

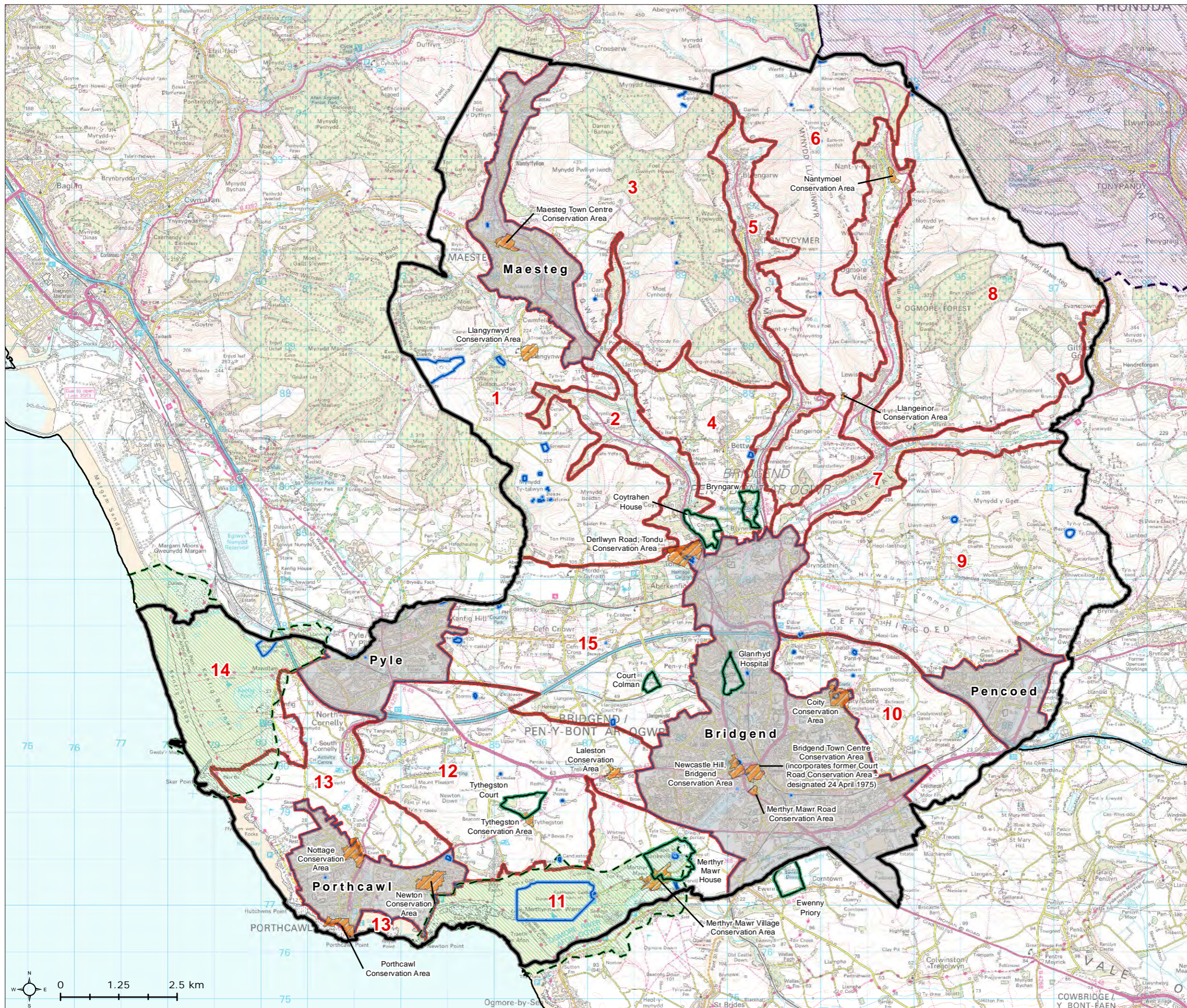
Historic Designations In Bridgend County Borough

-  Bridgend County Borough Boundary
-  Registered Parks & Gardens
-  Conservation Areas
-  Scheduled Monuments
-  Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest - Merthyr Mawr, Kenfig & Margam Burrows
-  Landscape of Special Historic Interest - The Rhondda

Landscape Character Areas

-  1 Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry
-  2 Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
-  3 Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry
-  4 Bettws Settled Farmland
-  5 Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
-  6 Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands
-  7 Ogmores Valley Floor & Lower Slopes
-  8 Ogmores Forest and Surrounding Uplands
-  9 Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges
-  10 Coity Rural Hinterland
-  11 Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline
-  12 Newton Down Limestone Plateau
-  13 Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland
-  14 Kenfig Dunes and Coastline
-  15 Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland
-  Urban Area

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000



















Bridgend Landscape Character Area Study

Figure 2.2

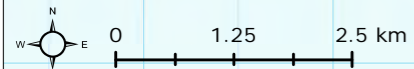
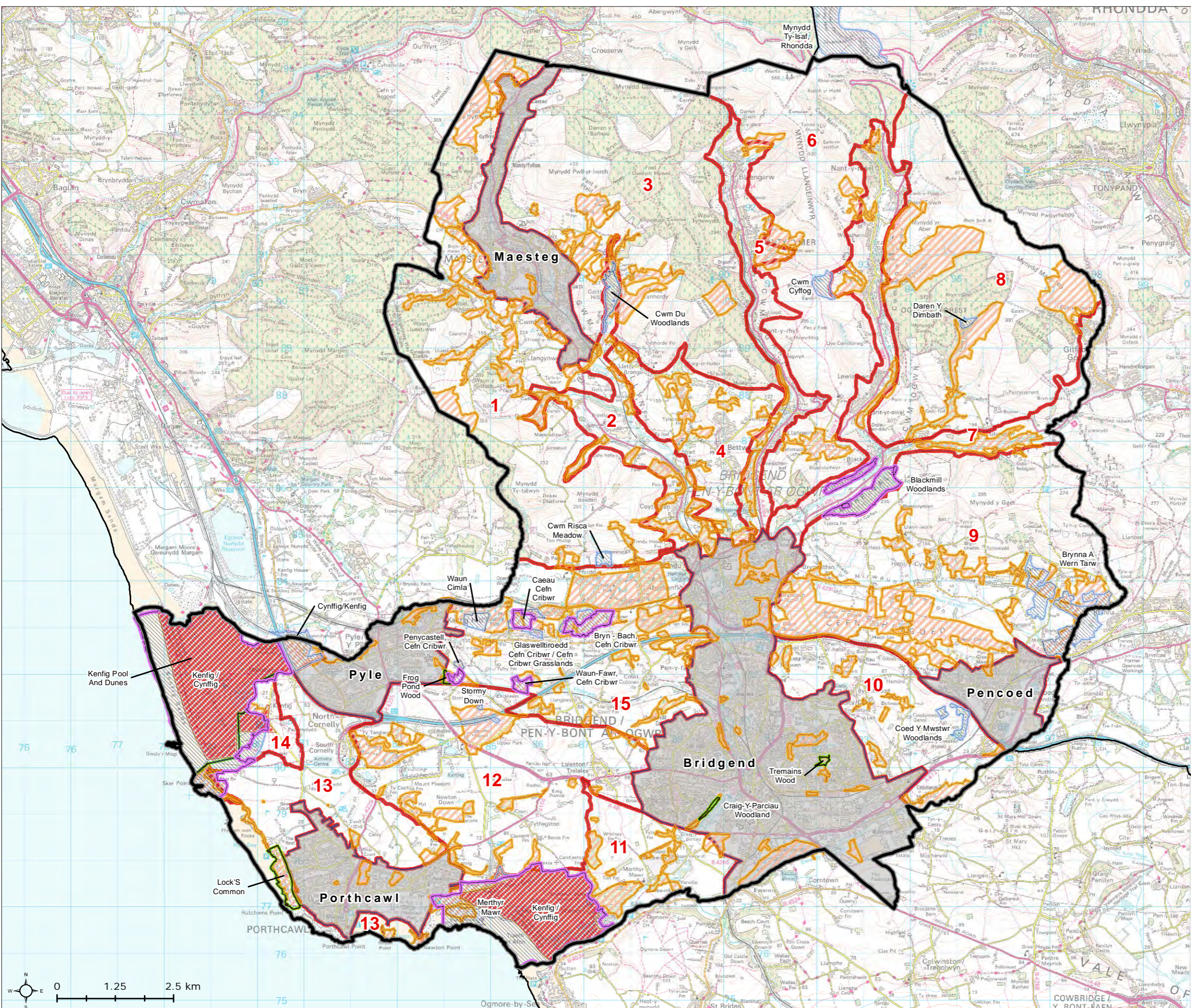
Nature Conservation Designations In Bridgend County Borough

-  Bridgend County Borough Boundary
-  Special Areas of Conservation
-  Sites Of Special Scientific Interest
-  Local Nature Reserves
-  National Nature Reserve
-  Sites Of Importance For Nature Conservation

Landscape Character Areas

-  1 Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry
-  2 Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
-  3 Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry
-  4 Bettws Settled Farmland
-  5 Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
-  6 Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands
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-  Urban Area

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000



The Landscape Character Assessment framework

Assessment units

- 2.5 The Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough is based on a spatial framework of fifteen Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). LCAs are defined as:
- Single unique areas of landscape character, each with its own unique character and identity***²
- 2.6 Some single Landscape Character Areas may share the same general characteristics as other similar landscapes found elsewhere (e.g. different valleys or sections of coastline). To provide an additional level of characterisation, some Landscape Character Assessments also identify these as separate assessment units, known as 'Landscape Character Types' (LCTs).
- 2.7 Unlike LCAs, LCTs can occur in several locations and 'nest' within the LCA framework. They are particularly helpful in addressing strategic issues at a larger (e.g. county, regional or national) scale to promote a streamlined approach to cross-border landscape planning and management. Equally, they can be defined at a more finer-grained level to inform local landscape planning and management. In Wales, this function is fulfilled by the national LANDMAP landscape characterisation tool (Level 2). **Figure 2.3** is an extract from the national guidance to Landscape Character Assessment (2002), which shows the relationship between Character Areas and Character Types from the national down to the local level. It indicates where this Landscape Character Assessment fits within that hierarchy.
- 2.8 Because of both the relatively small size of the County Borough and the desire for the Landscape Character Assessment to be used to inform local planning decisions, it was decided to focus this assessment on Landscape Character Areas – as recognisable geographic locations within the landscape. The information presented for each LCA thoroughly

addresses variations in character within them, with guidance tailored to particular locations where appropriate.

- 2.9 **Please note that the accompanying Design Guide focuses on development and urban issues within the County Borough.** It is standard practice in the method of Landscape Character Assessment to exclude urban areas, which is the case in this document. This is because specific processes for assessing and managing urban areas exist, such as Townscape Assessments or – in BCBC's case – Design Guides. The main urban areas in the County Borough are Bridgend, Porthcawl, Pyle, Maesteg and Pencoed. Although not incorporated into the framework of Landscape Character Areas, reference to the urban areas is included in the descriptions where appropriate (e.g. views to urban development from the surrounding rural landscapes).
- 2.10 The Landscape Character Areas are mapped in **Figure 2.4** with their descriptions ('Data Sheets') following in the next Chapter.

Methodology for developing this LCA

- 2.11 The approach for producing this Landscape Character Assessment followed a series of key steps, adhering to national best practice in the method of LCA³. These are summarised below.
- Step 1: Desk-study**
- 2.12 GIS was used as a tool for manipulating available data layers and analysing information to generate a draft classification of Landscape Character Areas for verifying in the field. LANDMAP aspect areas (Visual & Sensory Level 2) and the Landscape Character Areas of the previous assessment (*Landscapes Working for Bridgend, Volume 4, January 1997*) were used as building blocks for starting to define new draft LCAs. Other information contained within the GIS database, including within the five LANDMAP aspects, natural and historic designations and features shown on the Ordnance Survey mapping (such as field patterns) were used to draw draft Landscape Character Area boundaries.

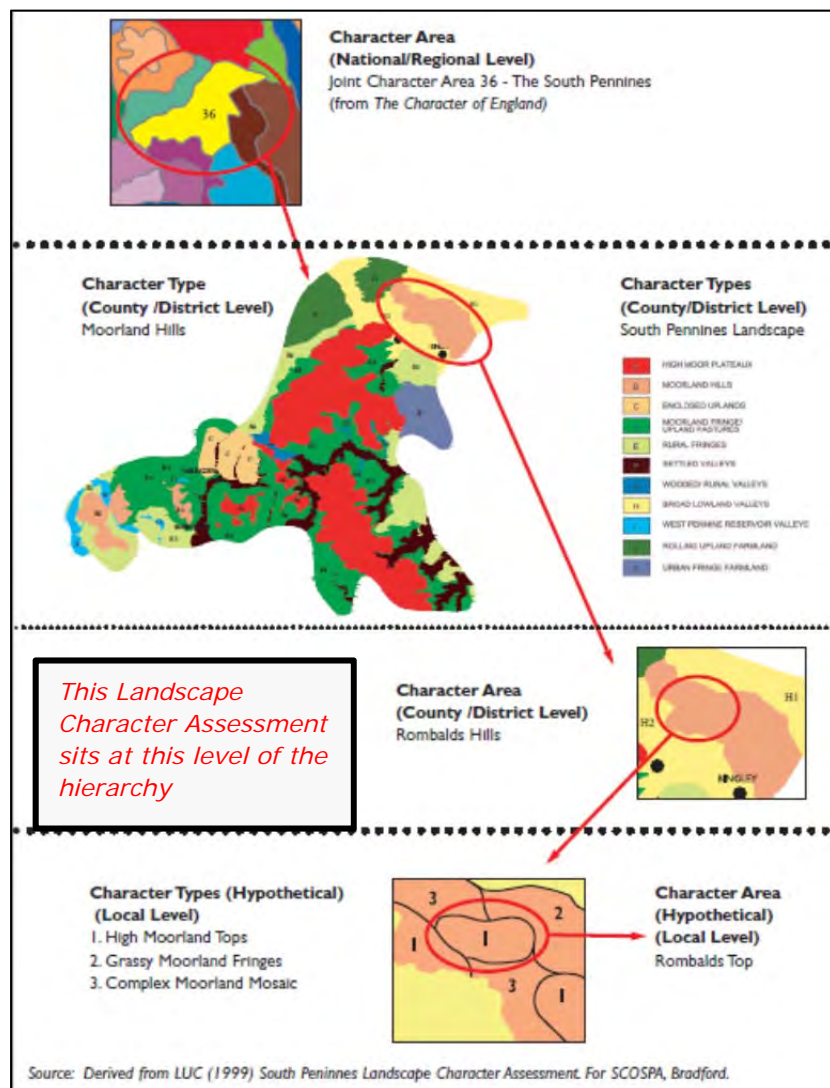
³ Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Agency (2002). *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*. Prepared by LUC and Carys Swanwick.

This study also drew on the revised national guidance for LCA prepared for Natural England and Natural Resources Wales by LUC (2011, currently unpublished).

² Taken from Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*. Prepared by LUC and Carys Swanwick (University of Sheffield).

- 2.13 A draft set of key characteristics, based on available information, was formulated at this stage to also be checked in the field.

Figure 2.3: Landscape Character Assessment Hierarchy (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)



Step 2: Field verification

- 2.14 Prior to undertaking fieldwork on the findings of the desk study, comments on the emerging classification were received from Bridgend County Borough Council's Steering Group. These were followed up during a three-day field visit to each draft Landscape Character Area. The field survey exercise sought to 1) verify boundaries based on variations in landscape character; 2) record further information on key landscape characteristics; 3) observe forces for change impacting on landscape condition; 4) take representative photographs of each LCA.
- 2.15 Information collected in the field was incorporated into a revised classification of Landscape Character Areas and first drafts of the 'LCA Data Sheets'.

Consultation

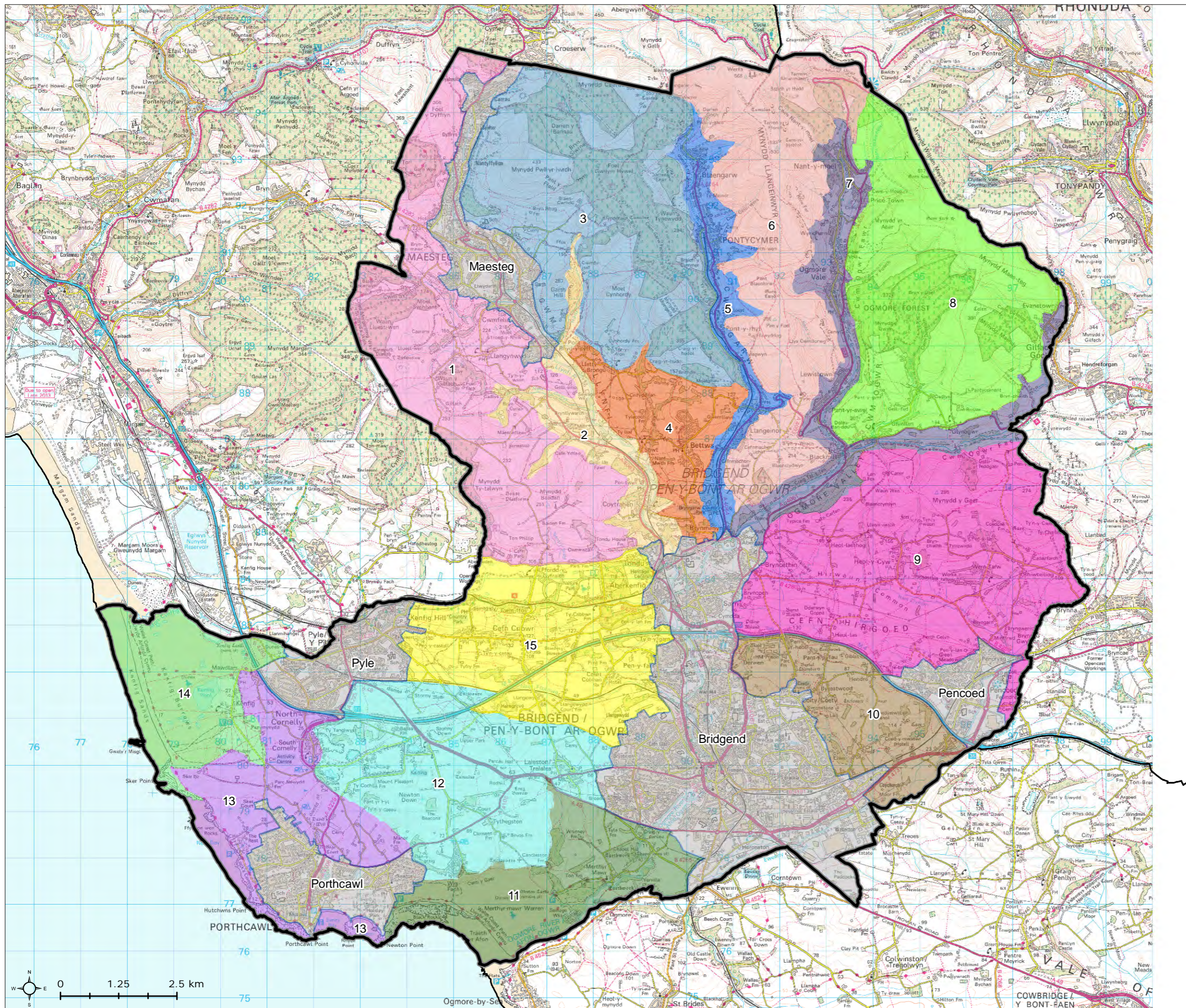
- 2.16 A drop-in session was held on Tuesday 26 March 2013 at BCBC's Civic Offices, with a range of people and organisation representatives invited to comment on the emerging findings, considering the following:
- What is felt to be 'special' about each Landscape Character Area;
 - The key 'threats' or 'forces for change' impacting on the different landscapes of the County Borough;
 - Ideas for how the landscapes should be 'managed' or 'planned' in the future, including links to initiatives, plans or policies.
- 2.17 Those invited to this session included representatives of Community Councils, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government, environmental NGOs and BCBC elected members and officers, including within the Regeneration, Conservation & Design, Planning, Rights of Way, Countryside Management and Tourism departments. A report of the workshop is included at **Appendix 1**.

Reporting

- 2.18 Following the drop-in session and further comments received, this Landscape Character Assessment was finalised as Volume 2 of the Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape SPG.

Bridgend Landscape Character Area Study

Figure 2.4
Landscape Character Areas



-  Bridgend County Borough Boundary
-  1 Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry
-  2 Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
-  3 Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry
-  4 Bettws Settled Farmland
-  5 Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
-  6 Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands
-  7 Ogmore Valley Floor & Lower Slopes
-  8 Ogmore Forest and Surrounding Uplands
-  9 Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges
-  10 Coity Rural Hinterland
-  11 Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline
-  12 Newton Down Limestone Plateau
-  13 Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland
-  14 Kenfig Dunes and Coastline
-  15 Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland
-  Urban Area

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000



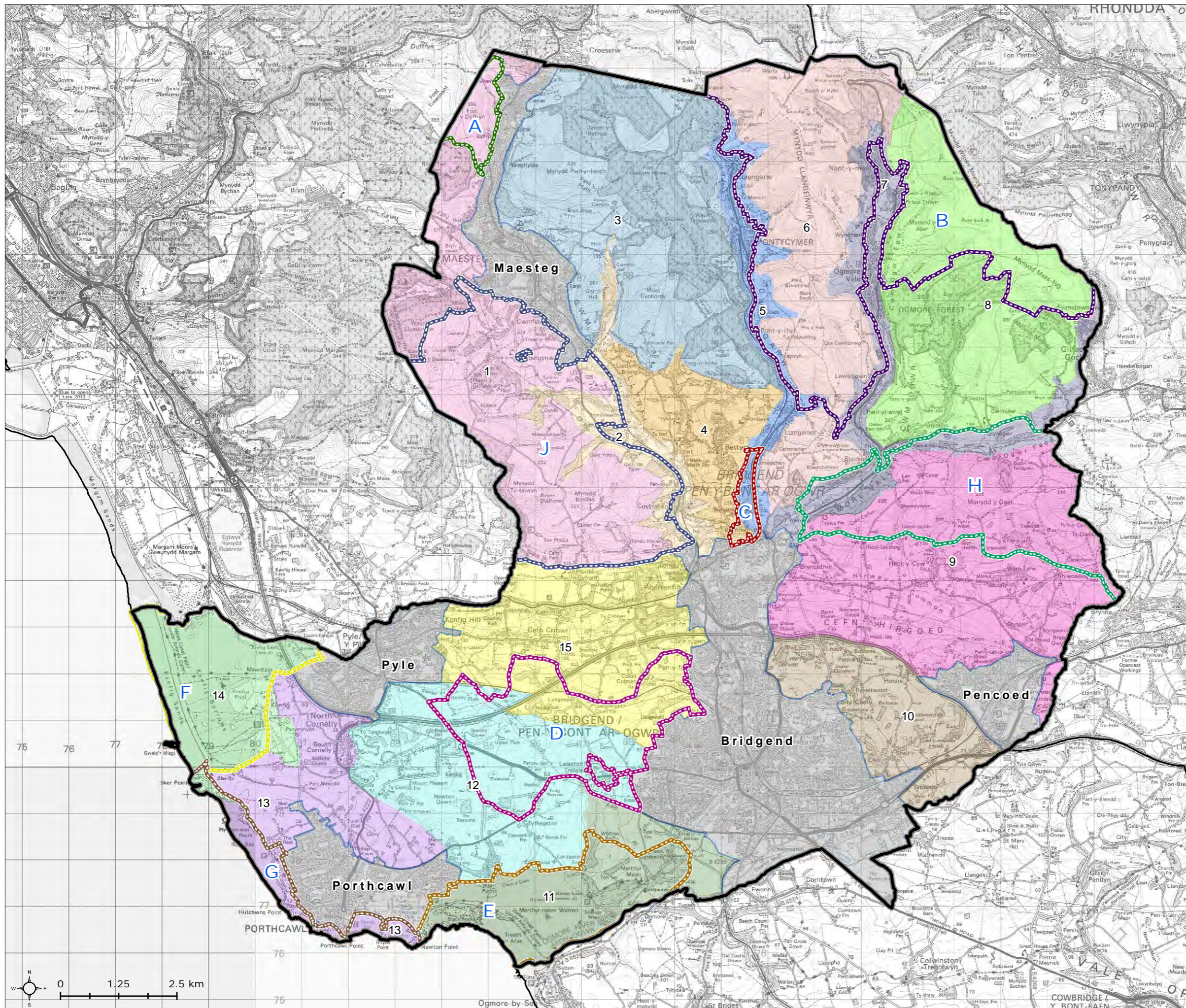
Special Landscape Areas

- 2.19 The County Borough includes nine Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), as defined in Policy ENV3 of the Local Development Plan. These are areas which are recognised as being unique, exceptional or distinctive to the County Borough.
- 2.20 Policy ENV3 states that: *Development in Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) will only be permitted where:*
- **It retains or enhances the character and distinctiveness of the SLA⁴;**
 - The design of the development reflects the building traditions of the locality in its form, materials and details, and/or assimilates itself into the wider landscape; and
 - The proposed development is accompanied by a landscape assessment which takes into account the impact of the development and sets out proposals to mitigate any adverse effects.
- 2.21 Special Landscape Areas serve a different but complementary purpose to Landscape Character Areas. LCAs do not make the distinction between areas deemed as of high or low landscape importance. All LCAs are treated equally and described as baseline evidence for landscape character. The LCA Data Sheets presented in this report provide a reference to which SLA(s) are within their boundary to aid in planning. Where possible, and where consistent with the methodology adopted for this study, LCAs share the same boundaries as the SLAs to allow for a 'nested' hierarchy if at all possible. It should be noted, however, that exact duplication is not desirable due to their different purposes.
- 2.22 The relationship between the LCAs and SLAs is illustrated in **Figure 2.5**. Each LCA data sheet in Chapter 3 also includes reference to any component SLAs.

⁴ Emphasis added

Bridgend Landscape Character Area Study

Figure 2.5
Landscape Character Areas and Special Landscape Areas



- Bridgend County Borough Boundary
- 1 Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry
- 2 Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
- 3 Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry
- 4 Bettws Settled Farmland
- 5 Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes
- 6 Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands
- 7 Ogmore Valley Floor & Lower Slopes
- 8 Ogmore Forest and Surrounding Uplands
- 9 Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges
- 10 Coity Rural Hinterland
- 11 Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline
- 12 Newton Down Limestone Plateau
- 13 Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland
- 14 Kenfig Dunes and Coastline
- 15 Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland
- Urban Area
- Special Landscape Areas**
- Foel y Dyffryn
- Northern Uplands
- Bryngarw Country Park
- Laleston
- Merthyr Mawr Warren
- Kenfig Burrows
- Porthcawl Coast
- Mynydd y Gaer
- Western Uplands

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000



3 Landscape Character Assessment Data Sheets

Format of the LCA Data Sheets

3.1 Each Landscape Character Area (LCA) has its own Data Sheet which sets out the following information:

PART 1: DESCRIPTION

- Map of the LCA, including County Borough context map
- Location and Snapshot, including links to the LANDMAP classification
- Key Characteristics

PART 2: EVALUATION

- Forces for Change

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

- Key Landscape Sensitivities
- Guidelines to Protect/Conserve (with links to relevant sections of Design Guide)
- Guidelines to Manage/Enhance (with links to relevant sections of Design Guide)
- Planning ahead (with links to relevant sections of Design Guide)

3.2 Links to the Design Guide are provided using circular symbols which match the themes of the document. 'App 1' refers to Appendix 1.



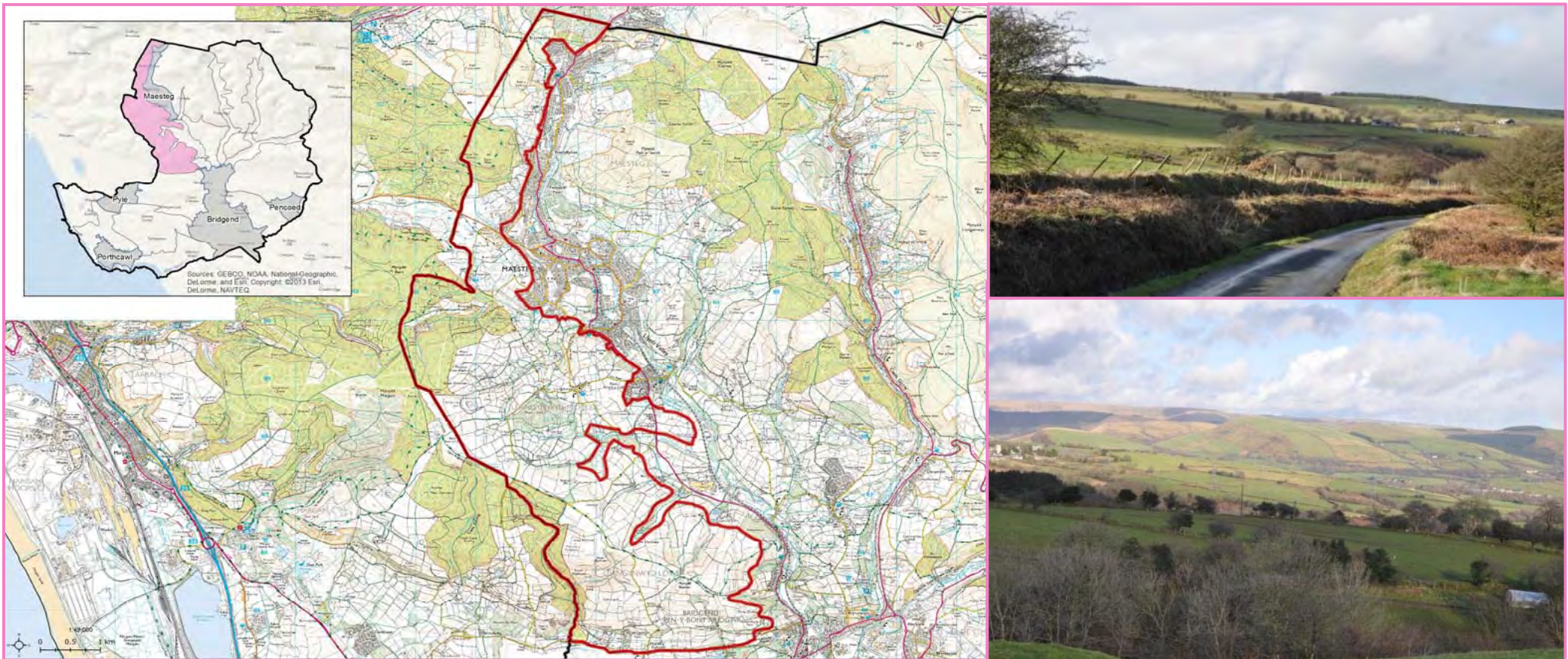
Order of the LCA Data Sheets

3.3 The Data Sheets are presented in numeric order for the LCAs, as follows:

| LCA Name/Number | Page Number |
|---|-------------|
| 1: Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry | 13 |
| 2: Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | 19 |
| 3: Llynfi & Garw Uplands and Forestry | 24 |
| 4: Bettws Settled Farmland | 29 |
| 5: Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | 34 |
| 6: Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands | 39 |
| 7: Ogmores Valley Floor & Lower Slopes | 44 |
| 8: Ogmores Forest and Surrounding Uplands | 50 |
| 9: Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges | 55 |
| 10: Coity Rural Hinterland | 60 |
| 11: Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline | 65 |
| 12: Newton Down Limestone Plateau | 71 |
| 13: Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland | 76 |
| 14: Kenfig Dunes and Coastline | 81 |
| 15: Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland | 86 |

1: LLANGYNWYD ROLLING UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA is located along the north-western fringes of the County Borough, to the west of Maesteg. All of the landscape is defined as 'Upland' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The southern half of the LCA falls within the Western Uplands SLA, and a section in the north falls entirely within the Foel y Dyffryn SLA. **Other designations** include Cwm Risca SSSI, Margam Mountain Landscape of Special Historic Interest, Bwlwarcau hillfort and Llangynwyd Castle Scheduled Monuments, Llangynwyd Conservation Area and a number of SINCs.

1: LLANGYNWYD ROLLING UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Strongly undulating upland landscape with a series of north-east facing slopes and hill summits ranging from 120 to 365 metres AOD.
- Distinctive topography influenced by the heavily dissected Upper Coal Measures plateau greatly modified by the effects of glaciation.
- Landscape crossed by a number of fast-flowing springs and streams, flowing into the Llynfi Valley below.

Woodland cover

- Dense coniferous forestry plantations on some slopes and hill summits (e.g. Garn Wen and Waun Lluest-wen) with linear broadleaved woodlands found along valley sides.
- Dark, straight plantation edges providing a stark contrast to the adjacent muted grasslands on rounded slopes.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Pastoral landscape with significant tracts of rough sheep and pony grazing on higher ground (particularly in the north).
- A strong pattern of irregular fields enclosed by hedgerows, tree belts and stone walls.
- Elevated land around Mynydd Ty-talwyn including large, regular semi-improved pastures divided by fencing.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued habitats including heathland, blanket bog, acid grassland, fen and marsh (with significant areas defined as SINCs).

- Broadleaved semi-natural woodland on slopes and valleys, and nationally important marshy grassland (supporting marsh fritillaries) at Cwm Risca Meadow SSSI.

- Patches of bracken, gorse and rush pasture found throughout.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Land west of Llangynwyd within the Margam Mountain Landscape of Special Historic Interest, with scheduled archaeological features including Y Bwlwarcau hillfort and the medieval Llangynwyd Castle.
- Cluster of nationally important medieval house platforms and settlement remains around Mynydd Ty Talwyn.

Settlement and road pattern

- Nucleated hill-top village of Llangynwyd (a Conservation Area), with prominent 15th century square church tower forming a local landmark.
- Farmsteads and small groups of dwellings thinly dispersed elsewhere.
- A small number of minor roads, tracks and footpaths cross through the landscape. The Ogwr Ridgeway Walk passes through the southern part of the LCA, and areas of higher ground are open access land.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A strongly rural and tranquil landscape despite the close proximity of nearby development at Maesteg.
- Tranquil qualities eroded by the presence of pylon lines, telecommunications masts and urban fringe land uses close to Maesteg, including a golf course.
- Southern rigelines affording panoramic views across the County Borough, including wind farm developments on distant skylines.
- Intervisibility with Maesteg a strong feature of the northern half of the LCA.

1: LLANGYNWYD ROLLING UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR CHANGE

- **Afforestation:** Large blocks of coniferous plantation with hard edges, at odds with the flowing form of the landscape and causing a direct loss of previous upland habitats.
- **Large-scale felling:** Current and future threat of pests and fungal diseases affecting the forestry crop (e.g. *Phytophthora* spp) leading to widescale felling, causing higher levels of soil erosion, potential for increased flooding, landslides and impacts on water quality.
- **Agricultural intensification:** Large-scale agricultural improvement of hill summits in the south – with large, regular fields divided by fencing, reminiscent of downland in some locations (e.g. Mynydd Ty-talwyn). Drive for increased domestic food production stimulating further intensification of production.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Areas of upland habitat fragmented due to agricultural improvements and other land uses (e.g. Maesteg Golf Course).
- **Boundary neglect:** Historic stone walls often in a poor state of repair, supplemented or replaced by post-and-wire fencing. Hedgerows are subject to intensive management in some locations, with few hedgerow trees / little species diversity.
- **Downstream flooding:** Fast-run off via the watercourses draining from this landscape contributing to downstream flooding, including in Maesteg. This is due in part to blocked culverts, as well as the decline in vegetation coverage due to agricultural intensification.
- **Impacts of climate change:** Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in open upland habitats. More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands such as blanket bog and marshy grassland.
- **Pylons:** Prominent pylon lines traversing the southern half of the landscape, intruding into a landscape otherwise devoid of modern development.
- **Urban fringe misuse:** Urban fringe issues eroding the tranquil, rural character of the landscape – including fly tipping along verges and within fields close to Maesteg.
- **Recreational pressures:** Recreational pressures around the fringes of Maesteg, including the Maesteg Golf Course. This is, however, relatively well integrated into its landscape setting, with patches of gorse, bracken and trees (characteristic of the surrounding landscape) intermixed within the fairways.
- **Views of development:** Views to the sprawling urban form of Maesteg, as well as wind turbines on distant hills both within and outside of the County Borough. This provides a contrast to the undeveloped and remote character of much of the landscape.

1: LLANGYNWYD ROLLING UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:




- **Open tracts of traditionally grazed uplands.**
- **Strong historic pattern of irregular fields** enclosed by hedgerows, tree belts and stone walls.
- **Important semi-natural habitats**, including heathland, blanket bog, acid grassland, wetlands and broadleaved woodlands.
- **Nationally important archaeological features** within the Margam Mountain Landscape of Special Historic Interest.
- **Dispersed settlement pattern** of farmsteads and small groups of dwellings.
- **The Conservation Area of Llangynwyd**, with its prominent church tower.
- **High levels of tranquillity.**
- **Panoramic views** from high ridgelines in the south across the County Borough.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

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- Protect the rural and tranquil character of the landscape, with its dispersed pattern of farmsteads, isolated groups of dwellings and the nucleated historic village of Llangynwyd. Avoid locating new development on the most prominent, open ridgelines.
- Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area, such as ancient settlement remains, Y Bwlwarcau hillfort and the medieval Llangynwyd Castle, including through appropriate grazing regimes and recreation management.
- Protect the landscape's open panoramic views from elevated southern ridgelines, and views to the local landmark of Llangynwyd church tower.

1: LLANGYNWYD ROLLING UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the landscape’s network of quiet rural roads and tracks, resisting unsympathetic highways improvements or signage. |  |
| <p>GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the landscape’s hedgerow and stone wall field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Respect the traditional methods and styles of stone wall construction, and utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting (locally sourced wherever possible). |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage valued areas of rough grassland, heathland, acid grassland and wetlands (including marshy grassland at Cwm Risca SSSI) through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels, along with a programme of scrub removal. Support farmers to continue to farm these ‘marginal’ areas as an integral part of their farming system. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage areas of broadleaved woodland and tree belts forming field boundaries, including through traditional coppice management. Encourage new woodland planting along valley sides to reduce downstream flooding and diffuse pollution. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the area’s conifer plantations for sustainable timber production, recreational opportunities and wildlife interest, creating new green links to surrounding semi-natural habitats (work with Neath Port Talbot CBC for those straddling the administrative boundary). | |
| <p>PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with the Natural Resources Wales to plan for the future restructuring of the area’s conifer plantations (when their role in timber production has ceased), including their gradual restoration to upland habitats and restocking with climate change-resilient species (native broadleaves where possible). | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure any new development is limited to within existing settlement boundaries, reflecting local vernacular styles, materials and boundary treatments. Avoid further development/urban land uses expanding out from Maesteg into the open countryside of this LCA. |  |

1: LLANGYNWYD ROLLING UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

- Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of drainage systems and watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans).

D

2: LLYNFI VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA comprises the valley floor and lower slopes of the Llynfi Valley between Bridgend and Maesteg. All of the LCA is classed as 'Lowland Valley' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The western half of the LCA falls within the Western Uplands SLA. **Other designations** include Cwm Du Woodlands SSSI, Coytrahen House Registered Park and Garden, part of Tondy Conservation Area and a number of SINCs.

2: LLYNFI VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- South-easterly flowing Llynfi river, with valley sides dissected by frequent tributaries creating a landform of rounded spurs between incised valleys.
- Views to prominent hill summits either side – rising dramatically to over 350 metres at Craig-yr-hudol in the east, and overlooked by the hill summit of Mynydd Baedan (251 metres) in the west.
- Geology dominated by an extensive, heavily dissected plateau of Upper Coal Measures, with glacial boulder clay found on some lower valley slopes, and alluvial deposits along the valley's length.

Woodland cover

- Tributary valleys and the undeveloped fringes of the Llynfi River frequently clothed in broadleaved and riparian woodland, creating a sense of enclosure and shelter.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Lower valley slopes of semi-improved and improved grassland, with relatively large, regular fields bounded by mixed-species hedgerows (oak, ash, hazel, holly).
- Fields on higher slopes defined by dry stone walls, wire fences and occasional weak hedgerows.

Semi-natural habitats

- Riparian vegetation and broadleaved semi-natural woodlands on valley sides (including sessile oak woodlands at Cwm Du Woodlands SSSI) – dominated by oak and ash with understoreys including holly, hazel, hawthorn and elder.
- Patches of purple moor grass, rush pasture and scrub contributing to semi-natural character.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Grade II listed 18th century Coytrahen House estate on the south-eastern banks of the Llynfi. Valued for large-scale walled and terraced gardens in an attractive woodland setting.

Settlement and road pattern

- Linear roadside development of 19th century terraces and modern housing at Coytrahen, with occasional hamlets and farmsteads nestled within tributary valleys.
- Valley floor crossed by the snaking forms of the railway line and A4063 linking Bridgend and Maesteg.
- Central valley landscape dominated by the large form of the Bridgend Paper Mills with landmark chimneys, along with further smaller industrial developments and sewage works dotted along the valley floor.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Perceptual qualities dominated by the sound and movement of traffic on the main transport corridors, along with views/noise from the mills (and high smoke plumes visible from long distances).
- Undeveloped slopes and branch valleys, with sometimes dense woodland cover, providing a relative sense of tranquillity and naturalness to these parts of the landscape.

2: LLYNFI VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR CHANGE

- **Habitat fragmentation:** Continuity of riparian habitats, including semi-natural broadleaved woodlands and wet meadows, broken by development and infrastructure spreading along the valley floor.
- **Hedgerows:** Hedgerows subject to intensive management in some locations, with few hedgerow trees / little species diversity.
- **Invasive species:** Spread of invasive species, often transported along valleys to other landscapes downstream (this is a County Borough-wide issue), including Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.
- **Increased flooding:** Settlement in the valleys increasingly vulnerable to flooding due to climate change and land use changes in the adjacent uplands (e.g. clearfell of plantations).
- **Impacts of climate change:** Summer droughts likely to reduce the valley's water supply from the surrounding uplands (with an associated drying out of valued wetland habitats). Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back.
- **Post-war housing development:** Valley settlement of Coytrahen, with post-war housing estates dominating the valley side in an otherwise sparsely settled landscape.
- **Litter accumulation:** Accumulation of litter transported along by the river and deposited along its banks in places.
- **Impacts on tranquillity:** Levels of tranquillity impacted upon by traffic on the busy A4063 and mainline rail corridor.

2: LLYNFI VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Valued semi-natural habitats**, including riparian vegetation, broadleaved semi-natural woodlands (including Cwm Du Woodlands SSSI), purple moor grass, rush pasture and scrub.
- **Grade II listed Coytrahen House estate**, with walled and terraced gardens in a woodland setting.
- **The tranquil and undeveloped character** of the LCA's tributary valleys and higher slopes.
- **Intervisibility with the surrounding uplands.**

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect the character and setting of the Grade II Listed Coytrahen House, ensuring any new development does not encroach into the historic landscape or affect views to or from it.
- Protect the tranquil and undeveloped character of the higher slopes and the Llynfi's tributary valleys, including Cwm Du, Nant y Gadlys and Cwm Nant-gwyn. Maintaining (and where possible soften) the transition between the developed valley floor and remote uplands above.
- Protect important views from the LCA to the surrounding undeveloped uplands and ridgelines.

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Manage and enhance the valleys' semi-natural woodlands through traditional techniques including coppicing. Control access by livestock, promoting natural regeneration to enhance longevity whilst using extensive grazing to promote the species diversity of

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2: LLYNFI VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| woodland ground flora. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and where possible extend areas of riparian vegetation, wet grassland, purple moor grass, rush pasture and scrub (particularly along higher slopes and within the tributary valleys) through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – both to enhance their wildlife value and functions in flood prevention. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control the spread of invasive species transported along the valley and beyond – such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed - as part of a County Borough-wide initiative (involving private landowners, conservation charities/NGOs and public bodies). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the landscape’s hedgerow and stone wall field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges (including where post-and-wire fencing is currently used) particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting, and encourage the planting of hedgerow tree specimens (locally sourced wherever possible). | | App 1 |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | | Design Guide Theme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create, extend and link woodland and wetland habitats to enhance the landscape’s water storage capacity and improve water quality (through reducing soil erosion and agricultural run-off). The natural regeneration of woodland should be encouraged and new planting, using climate-hardy species, undertaken to link fragmented sites. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of drainage systems and watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC’s Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). | | C D |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure any new development is limited to within existing settlement boundaries, avoiding linear spread along the A4063 road corridor to avoid coalescence with Bridgend and Maesteg. | | B |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to enhance the setting of existing development within the valley floor, following the principles set out in the accompanying Design Guide. | | B |

3: LLYNFI & GARW UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA comprises an exposed upland landscape in the north of the County Borough, sitting to the east of Maesteg. All of the LCA is classified as 'Upland' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: There are no SLAs within this LCA. **Other designations** include Scheduled Monuments on Mynydd Caerau and a number of SINCs.

3: LLYNFI & GARW UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Strongly rolling upland landscape with steep slopes and rounded hill summits, reaching a maximum of 556 metres AOD at Mynydd Caerau.
- High land underlain by Upper Coal Measures with complex dip characteristics, forming distinctive rounded hill summits. Upper slopes draining into the Llynfi Valley comprise frequently bedded Middle Coal Measures, with some deposits of glacial boulder clay.
- Functions as a water catchment for the adjacent Llynfi and Garw valleys, with many fast-flowing tributaries and waterfalls carving through the landscape to meet the rivers below.

Woodland cover

- Extensive tracts of mature larch and Norway spruce forestry on hill summits and slopes (including Garw Forest), forming prominent geometric blocks.
- Bands of semi-natural broadleaved woodland along streams (oak, ash and birch dominated) and field boundaries, with wind-sculpted, stunted oaks featuring on lower slopes.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Apart from forestry, the main land use is rough moorland sheep grazing, with enclosed semi-improved pastures on lower slopes with areas of purple moor grass/ rush pasture.
- Large enclosures marked by fencing or lines of wind-sculpted trees.

Semi-natural habitats

- Valued habitats include patches of broadleaved semi-natural woodland, marshy grassland, bog, scrub, bracken, acid grassland and heathland, with a number of locally designated SINCs.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Disused spoil tips, mines and quarries on hillsides are evidence of the area's industrial past.
- Prehistoric round cairns crown hill summits, including a nationally important cluster on Mynydd Caerau and further examples within Garw Forest. The remains of a medieval platform house are also found on Garth Hill.

Settlement and road pattern

- Very sparse settlement limited to a handful of scattered farmsteads on lower slopes.
- The town of Maesteg lies to the west of the LCA within the Llynfi Valley, with the only road access into the landscape from the town terminating at the entrance to a former coal mining area below the Garw Forest.
- A large proportion of the forest is open access land, accessible by forestry access tracks and public footpaths/bridleways. There is also a significant area of open access land at Mynydd Bach.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A strong sense of remoteness and bleakness, particularly in adverse weather conditions.
- Expansive, panoramic views across the county borough and beyond (Brecon Beacons to the north, Bristol Channel and Somerset to the south).
- Lower slopes have strong visual connections with the adjacent Llynfi and Garw valleys and their associated settlements.

3: LLYNFI & GARW UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR CHANGE

- **Habitat fragmentation:** Landscape dominated by coniferous plantations and agriculturally improved rough grassland – semi-natural upland habitats now limited to fragmented sites.
- **Afforestation:** Extensive forestry plantations with ‘hard edges’ at odds with flowing skylines.
- **Large-scale felling:** Current and future threat of pests and fungal diseases affecting the forestry crop (e.g. *Phytophthora* sps) leading to widescale felling, causing higher levels of soil erosion, potential for increased flooding, landslide incidents and impacts on water quality.
- **Woodland management:** Areas of broadleaved woodland limited to field margins, stream sides and secondary woodland on abandoned agricultural land, with little evidence of woodland management to promote structural diversity.
- **Agricultural management:** Decline in agricultural management in some locations leading to bracken/bramble/secondary woodland encroachment – impacting on the open character of the landscape and introducing a sense of neglect.
- **Impacts of climate change:** Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in open upland habitats. More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands such as bogs.
- **Urban misuse:** Urban fringe issues relating to the proximity of the landscape to the valley settlements of Maesteg, Nantyllyllon, Blaengarw, Pontycymmer and Caerau – including fly tipping and unauthorised vehicular access.
- **Views to development:** Views from lower levels dominated by development in the valleys and distant views of wind turbines, eroding feelings of remoteness.
- **Pressure for renewable energy developments:** High levels of exposure means the landscape itself is likely to be under pressure for wind farm developments.

3: LLYNFI & GARW UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

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

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect the farming and land management traditions of the area, continuing to support local farmers and commoners to graze the open moorland and rough grasslands as an integral part of their farming system.
- Protect and appropriately manage the rich industrial and archaeological heritage of the area, such as former spoil tips, quarries, ancient cairns and medieval settlement remains, including through appropriate grazing regimes and recreation management.
- Protect the landscape's strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness, avoiding the location of new development on the most prominent, open ridgelines.

3: LLYNFI & GARW UPLANDS AND FORESTRY

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Manage and where possible extend areas of rough grassland, heathland, acid grassland and wetlands through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels and a programme of controlled burning (where appropriate).
- Manage and enhance bands of streamside semi-natural woodlands and distinctive individual trees through traditional techniques including coppicing. Control access by livestock, promoting natural regeneration to enhance longevity and their role in water storage (to reduce downstream flooding).
- Manage the area's conifer plantations for sustainable timber production, recreational opportunities and wildlife interest, creating new green links to surrounding semi-natural habitats to soften their edges wherever possible.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

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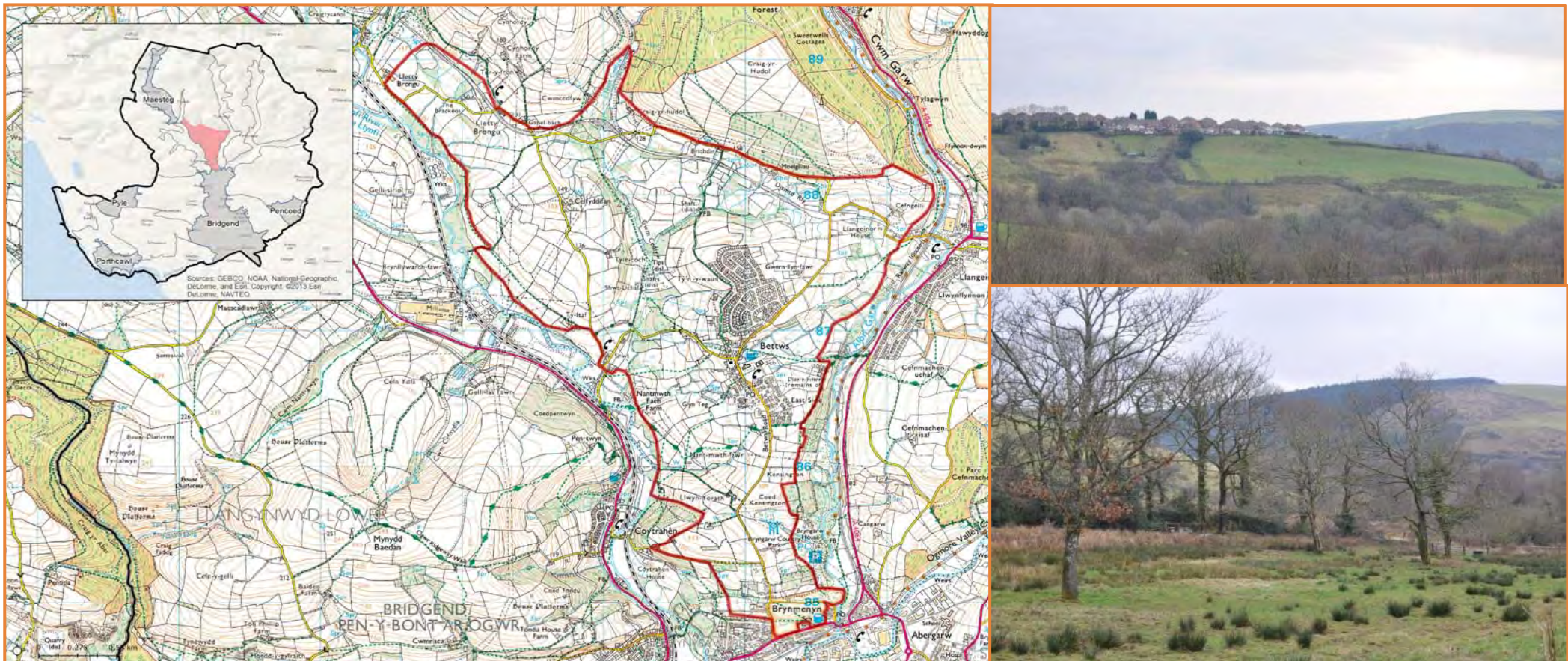
- Work closely with the Natural Resources Wales to plan for the future restructuring of the area's conifer plantations (when their role in timber production has ceased), including their gradual restoration to upland habitats and restocking with climate change-resilient species (native broadleaves where possible).
- Explore opportunities to enhance the setting of adjacent development on the western fringes of the LCA (Maesteg), softening its edges to reduce impacts on the remote, undeveloped qualities of the landscape.
- Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans).

B

D

4: BETTWS SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This Landscape Character Area is centred on the hilltop village of Bettws, north of Bridgend and sandwiched between the Llynfi and Garw valleys. All of the LCA is classified as 'Lowland' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: There are no SLAs within this LCA. **Other designations** include Plas-y-Bettws relict garden (a Scheduled Monument) and a number of SINCs.

4: BETTWS SETTLED FARMLAND

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Strongly undulating landscape with generally southerly facing slopes, with the elevated hill summit at Bettws rising up to 160 metres AOD.
- Upper Coal Measures geology sitting below the main coalfield plateau to the north, with numerous springs and streams flowing through the landscape to meet the Llynfi Valley.

Woodland cover

- Bands of broadleaved semi-natural woodland following stream courses, linking with mature hedgebanks and in-field trees to produce a well-wooded character.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Medium-scale irregular semi-improved grassland fields, with some rush pastures along streams.
- Mature hedgebanks and lines of trees form traditional field boundaries, with regular wooden-fenced horse paddocks a feature around Bettws.

Semi-natural habitat

- Valued semi-natural woodland habitats, wet grassland and rush pastures along stream-sides, with significant areas designated as SINC.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Relicts of 19th century industry in evidence around Tyle-Coch, including disused tips, shafts and a Grade II listed tramway bridge. A dismantled railway line runs along the northern LCA boundary.
- Historic core of Bettws includes the 17th century stone-built parish church of St David's (Grade I).
- Nationally important relicts of Plas-y-Bettws garden overlooking the Garw Valley.

Settlement and road pattern

- Settlement concentrated at Bettws, whose historic core is surrounded by post-war housing estates spreading along the hillside and sitting prominently on the elevated hill summit.
- Elsewhere scattered farmsteads and hamlets are linked by quiet rural lanes and occasional rights of way, including the Ogwr Ridgeway Walk.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A largely peaceful, rural landscape eroded locally by prominent housing development at Bettws (occupying a high hill summit).
- Views to the urban edge of Bridgend in the south and ridgeline housing at Pont Rhyd-y-cyff in the west. Important views east and west to the higher undeveloped land of LCAs 1 and 6.

4: BETTWS SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR CHANGE

- ***Decline in agricultural management:*** Areas on the fringes of Bettws suffering from a decline in agricultural management, with areas of bracken/bramble and scrub incursion due to a lack of grazing.
- ***Woodland/hedgerow management:*** Areas of broadleaved woodland and grown-out hedgebanks suffering from a lack of proactive management (including coppicing), resulting in a uniform age structure and lack of species diversity.
- ***Invasive species, pests and diseases:*** Spread of invasive species, often transported along watercourses to other landscapes downstream (this is a County Borough-wide issue), including Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed. Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes [due to climate change] die back.
- ***Impacts of climate change:*** More intense periods of drought, as a result of climate change, leading to the drying out of wet grassland and rush pastures. Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels leading to higher water levels and consequential increases in flood risk and livestock poaching on floodplains.
- ***Suburban land uses:*** Related land use pressures fringing the village include conversion of pasture to pony paddocks, sub-divided by wooden fencing into regular fields at odds with traditional landscape patterns and land uses.
- ***20th century housing developments:*** The dominant force for change within the landscape is the visual prominence of post-war housing at Bettws, extending out from its historic core up onto the elevated hill summit.
- ***Local vernacular and housing setting:*** Housing at Bettws displays a range of vernacular styles and orientations, poorly integrated into its landscape setting and unrelated to the historic centre of the village.
- ***Poor drainage:*** Impeded drainage at Bettws due to underlying geology and ground conditions, as well as blocked culverts.
- ***Pylons:*** Prominent pylon lines dissecting the landscape in the west, introducing modern intrusions into an otherwise strongly rural and tranquil landscape.

4: BETTWS SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Its strongly wooded character**, with semi-natural woodlands, mature hedgebanks and in-field trees.
- **Valued semi-natural habitats**, including areas of wet grassland and rush pasture along stream sides.
- **Important cultural remains**, including the relicts of Plas-y-Bettws garden and industrial features around Tyle-Coch.
- **Historic settlement core** of Bettws with 17th Century parish church (Grade I listed).
- **Levels of peace and tranquillity** associated with the sparsely settled rural area surrounding Bettws.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect the landscape's levels of peace and tranquillity outside the settlement of Bettws, with scattered farmsteads and hamlets linked by quiet rural lanes.
- Protect the integrity of the landscape's heritage features and historic buildings, including the Grade II listed tramway bridge at Tyle-Coch, scheduled relicts of Plas-y-Bettws garden and the Grade I listed Bettws Parish church.
- Protect the landscape's historic irregular field patterns, resisting further sub-division (e.g. to paddocks) or field amalgamation.

4: BETTWS SETTLED FARMLAND

| GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES | Design Guide Theme |
|---|--------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support farmers to continue to manage land on the fringes of Bettws, including through agri-environment and community grazing schemes (e.g. organised through the local Wildlife Trust or PONT⁵). | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage areas of broadleaved woodland, mature hedgebanks and in-field trees, including through traditional coppice management. Encourage new woodland and hedgerow planting along slopes to reduce downstream flooding and diffuse pollution. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and where possible extend areas of wet grassland and rush pasture through appropriate grazing and traditional land management regimes – to enhance landscape character, wildlife interest and the LCA's water storage capacity. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and enhance distinctive hedgebanks and mature tree line field boundaries, respecting the characteristics of hedgebank construction (e.g. height of banks) and using locally prevalent species to fill gaps. Encourage the replacement of areas of fencing (e.g. around horse paddocks) with traditional field boundaries to reinforce landscape character and create further wildlife corridors. | B |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | Design Guide Theme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to enhance the built environment and local vernacular of the prominent hilltop settlement of Bettws, following the principles set out in the Design Guide. | B |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of drainage systems and watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). | D |

⁵ <http://www.pontcymru.org/>

5: GARW VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA comprises the settled valley floor and lower slopes of the Garw Valley to the north of Bridgend. The majority of the LCA is classed as 'Lowland Valley' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2), with some of the higher slopes falling within the 'Upland' category.

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The lower reaches of the valley fall within the Bryngarw Country Park SLA, and the eastern slopes of the valley fall within the Northern Uplands SLA.

5: GARW VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Valley system following the course of the Garw from its source at the head of the valley to the Brynmenyn confluence (on the northern fringes of Bridgend).
- Overlooked by elevated uplands on either side, including the extensive forestry of the Garw Forest to the west.
- River cutting deeply into the surrounding coalfield plateau in its upper courses, with slopes becoming gentler and less dramatic as it widens and flows south.

Woodland cover

- Fragments of broadleaved woodland and scrub in-between development on the lower valley slopes. This includes ornamental plantings associated with Bryngarw Country Park.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Improved and semi-improved pastures on lower slopes enclosed by a network of hedgerows, grown-out lines of trees and woodland belts, with higher slopes defined by rough grazing land.

Semi-natural habitats

- Patches of valued semi-natural habitat tracing the valley's transition from its upland source, including acid grassland, heath, scrub, marshy grassland and oak-dominated broadleaved woodlands (including several SINCs).

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Rich cultural heritage relating to the 19th century coal mining industry, including remnant shafts, coal workings and lines of workers' terraces.
- Historic buildings interspersed within the sprawling settlements, including Grade II listed chapels.
- Grade II listed house and registered parkland estate of Bryngarw House, managed by BCBC as a Country Park.
- Literary connections with Nina Bawden's bestselling children's novel, *Carrie's War* (1973).

Settlement and road pattern

- Linear settlement occupying a significant part of the valley floor, with terraces and 20th century development displaying a range of vernacular styles extending along and up valley sides.
- Landscape traversed by the main A4064 (which terminates at Blaengarw), with minor roads linking housing up valley sides. National Cycle Route 883 follows a disused railway line along the valley floor

Views and perceptual qualities

- Pockets of tranquillity and naturalistic character in contrast to areas of dense development, including the woodlands and grounds of Bryngarw Country Park and the moorland fringes around Blaengarw.
- Strong intervisibility with the surrounding uplands and forestry.

5: GARW VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- ***Decline in agricultural management:*** Marginal agricultural land on the immediate fringes of settlements frequently neglected and encroached with bracken, scrub and secondary woodland.
- ***Habitat fragmentation:*** Fragmented semi-natural habitats due to the expansion of development and afforestation.
- ***Afforestation:*** Hard edges of forestry and blocks of recently felled plantation disrupting the visual flow of the higher valley slopes.
- ***Invasive species:*** Spread of invasive species, often transported along valleys to other landscapes downstream (this is a County Borough-wide issue), including Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.
- ***Drainage and flooding:*** Fast-run off due to development, blocked culverts (a post-industrial legacy) and areas devoid of vegetation/woodland cover. Land use changes in the adjacent uplands (e.g. clear felling of plantations), along with the effects of climate change, likely to cause increased flooding within valley settlements.
- ***Impacts of climate change:*** Summer droughts likely to reduce the valley's water supply from the surrounding uplands (with an associated drying out of valued wetland habitats). Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back.
- ***Hedgerow management:*** Gappy/fragmented hedgerow field boundaries due to a lack of management.
- ***Urban fringe misuse:*** Fly-tipping and other misuse issues affecting the rural land surrounding the valley settlements.
- ***Litter accumulation:*** Accumulation of litter transported along by the river and deposited along its banks in places.
- ***20th century development:*** Valley settlements sprawling along the valley floor and extending up slopes. Views of development dominate the landscape.
- ***Local vernacular and built environment:*** Rows of 19th century miners' terraces supplemented by a range of other housing styles, materials and colours from the post-war and recent periods. Older buildings in a poor state of repair are a frequent occurrence.
- ***Tranquillity:*** The busy A4064 linking Bridgend and Blaengarw travels through the entire length of the valley, eroding levels of peace and tranquillity throughout.

5: GARW VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Pastures on lower slopes** enclosed by a strong network of hedgerows, tree lines and woodland belts, with open rough grazing land forming the transition with the adjacent uplands.
- **Valued semi-natural habitats** including acid grassland, heathland, scrub, marshy grassland and oak-dominated woodland.
- **Rich cultural and archaeological heritage**, including 19th century industrial relicts and historic chapels.
- **Pockets of tranquillity** in-between and surrounding areas of development
- **Intervisibility with the surrounding uplands**





GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

Design
Guide
Theme

- Protect and appropriately manage the rich industrial and archaeological heritage of the area, including remnant mine shafts, workings, historic chapels and characterful lines of workers' terraces.
- Protect the character and setting of the Grade II registered parkland of Bryngarw (a BCBC Country Park), ensuring any new development does not encroach into the historic landscape or affect views to or from it. Continue to manage the parkland sensitively whilst respecting its role as a valued recreational resource.
- Protect pockets of tranquil and undeveloped land on the higher valley slopes, maintaining (and where possible softening) the transition between the developed valley floor and remote uplands above.

B

5: GARW VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

| GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES | Design Guide Theme | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support farmers to continue to manage land on valley slopes and around settlements through livestock grazing. Explore establishing community grazing schemes where conventional farmers are not able to graze more marginal land (e.g. organised through the local Wildlife Trust or PONT⁶). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the landscape's hedgerow field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting, and encourage the planting of hedgerow tree specimens (locally sourced wherever possible). |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and enhance areas of semi-natural woodland through traditional techniques including coppicing and sensitive grazing regimes. Promote natural regeneration and the planting of new woodlands along valley slopes to enhance longevity and the water storage capacity of the landscape (to prevent downstream flooding). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control the spread of invasive species transported along the valley and beyond – such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed - as part of a County Borough-wide initiative (involving private landowners, conservation charities/NGOs and public bodies). Target particularly the head of the valley and the upper catchment (within adjacent upland LCAs) with the aim of preventing transportation downstream. | | |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | Design Guide Theme | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create, extend and link woodland and wetland habitats to enhance the landscape's water storage capacity and improve water quality. Encourage the natural regeneration of woodland and undertake new planting, using climate-hardy species at right angles to slopes to reduce run-off. |  | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a whole catchment approach to the management of drainage systems and watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). |  | |

⁶ <http://www.pontcymru.org/>

5: GARW VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

| | |
|--|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for any new development to be sited within existing settlement boundaries, avoiding further coalescence and spread of development along valley floors and the upper slopes. | B |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore opportunities to enhance the built environment and landscape setting of the valley settlements, following the principles set out in the Design Guide. | B |

6: MYNYDD LLANGEINWYR UPLANDS

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

Found in the north-eastern part of the County Borough, this remote, upland LCA is located between the Garw and Ogmore valleys. LANDMAP's Sensory and Visual aspect (Level 2) classifies all of the landscape as 'Upland'.

Link to Special Landscape Areas: There are no SLAs within this LCA.

6: MYNYDD LLANGEINWYR UPLANDS

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Exposed, elevated plateau landscape sitting dramatically above the Garw and Ogmere valleys, rising to 568 metres on the hill summit of Werfa.
- Upper Coal Measures geology greatly influenced by the effects of glaciation, with truncated streams and waterfalls plunging down hillsides to meet the larger valleys below.
- Prominent Craig Ogwr tors and ridgeline in the north-east of the LCA, displaying outcrops of the Coal Measures geology in cliffs and scree slopes (designated as a RIGS).

Woodland cover

- An open landscape with little tree cover – the coniferous plantations at the head of the Ogmere Valley standing out prominently against the muted moorland backdrop.
- Lower-lying farmland in the south including linear belts of woodland along field boundaries and mixed plantation at Parc Cefnmachen.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Largely unenclosed uplands with rough sheep grazing.
- Small, irregular fields at lower elevations (particularly in the south), comprising semi-improved pastures enclosed by hedgerows, grown-out hedgebanks and stone walls.

Semi-natural habitats

- Upland habitats including locally important tracts of acid grassland with patches of heathland, scrub, marshy grassland and flushes.
- Cwm Cyffog SSSI valued for its blanket bog, heathland and rare populations of White Beak-sedge.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Nationally important archaeological features on hill summits including a prehistoric round barrow, cairns and the defensive dyke of Bwlch yr Afan.

Settlement and road pattern

- Sparsely settled, with occasional hamlets, a few farms and the small village of Llangeinor (a Conservation Area) nestled on the lower southern slopes and linked by minor roads.
- Road access limited to the southern part of the LCA, with the A4093 linking Ogmere and Bettws.
- Uplands traversed by footpaths and bridleways, including the Ogwr Ridgeway Trail which passes through the southern part of the landscape. Most of the LCA is designated as statutory open access land.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Spectacular panoramas across the Vale of Glamorgan and Bristol Channel to the south and the Brecon Beacons to the north.
- Intervisibility with the adjacent valley settlements is a feature of the lower fringes of this LCA.
- Telecommunications masts on the high summit of Werfa and above Blackmill, with long views westwards towards Ffynnon Oer windfarm in Neath Port Talbot.
- An overall remote and wild landscape, with a great degree of exposure.

6: MYNYDD LLANGEINWYR UPLANDS

PART 2: EVALUATION

PAST / CURRENT FORCES FOR CHANGE

- **Habitat fragmentation:** Locally extensive areas of productive grassland on higher ground, reducing areas of semi-natural grassland/upland habitats to fragmented sites.
- **Decline in agricultural management:** Elsewhere, a lack of grazing management is leading to bracken/scrub/secondary woodland encroachment on the uplands, both reducing nature conservation interest and impacting on the open character of the landscape.
- **Afforestation:** The head of the Ogmore Valley dominated by forestry plantation, forming abrupt edges against the surrounding sparsely vegetated scree slopes and rough grassland.
- **Forestry pests and diseases:** The growing prevalence of pests and diseases (including as a result of climate change) affecting the future sustainability of the plantations, and increasing the vulnerability of the landscape to landslides and runoff, causing more frequent downstream flooding and impacts on water quality.
- **Impacts of climate change:** Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in open upland habitats. More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands such as blanket bogs.
- **Urban fringe misuse:** Urban fringe issues relating to the proximity of the landscape to the settlements within the adjacent Ogmore and Garw Valleys, including fly tipping and unauthorised vehicular access.
- **Views of development:** Distant views of wind turbines in adjacent counties (the operational Ffynnon Oer windfarm in Neath Port Talbot, and the Maerdy windfarm in Rhondda, currently under construction), eroding feelings of remoteness.
- **Renewable energy development:** High levels of exposure resulting in likely pressure for future wind energy developments within the landscape.

6: MYNYDD LLANGEINWYR UPLANDS

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE




The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Its open landscape character** defined by rough sheep grazing.
- **Prominent Craig Ogwr tors and ridgeline**, designated as a RIGS.
- **Valued upland habitats**, including acid grassland, heathland, scrub and wetlands (including Cwm Cyffog SSSI).
- **Nationally important** archaeological features on hill summits from the prehistoric period.
- **Long, uninterrupted views** to as far as the Bristol Channel and Brecon Beacons.
- **Its remote and wild character**, the majority being devoid of development.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

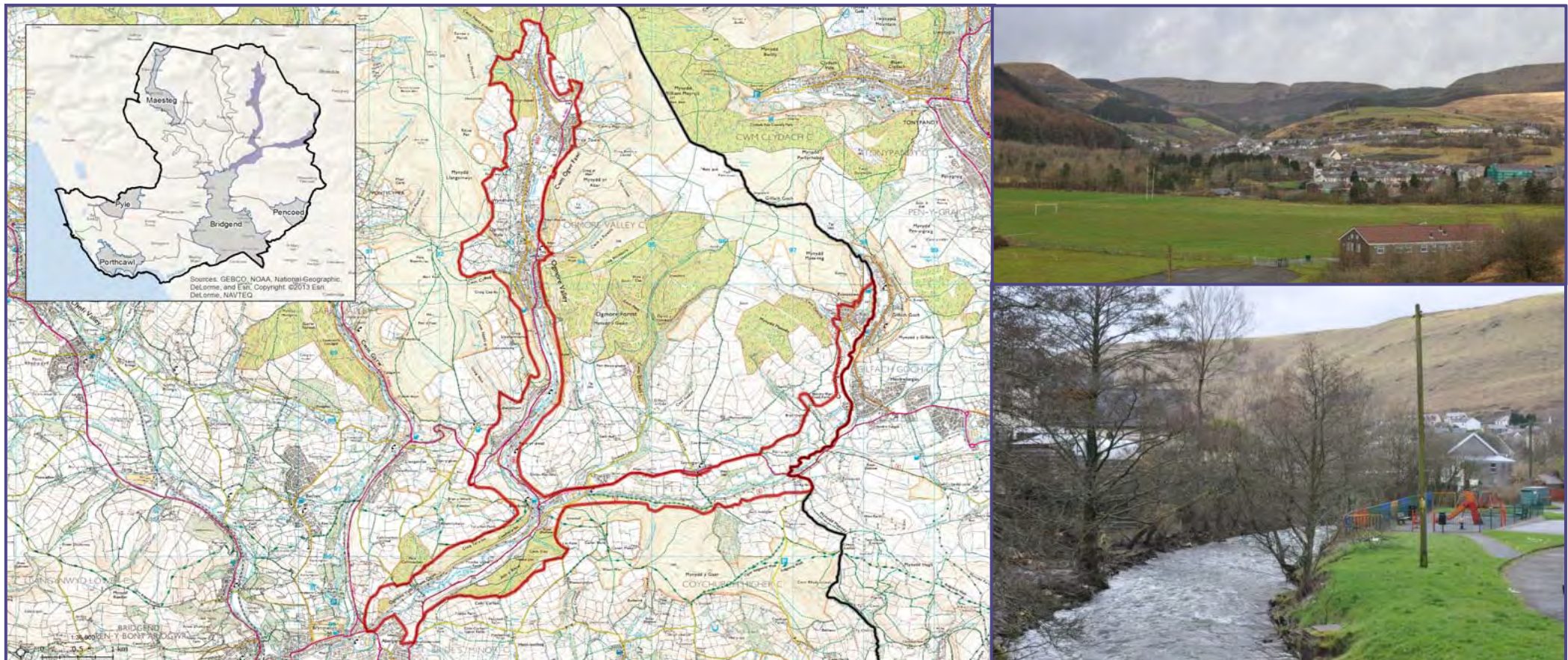
- Protect the farming and land management traditions of the area, continuing to support local farmers and commoners to graze the open moorland and rough grasslands as an integral part of their farming systems.
- Protect and appropriately manage the nationally important archaeological heritage of the area such as the prehistoric round barrow on the Werfa, ancient cairns crowning ridgelines and the Bwlch yr Afan dyke, including through appropriate grazing regimes and recreation management.
- Protect the landscape's strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness, avoiding the location of new development on the most prominent, open ridgelines. Protect the character and setting of the Llangeinor Conservation Area in the south of the LCA when considering new development proposals.
- Protect the long, uninterrupted views from the landscape, including to as far as the Brecon Beacons, Vale of Glamorgan and Bristol Channel.

6: MYNYDD LLANGEINWYR UPLANDS

| GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES | Design Guide Theme | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and where possible extend areas of acid grassland, heathland, scrub and wetlands (including nationally important blanket bog and rare populations of White Beak-sedge at Cwm Cyffog SSSI) through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels and a programme of controlled burning (where appropriate). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the landscape's hedgerow, hedgerbank and stone wall field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting, and encourage the planting of hedgerow tree specimens (locally sourced wherever possible). Respect local materials and styles of stone wall construction. |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the area's conifer plantations for sustainable timber production, recreational opportunities and wildlife interest, creating ecological links to surrounding semi-natural habitats to soften their edges wherever possible. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage linear belts of woodland forming field boundaries, including through traditional coppice management. Encourage new woodland planting at right angles to lower slopes to reduce downstream flooding and diffuse pollution. | | |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | Design Guide Theme | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with Natural Resources Wales to plan for the future restructuring of the area's conifer plantations (when their role in timber production has ceased), including their gradual restoration to upland habitats and restocking with climate change-resilient species (native broadleaves where possible). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). |  | |

7: OGMORE VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

The majority of the LCA is classed as 'Lowland Valley' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2), with some of the higher slopes falling within the 'Upland' category.

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The majority of Cwm Ogwr Fach lies within the Mynydd y Gaer SLA, and the slopes of the Cwm Ogwr Fawr fall within the Northern Uplands SLA. **Other designations** include the Blackmill Woods SAC and SSSI, Nantymoel Conservation Area and a number of SINCS.

7: OGMORE VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Narrow, steep sided valley system comprising the two branches of the River Ogmore (Cwm Ogwr Fawr and Cwm Ogwr Fach). These are met by the Garw at the Brynmenyn confluence north of Bridgend.
- Valleys cutting deeply into the surrounding coalfield plateau, with a series of incised re-entrant valleys and spurs creating dramatic landform features with evidence of their glacial past.

Woodland cover

- Frequently heavily wooded valley sides; a mixture of coniferous plantations – particularly in the upper Ogmore – and semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
- Mature hedgerows and lines of trees along field boundaries emphasise the landscape's wooded character.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Pastoral fields on lower slopes enclosed by a network of hedgerows and woodland belts, with upper slopes defined by rough grassland grazed by sheep.
- Patches of bracken and gorse evoking an upland feel.

Semi-natural habitats

- SAC and SSSI ancient sessile oak woodlands at Blackmill, contributing greatly to local character particularly due to their close proximity to built development.

- Swathes of important semi-natural habitat in-between areas of development, including acid grassland, heath, scrub, marshy grasslands and valued oak-dominated woodlands.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Rich cultural heritage relating to the 19th century coal mining industry, including disused shafts, coal workings and former railway lines converted to cycle paths (national routes 883 and 4).
- Landscape around Evanstown and Gilfach Goch formed the basis for the famous 1939 novel *How Green Was My Valley* (Richard Llewellyn).

Settlement and road pattern

- Linear settlements stretching along valley floors, with rows of former mine workers' terraces sprawling up valley sides in a ribbon effect (e.g. the Nantymoel Conservation Area).
- The characterful terraces are intermixed within a range of 20th century and modern developments displaying varying styles and materials.
- Settlements linked by busy roads including the main A4061 and A4093, eroding levels of tranquillity throughout.
- Large-scale industrial warehouses at Blackmill forming prominent features within the wooded valley.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Strong visual and cultural links between the valleys and the surrounding uplands, with views to higher ground introducing a relative sense of remoteness to the busy valley floors.
- The settlement of Evanstown overlooked by wind turbines at Fforch Nest.

7: OGMORE VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- ***Decline in agricultural management:*** Marginal agricultural land on the immediate fringes of settlement frequently neglected and encroached with bracken and scrub due to an absence of grazing management.
- ***Habitat fragmentation:*** Fragmented semi-natural habitats due to the expansion of development along the valley floors and up slopes.
- ***Invasive species:*** Spread of invasive species, often transported along valleys to other landscapes downstream (this is a County Borough-wide issue), including Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.
- ***Increased flooding:*** Settlement in the valleys increasingly vulnerable to flooding due to climate change and land use changes in the adjacent uplands (e.g. deforestation).
- ***Impacts of climate change:*** Summer droughts likely to reduce the valley's water supply from the surrounding uplands (with an associated drying out of valued wetland habitats). Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back.
- ***Local vernacular:*** Rows of 19th century miners' terraces supplemented by a range of other housing styles, materials and colours from the post-war and recent periods.
- ***Urban fringe misuse:*** Fly-tipping and other misuse issues affecting the rural land surrounding the valley settlements.
- ***Litter accumulation:*** Accumulation of litter along river banks, transported by the water downstream.
- ***20th century development:*** Post-war and modern expansion of mining settlements along the valley floor and extending up slopes. Views of development dominate the landscape.
- ***Industrial developments:*** Large-scale industrial developments west of Blackmill Woods, with large warehouses out of scale in the intimate valley landscape, and standing out against the naturalistic backdrop of the SAC-designated oak woodlands.
- ***Views to development:*** Views to remote uplands and woodlands increasingly obscured by development – views to wind turbines on upland horizons (Fforch Nest and Pant-y-wal north of Evanstown, Taff Ely to the south).
- ***Levels of tranquillity:*** Busy roads linking Bridgend to settlements within the valleys, eroding levels of peace and tranquillity throughout.

7: OGMORE VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE




The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Valued swathes of semi-natural broadleaved woodland**, including at Blackmill (SAC and SSSI designated).
- **Locally important habitats**, including acid grassland, heath, scrub and marshy grasslands.
- **Rich industrial heritage**, including disused shafts, coal workings and former workers' terraces (e.g. Nantymoel Conservation Area).
- **Strong intervisibility** with surrounding undeveloped uplands.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect and appropriately manage the rich industrial heritage of the area, including disused mine shafts, workings and distinctive lines of workers' terraces, including within Nantymoel Conservation Area).
- Protect pockets of undeveloped land on the valley slopes and between the main settlements, maintaining (and where possible softening) the transition between the settled valley floor and the remote uplands above (particularly relevant to Cwm Ogwr Fawr).
- Protect important views to the surrounding uplands from the valleys, which provide a scenic setting to the valley landscapes.

7: OGMORE VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

| GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES | Design Guide Theme | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support farmers to continue to manage land on valley slopes and around settlements through livestock grazing. Explore establishing community grazing schemes where conventional farmers are not able to graze more marginal land (e.g. organised through the local Wildlife Trust or PONT⁷). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the landscape's hedgerow field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting, and encourage the planting of hedgerow tree specimens (locally sourced wherever possible). |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and enhance areas of semi-natural woodland through traditional techniques including coppicing and sensitive grazing regimes, including the internationally important Blackmill Woods. Promote natural regeneration and the planting of new woodlands along valley slopes to enhance longevity and the water storage capacity of the landscape (to prevent downstream flooding). | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control the spread of invasive species transported along the valley and beyond – such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed - as part of a County Borough-wide initiative (involving private landowners, conservation charities/NGOs and public bodies). Target particularly the heads of both valleys and the upper catchments (within adjacent upland LCAs) with the aim of preventing transportation downstream. | | |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | Design Guide Theme | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create, extend and link woodland and wetland habitats to enhance the landscape's water storage capacity and improve water quality. Encourage the natural regeneration of woodland and undertake new planting, using climate-hardy species at right angles to slopes to reduce run-off. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a whole catchment approach to the management of drainage systems and watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). |  | |

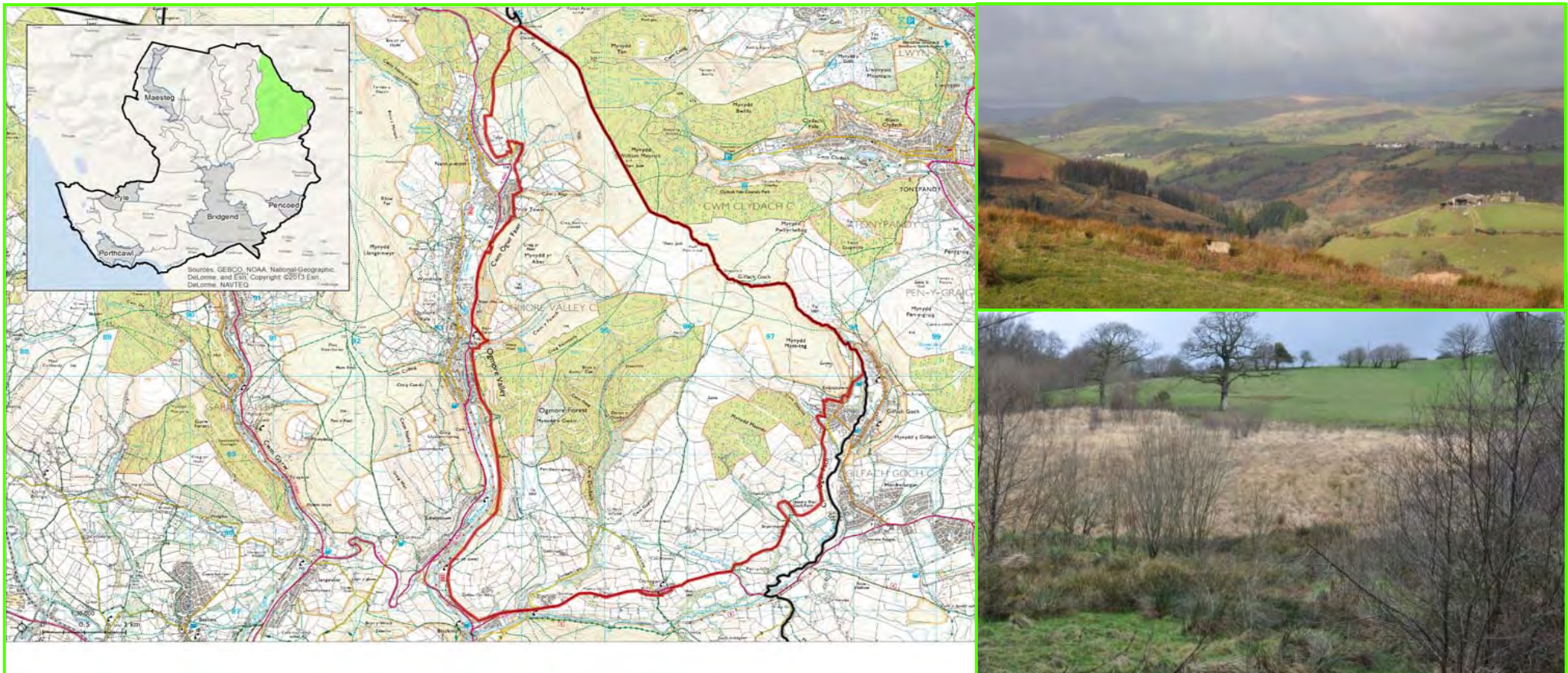
⁷ <http://www.pontcymru.org/>

7: OGMORE VALLEY FLOOR AND LOWER SLOPES

| | |
|--|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan for any new development to be sited within existing settlement boundaries and to be integrated into its landscape setting, avoiding further coalescence and spread of development along valley floors and slopes. | B |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Explore opportunities to enhance the built environment and landscape setting of the valley settlements, following the principles set out in the Design Guide. | B |

8: OGMORE FOREST AND SURROUNDING UPLANDS

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This is an upland landscape in the north eastern corner of the County Borough, dominated by the Ogmores Forest. It lies on the boundary with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough. All of the LCA is classed as 'Upland' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The northern half of this LCA falls within the Northern Uplands SLA. **Other designations** include Daren y Dimbath SSSI, Bwlch y Clawdd Dyke (a Scheduled earthwork) and a number of SINCs.

8: OGMORE FOREST AND SURROUNDING UPLANDS

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Highly undulating plateau and ridge landscape of Upper Coal Measures dissected by steeply incised valleys, draining into the Cwm Ogwr Fawr to the west and Cwm Ogwr Fach to the south.
- Hill summits and ridges reaching over 500 metres AOD in the north of the LCA.
- Fast-flowing streams and springs draining off the uplands and passing under stone hump-backed bridges in their lower courses.

Woodland cover

- Forestry plantations (including the Ogmores Forest) with abrupt linear edges on ridges and hill summits, with riparian and broadleaved woodlands on valley sides.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Rough grazing by sheep predominating (including on upland commons).
- Enclosed land on valley sides, with marginal pastures divided by hedges and mature hedgerows forming tree lines.
- Patches of gorse, bracken and rush pasture conveying an upland feel.

Semi-natural habitats

- Large tracts of semi-improved/semi-natural acid grassland, marshy grassland, heath, bracken and scrub.
- Locally important swathes of broadleaved semi-natural woodland are found within Cwm Dimbath and on the western slopes of Mynydd yr Aber.
- Daren y Dimbath SSSI important for its assemblage of rare Atlantic Ferns.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Bwlch y Clawdd Dyke (a Scheduled earthwork) situated in a prominent upland position along the county borough boundary, with cairns topping hill summits elsewhere.
- Evidence of the landscape's coal mining heritage, with disused tips on slopes.

Settlement and road pattern

- The only settlements are occasional small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads nestled on the southern slopes above the Ogmores Valley.
- Minor lanes providing access, whilst a large proportion of the uplands is designated open access land and crossed by rights of way.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A largely unsettled and inaccessible landscape, heightening senses of remoteness and wildness with exposure to the elements. This is reduced on the fringes of the LCA close to valley settlements.
- Spectacular panoramic views from high ground to the Brecon Beacons and Bristol Channel.

8: OGMORE FOREST AND SURROUNDING UPLANDS

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Habitat fragmentation:** Agricultural improvements and inappropriate grazing levels fragmenting valued upland habitats to a few isolated sites.
- **Afforestation:** Large-scale forestry plantations further reducing the extent of upland habitats and introducing prominent geometric blocks into the flowing landform.
- **Large-scale felling:** Current and future threat of pests and fungal diseases affecting the forestry crop (e.g. *Phytophthora* spp) leading to widescale felling, causing higher levels of soil erosion, potential for increased flooding, landslides and impacts on water quality.
- **Woodland management:** Lack of active woodland management leading to an even age structure in broadleaved woodlands and sparse ground flora (overgrazing and supplementary feeding causing poaching within woodlands fringing Dimbath Lane where livestock congregate).
- **Impacts of climate change:** Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a further decrease in open upland habitats. More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands such as marshy grassland.
- **Urban fringe misuse:** Urban fringe issues relating to the proximity of the landscape to the settlements within the adjacent Ogmores valley, including fly tipping and illegal vehicular access.
- **Renewable energy development:** Demand for wind energy developments within the exposed landscape – with turbines already present at Fforch Nest and Pant-y-wal on the border with Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- **Views to development:** Views of extensive development within adjacent valleys reducing feelings of remoteness.

8: OGMORE FOREST AND SURROUNDING UPLANDS

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE




The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Large areas of open rough grassland**, traditionally grazed by sheep.
- **Valued upland habitats**, including acid and marshy grasslands, heathland and rare Atlantic ferns at Daren y Dimbath SSSI.
- **Significant archaeological and industrial remains**, including Bwlch y Clawdd Dyke (a Scheduled Monument)
- **Strong sense of remoteness and wildness**, largely being an unsettled landscape.
- **Panoramic views** from summits, including long views to the Brecon Beacons and Bristol Channel.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

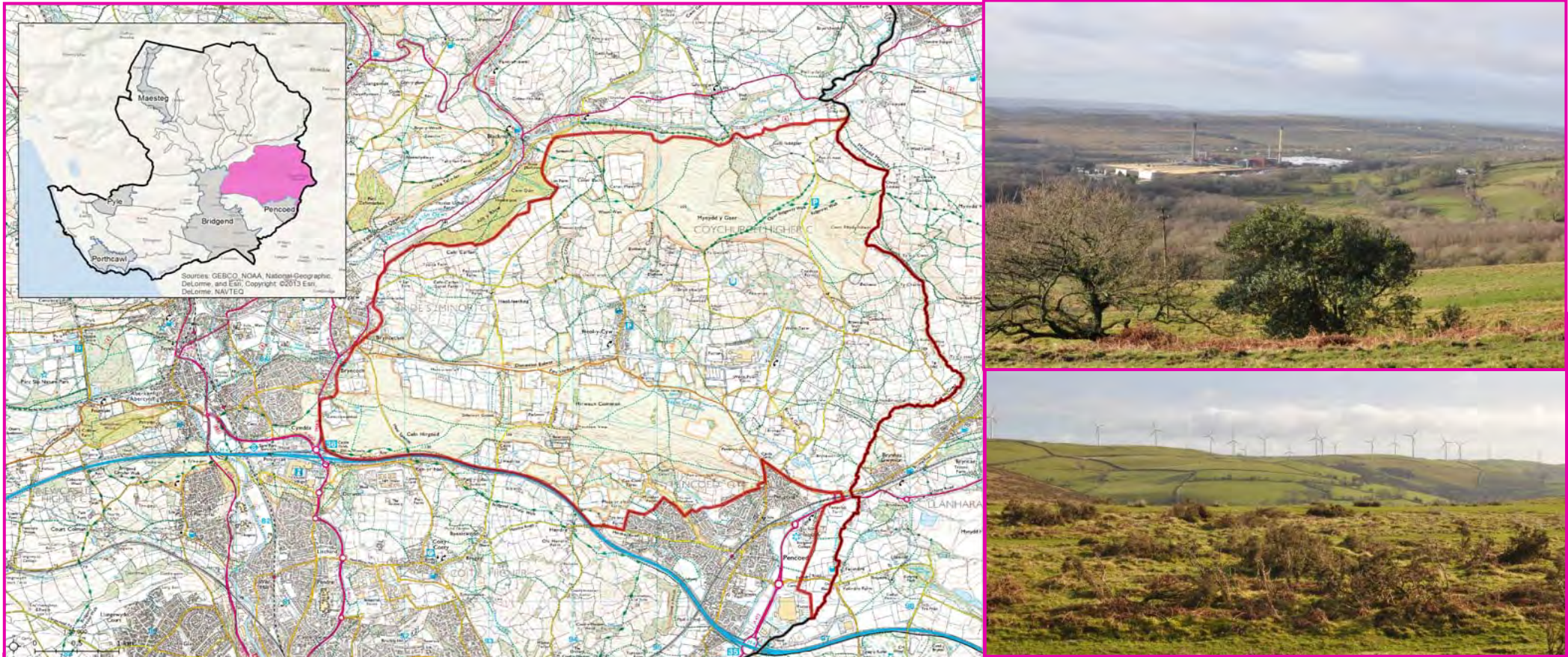
- Protect the farming and land management traditions of the area, continuing to support local farmers and commoners to graze the uplands as an integral part of their farming system.
- Protect and appropriately manage the archaeological and industrial heritage of the area, including the Scheduled Monument of Bwlch y Clawdd Dyke, prehistoric cairns and disused coal mining tips, through appropriate grazing regimes and recreation management.
- Protect the landscape's strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness, with occasional small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads concentrated in the south. Protect the undeveloped character of the higher ground, avoiding locating new development on the most prominent open ridgelines.
- Protect the landscape's open views across the County Borough and beyond, including north towards the Brecon Beacons and south to the Bristol Channel.

8: OGMORE FOREST AND SURROUNDING UPLANDS

| GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES | Design Guide Theme |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and where possible extend areas of acid and marshy grassland, heathland, scrub and bracken through a continuation of livestock grazing at appropriate levels and a programme of controlled burning (where appropriate). Ensure the sensitive management of the rare Atlantic ferns, mosses and liverworts at Daren y Dimbath SSSI. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and enhance areas of riparian and broadleaved woodland on valley slopes, using traditional techniques including coppicing. Control access by livestock, promoting natural regeneration to enhance longevity and their role in water storage (to reduce downstream flooding). | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage hedgerows to strengthen field patterns on lower slopes, including through the coppicing of mature hedgerow trees to enhance their longevity and the planting of new specimens using locally prevalent (and climate resilient) species. |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the area's conifer plantations for sustainable timber production, recreational opportunities and wildlife interest, creating ecological links to surrounding semi-natural habitats to soften their edges wherever possible. | |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | Design Guide Theme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with Natural Resources Wales to plan for the future restructuring of the area's conifer plantations (when their role in timber production has ceased), including their gradual restoration to upland habitats and restocking with climate change-resilient species (native broadleaves where possible). | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). |  |

9: HIRWAUN COMMON AND SURROUNDING RIDGES

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

Found in the east of the County Borough, this LCA is flanked by the urban areas of Pencoed to the south and Bridgend to the south-west. It comprises large areas of common land and open ridgelines, and includes the Rockwool Factory. LANDMAP classifies the southern half of the LCA as 'Lowland' and the northern half as 'Upland'.

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The northern half of the LCA falls within the Mynydd y Gaer SLA. **Other designations include** Brynna a Wern Tarw SSSI, Hirwaun Common SINC and several Scheduled Monuments.

9: HIRWAUN COMMON AND SURROUNDING RIDGES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Strongly undulating landscape with prominent ridgelines at Mynydd y Gaer to the north (295 metres) and the narrow Cefn Hirgoed in the south (130 metres).
- Complex geology, with Mynydd y Gaer marking the southern extent of Upper Coal Measures, Cefn Hirgoed ridgeline formed of resistant Millstone Grit and the LCA's low-lying land overlying sandstone.
- Incised river valleys dissecting Mynydd y Gaer, grading to a low-lying valley bottom criss-crossed by minor streams and springs.

Woodland cover

- Coniferous plantations on Mynydd y Gaer and semi-natural woodland on the slopes of Allt y Rhiw forming the largest areas of continuous tree cover in the LCA.
- Open, largely treeless commons and ridges contrasting with surrounding enclosed farmland, with bands of wet woodland along springlines, tree lines forming prominent field boundaries and occasional in-field specimens.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Large tracts of unimproved grassland, rush pasture and rough upland vegetation predominantly grazed by sheep. Sheep-grazed pastures and wet meadows found elsewhere.
- Blocks of historically important registered common land enclosed by fencing along roadsides, with some edges near housing converted to pony paddocks.
- Enclosed land defined by small to medium-scale irregular and regular fields bounded by square-cut hedges, tall hedgebanks and lines of trees.

Semi-natural habitats

- Broadleaved semi-natural woodland on valley sides, unimproved grasslands and heath (e.g. species-rich neutral grassland and wet heath at Brynna a Wern Tarw SSSI; acid grassland/heath at Hirwaun Common SINC).
- Scattered scrub, bracken and trees add to a varied landscape mosaic.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Strategically-sited Iron Age hillforts on Mynydd y Gaer and a spur overlooking Cwm Llwyd, as well as medieval pillow mounds on Cefn Hirgoed (all Scheduled Monuments).

Settlement and road pattern

- Mixed local vernacular, with rendered 19th century terraces and a range of 20th century/modern housing at Heol-y-Cyw.
- Busy B4280 road cutting through the landscape – which forms a route connecting Bridgend with the M4.
- Tracts of registered common land providing valued recreational opportunities.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A strongly rural landscape with an exposed, upland feel on higher ground.
- Strong intervisibility between the two ridges, with the white/cream rendered housing of Heol-y-Cyw visible in views from Cefn Hirgoed.
- The Rockwool Factory chimney and reservoirs on Hirwaun Common standing out strongly against their muted naturalistic backdrop.
- Extensive ridgetop views to the uplands to the north and the south-east coast in clear conditions. Views east from Mynydd y Gaer dominated by wind turbines on Mynydd Maendy (within RCT County Borough).

9: HIRWAUN COMMON AND SURROUNDING RIDGES

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Loss of common land:** Intensification and sub-division of common land, including conversion to pony paddocks and a dilution of traditional common management systems.
- **Decline in common land management:** Inappropriate grazing levels in places, leading to bracken, scrub and secondary woodland encroachment, reducing the area's open character and diluting historically important common land traditions through a reduction of commoners' livestock grazing the landscape .
- **Afforestation** on the slopes of Mynydd y Gaer, further fragmenting valued upland habitats.
- **Impacts of climate change:** Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland resulting in a decrease in the open habitats on the common and ridgelines. More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands such as wet meadows and rush pasture.
- **Pests and diseases:** Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes [as a result of climate change] die back.
- **Local vernacular:** Decline in the condition of traditional farm buildings and introduction of incongruous structures, such as corrugated iron sheds and large-scale modern barns.
- **Urban influences:** Prominent signage and roadside billboards, metal-fenced playgrounds along with over-engineered road edges, leading to a suburbanisation of wayside commons. Incidences of fly tipping and other anti-social behaviour also an issue within this landscape.
- **Levels of tranquillity:** Prominent pylon lines and the busy B4280 cutting through the landscape, eroding perceptions of tranquillity and the landscape's rural character on the doorstep of Bridgend
- **Rockwool Factory:** Dominating form of the factory, out of scale with the surrounding landscape. Smoke plumes from the chimneys visible from long distances.
- **20th century and recent development:** 20th century and modern development using a range of styles and materials, reducing visibility of local building traditions.
- **Urban fringe misuse:** Occasional incidences of fly-tipping on commons and roadsides.

9: HIRWAUN COMMON AND SURROUNDING RIDGES

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Open, unenclosed commons** with strong traditions of common land management linked to the local communities.
- **Large expanses of semi-natural habitat**, including species-rich grasslands and wet heath at Brynna a Wern Tarw SSSI.
- **Bands of wet woodland and tree lines** defining enclosed land surrounding the commons.
- **Nationally important archaeological features**, including Iron Age hillforts and medieval pillow mounds.
- **Strong rural character**, with a sense of remoteness on higher ground.
- **Extensive views from ridges**, to the coastline and the nearby uplands of LCA 8.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

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- Protect and support the common land management traditions of the area, including through encouraging collective participation in agri-environment schemes and supporting/promoting the work of the Coity Wallia Commoners Association and other partners (such as the current Biodiversity Enhancement Project funded by BIFFA⁸).
- Protect the landscape's rural character, considering aspects such as sensitive highway design where roads pass through the commons (e.g. the rationalisation of roadside signage and softening of verge treatments in these locations).
- Protect and appropriately manage archaeological features within the landscape, including the nationally important Iron Age hillforts on Mynydd y Gaer and overlooking Cwm Llwyd, as well as medieval pillow mounds on Cefn Hirgoed. Implement sensitive grazing

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⁸ <http://www.coitywallia.org/about/>

9: HIRWAUN COMMON AND SURROUNDING RIDGES

regimes and recreation management for these sites.

- Protect the remote, undeveloped qualities of the higher ground, with extensive unobstructed views to the uplands of the County Borough and Rhondda Cynon Taf, and south-east towards the coast.

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Manage and where possible extend areas of unimproved grasslands, heath and bracken through a continuation of traditional common land practices, particularly grazing at appropriate levels and controlled burning (where appropriate).
- Manage the landscape's trees, hedgerows and woodlands, including through traditional coppicing techniques. Promote the natural regeneration of streamside woodlands to enhance longevity and role in water storage (to reduce downstream flooding). Ensure, however, that the encroachment of woodland and scrub onto the open commons is controlled through livestock grazing.
- Manage the plantations on Mynydd y Gaer for sustainable timber production, recreational opportunities and wildlife interest, creating ecological links to surrounding semi-natural habitats to soften its edges wherever possible.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

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- Plan for the future restructuring of the conifer plantation on Mynydd y Gaer (when its role in timber production has ceased), including gradual restoration to upland habitats and restocking with climate change-resilient species (native broadleaves where possible).

- Prevent the encroachment of new development onto areas of common land. Ensure any new development is integrated sympathetically into its landscape setting and respects the scale and local vernacular of the area.

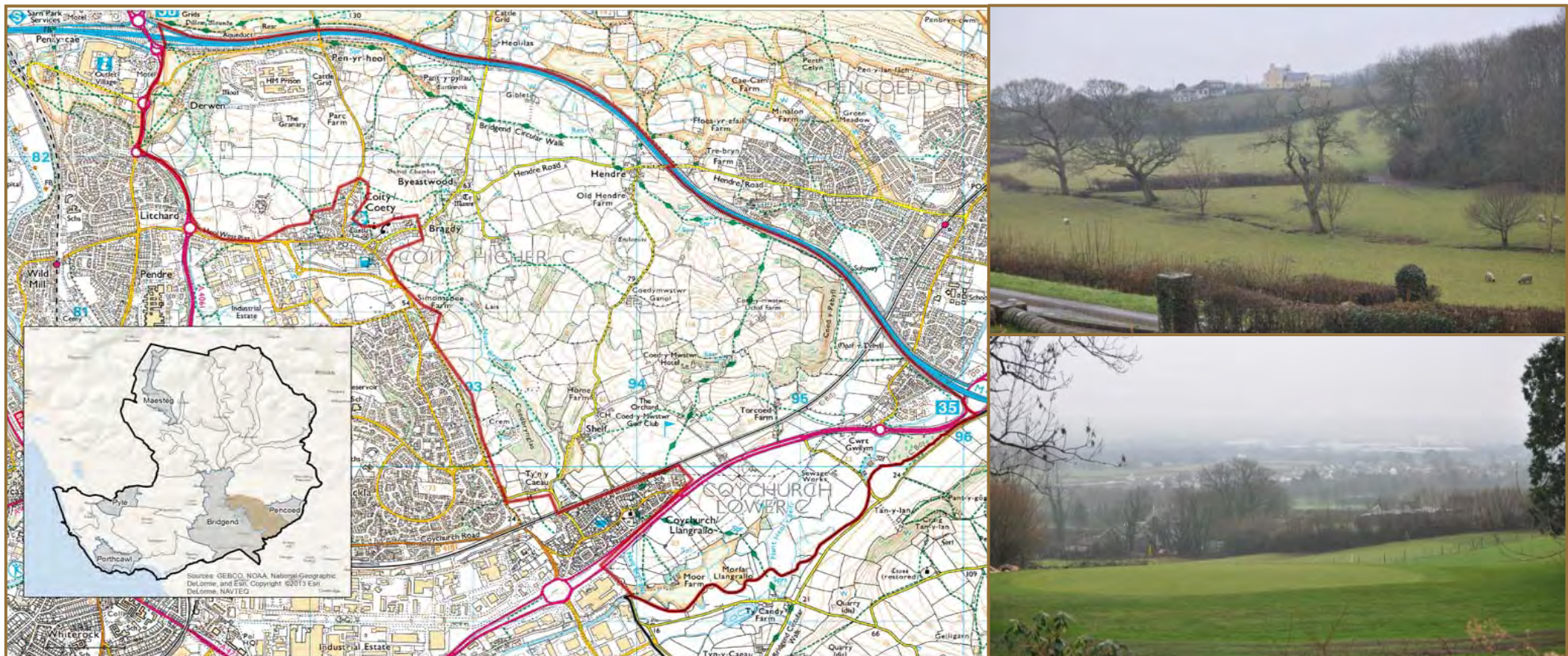
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- Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans).

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10: COITY RURAL HINTERLAND

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This is a sparsely settled landscape located in the south east of the County Borough, providing a rural buffer between the settlements of Bridgend and Pencoed. All of the LCA is classified as 'Lowland' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: There are no SLAs within this LCA. **Other designations** include Coed y Mwstwr RIGS, Coed y Mwstwr Woodland SSSI, several Scheduled Monuments, part of Coity Conservation Area and a number of SINCS.

10: COITY RURAL HINTERLAND

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Strongly undulating lowland landscape, varying in height from 114 metres AOD to around 30 metres AOD.
- Underlying rocks of Triassic sandstones and mudstones, with a band of limestone in the south-east outcropping along the Coed y Pebyll ridge.
- Locally distinct cave systems at Coed y Mwstwr (designated as a RIGS).
- Includes the distinct sinuous valley of Nant-Bryn-glas and a number of springs.

Woodland cover

- Bands and blocks of broadleaved woodland linking to hedgerows (often grown out into tree lines) to produce a strong sense of enclosure and wooded character.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Distinctive small-scale field pattern of improved and semi-improved pastures, marked by a strong framework of mature hazel, holly and hawthorn hedges with frequent oak and ash standards.
- Horse paddocks divided by wooden fencing on the fringes of Hendre.
- Remnant common land in the north-west and around Coychurch softening the urban edge.

Semi-natural habitats

- Semi-natural broadleaved woodlands of nature conservation interest, including the Coed y Mwstwr Woodland SSSI (mixed woodland with a rich limestone ground flora).
- Patches of scrub and neutral grassland also valued locally.

Archaeology and field pattern

- Rich archaeological heritage including prehistoric earthworks and a burial chamber near Byeastwood, and Ogof y Pebyll cave (which displays evidence of prehistoric occupation).
- A 19th century historic estate character is associated with the landscape around Coed y Mwstwr, which also includes a golf course.

Settlement and road pattern

- Sparsely settled, with occasional nucleated hamlets and farmsteads linked by winding lanes, single tracks and a network of footpaths, including the Bridgend Circular Walk.
- Areas of open access land (commons) providing valued recreational spaces.
- HM Prison Parc located in the north-west of the LCA, largely screened by woodland. Large parts of the landscape inaccessible by road.
- Varied local vernacular, with examples of traditional local stone vernacular at Bragdy and Byeastwood, and the Victorian red brick Grade II listed Victorian mansion of the Coed-y-Mwstwr Hotel.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A highly rural and tranquil landscape in strong contrast to the neighbouring built form of Bridgend.
- Peaceful, unspoilt qualities interrupted by the sound of the M4 traffic along the northern edges, as well as the A473 and main railway line to the south.
- Views from the higher land in the south across the Vale of Gamorgan interrupted by the visual prominence of Bridgend Industrial Estate.
- Unspoilt views to the north characterised by the wooded/semi-natural ridgelines of LCA 8 and the uplands beyond.

10: COITY RURAL HINTERLAND

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Pony paddocks:** Traditional livestock farming replaced increasingly by horse paddocks, affecting traditional landscape patterns and producing closely grazed fields with a uniform sward.
- **Proximity to Bridgend and M4:** Urban edge influences along the southern and western fringes of the LCA, along with noise intrusions from the M4, contrasting with the peaceful, rural and largely undeveloped character of the landscape.
- **Invasive species:** Spread of invasive species, often transported along watercourses to other landscapes (this is a County Borough-wide issue), including Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.
- **Impacts of climate change on woodlands:** Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees (including valued parkland/veteran specimens) may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- **Increased flood risk:** Increased autumn and winter precipitation levels as a result of climate change leading to higher water levels and consequential increases in flood risk and livestock poaching on floodplains.
- **Agricultural intensification:** Drive for increased domestic food production, putting further pressure on unimproved agricultural land.
- **Loss of heritage features:** Previous loss of archaeological features to development, particularly the M4.
- **Urban and recreational influences:** Remnant common land around HM Prison Parc crossed by tarmac paths and street lighting, resulting in a suburbanising effect and extension of urban character into the landscape. The Coed y Mwstwr estate includes a golf course, occupying an elevated ridgeline.
- **Demand for new housing** in an attractive rural setting close to Bridgend – e.g. the Porth y Castell housing development north of Coity includes large detached roadside houses displaying various vernacular styles (rendered).

10: COITY RURAL HINTERLAND

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Strong wooded character**, with bands and blocks of broadleaved woodlands (including Coed y Mwstwr SSSI) linking to mature hedgerows.
- **Regionally important and distinctive cave systems** at Coed y Mwstwr (a RIGS).
- **Distinctive small-scale field pattern** marked by a strong hedgerow network.
- **Areas of scrub, semi-improved grassland and remnant commons.**
- **Historic landscape character** with a number of prehistoric sites and estate land around Coed y Mwstwr.
- **Rural, tranquil character** with long views from higher ground to the coast to the south and the uplands to the north.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect the landscape's strongly rural character and high levels of relative tranquillity, particularly valued given its position on the doorstep of Bridgend.
- Protect and appropriately manage the area's rich archaeological resource, including nationally important prehistoric monuments and evidence of ancient occupation (at Ogof y Pebyll cave), and the medieval moated site at Derwen. Protect the character and setting of the estate land around Coed y Mwstwr, including through a continuation of grazing management and the sensitive management of parkland trees.
- Protect the landscape's important views to undeveloped wooded horizons and the uplands to the north, and long views to the Vale of Glamorgan and the Bristol Channel to the south.



10: COITY RURAL HINTERLAND

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Manage and enhance the landscape's strongly wooded character, promoting coppice management and sensitive livestock grazing to promote a diverse understorey and ground flora. Strengthen ecological links between areas of woodland and hedgerows to form an intact habitat network.
- Manage hedgerows to strengthen the small-scale historic field patterns, including through the coppicing of mature hedgerow trees to enhance their longevity and the planting of new specimens using locally prevalent (and climate resilient) species. Encourage the replacement of fencing around paddocks with traditional hedgerow boundaries.
- Appropriately manage and retain remnant areas of common, rough grasslands and scrub, softening the transition between the rural landscape and urban form of Bridgend. Promote ecological links between these areas and surrounding farmland habitats.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Design
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Theme

- Encourage new woodland and hedgerow planting along slopes, using climate-hardy species of local provenance, to enhance the water storage functions of the landscape and improve water quality (through reduced runoff and diffuse pollution).
- Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans). 
- Limited new development should be contained within existing settlement boundaries wherever possible and integrated sympathetically into its setting, including through woodland planting using locally prevalent species. Local vernacular styles and materials should be reflected in any new development. 

11: MERTHYR MAWR FARMLAND, WARREN AND COASTLINE

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

Located to the south west of Bridgend Town, this LCA comprises the distinctive sand dunes and coastline of Merthyr Mawr Warren (within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast), along with farmland of an estate character around Merthyr Mawr village. The Warren is classified as 'Coastal' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2) and the inland farmland as 'Lowland'.

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The majority of the LCA falls within the Merthyr Mawr SLA. **Other designations** include Merthyr Mawr Warren SAC, SSSI and NNR, Newton Fault RIGS, several Scheduled Monuments, Merthyr Mawr village Conservation Area and the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Merthyr Mawr House. Much of the landscape is designated as of Outstanding Historic Importance and all of the coastal area lies within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

11: MERTHYR MAWR FARMLAND, WARREN AND COASTLINE

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Coastal landscape within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, dominated by the high sand dunes of Merthyr Mawr, reaching up to 80m AOD, backed by rolling estate farmland.
- Dunes comprising of wind-blown sand forming a superficial layer over Lower Carboniferous Limestone. A band of Oolitic Limestone and Lower Lias strata contains the dunes. The Newton Fault RIGS shows the contrast between the Carboniferous and Triassic strata.
- Sandy beach with shingle and beach cobble occurring in places.
- Landscape drained by the River Ogmore along its southern boundary. Ground water aquifers within the limestone bedrock (emergency water supplies to local communities).

Woodland cover

- Varied woodland pattern creating landscape interest, including small spinneys within the sand dunes, broadleaved woodland fringing the River Ogmore, mixed estate plantations and in-field parkland trees.
- Buildings within Merthyr Mawr village nestled within tree groups, frequently Scots Pine.

Agricultural land use and field pattern

- Well-developed, loamy brown earths supporting predominantly pastoral farming, wood pasture and parkland, with some arable fields and wet meadows on the floodplain.
- Regular fields enclosed by estate stone walls, railings or low-cut hedges.

Semi-natural habitats

- Internationally important habitats on Methyr Mawr Warren including sand dunes, saltmarsh, limestone grasslands and swamp habitats. Dune slacks amongst the most species-rich in the UK.

- Broadleaved estate plantations, patches of semi-natural woodland and remnant unimproved grasslands, many designated as SINCs.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Historic and archaeological features of national importance including the Norman-origin Ogmore Castle (within the Vale of Glamorgan but strongly associated with this landscape), 14th century fortified manor house of Candleston Castle, Chapel Hill Iron Age hillfort, and the early medieval Vervil Dyke.
- Evidence beneath the dunes of occupation from the Neolithic period. Much is designated a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance.
- Grade II* Merthyr Mawr House and parkland, with pleasure grounds, specimen trees and estate plantations.

Settlement and road pattern

- Distinctive village and medieval church of Merthyr Mawr designated as a Conservation Area, including well-maintained stone cottages with thatched or slate roofs.
- Limestone local vernacular creating unity in the landscape – used in buildings, walls and bridges.
- Settlement limited to the historic nucleated village of Merthyr Mawr, with scattered farmsteads linked by minor rural lanes and tracks.
- The Warren crossed by the Wales Coast Path, with the Bridgend Circular Walk providing links from the town to Merthyr Mawr village and Candleston Castle.

Views and perceptual qualities

- A peaceful and strongly rural landscape on the doorsteps of Bridgend and Porthcawl, with important visual connections with the surrounding coast and seascapes.
- Sand dunes are a popular recreational destination, with increased traffic on the rural roads during peak times impacting on otherwise high levels of tranquillity.

11: MERTHYR MAWR FARMLAND, WARREN AND COASTLINE

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Vegetation encroachment:** Dunes vulnerable to encroachment by scrub and young trees due to a lack of traditional grazing management.
- **Flooding:** Low-lying land along the floodplain of the Ogmore subject to frequent flooding, including around Ogmore Dipping Bridge.
- **Coastal erosion and sea level rise:** Increased threat of coastal erosion expected over the next 50 years due to sea level rise and increases in the frequency of stormy sea conditions⁹. Existing defences in the west of the LCA at Newton are predicted to be uneconomic to defend, leading to a predicted increase in flooding over time once they fail.
- **Impacts of climate change:** Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees (including valued parkland/veteran specimens) may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events.
- **Agricultural intensification:** Drive for increased domestic food production, putting further pressure on unimproved agricultural land.
- **Offshore dredging:** Sand dredging off the coast potentially impacting on the loss of sand within the dunes.
- **Proximity to development:** The wild, remote and unspoilt qualities of the coastal landscape sit hard against the urban edge of Porthcawl in the west, Bridgend to the north-east, and it is bordered by a caravan park to the north.
- **Pressure for development** on the fringes of the two urban areas is a key force for change within the landscape, with linked potential impacts on traffic levels and tranquillity.
- **Recreation:** Popularity of the coast for recreation, with traffic on the rural roads passing through the Conservation Area of Merthyr Mawr Village - impacting on its tranquil setting.
- **Visitor impacts:** Impacts of visitors to the coast, including litter and erosion of the popular routes into the dunes.
- **Pylon lines:** Pylons passing through the estate farmland in the north detracting from historic character / intimate scale of the landscape (e.g. towering above specimen trees and livestock grazing).
- **Levels of tranquillity:** This landscape is on the doorstep of Bridgend, with the busy by-pass of the A48 forming the northern boundary. The sound and sight of vehicles dominates the fringes of the LCA; at odds with its historic estate character.

⁹ Laverneck Point to St Ann's Head SMP 2 (May 2009): Annex A1. <http://www.southwalescoast.co.uk/content.asp?id=58>

11: MERTHYR MAWR FARMLAND, WARREN AND COASTLINE

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Visually prominent sand dunes**, reaching some 80 metres AOD and forming a distinctive coastal frontage to the County Borough. The complex underlying geology includes the Newton Fault RIGS.
- **Internationally important coastal habitats** within the Merthyr Mawr Warren SAC, SSSI and NNR.
- **Nationally important** archaeological and cultural heritage, within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and designated as a **Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance in Wales**.
- **Merthyr Mawr village Conservation Area**, with strong local vernacular and surrounding estate character (Grade II* parkland).
- **The landscape's importance as a recreational resource** for local communities and visitors to the County Borough.
- **A peaceful landscape** on the doorstep of the towns of Bridgend and Porthcawl.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

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- Protect the landscape's relative sense of remoteness and wild character, maintaining visual connections and uninterrupted long views along the coastline and adjacent seasapes (including across the Bristol Channel to the North Somerset coast).
- Protect the nationally important archaeological and cultural heritage of the landscape as an integral part of the wider Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance, including prehistoric and medieval remains, the dunes' ancient buried archaeology and the Grade II* Merthyr Mawr Estate. Implement management strategies for their continued survival and visibility in the landscape, including through appropriate land management practices and recreation management.

11: MERTHYR MAWR FARMLAND, WARREN AND COASTLINE

- Protect the character and the wooded estate setting of the Merthyr Mawr Conservation Area, with its strong local vernacular of clustered historic stone buildings with thatched or slate roofs. Reflect the local vernacular and building styles of the area in any new buildings or related features, including boundary walls.

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GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

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- Manage the internationally important habitats on Merthyr Mawr Warren (sand dunes, dune slacks, saltmarsh, limestone grasslands and swamp) through a combination of scrub control, livestock grazing and the removal of litter (including that carried in by the sea).
- Manage and enhance the inland landscape's strongly wooded character, promoting coppice management and sensitive livestock grazing to promote a diverse understorey and ground flora. Strengthen links between areas of woodland and hedgerows to form an intact ecological network and strengthen landscape character.
- Manage the inland landscape's hedgerow, estate railing and stone wall field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting, encouraging the planting of climate-hardy tree specimens (locally sourced wherever possible). Use local limestone and respect the building styles of the area's stone walls when undertaking repairs or building new sections.
- Manage tourism and recreational pressures within the Merthyr Mawr Warren National Nature Reserve, continuing to provide sensitive on-site interpretation and interactive opportunities to raise awareness of the area's internationally important natural and cultural assets (e.g. through a programme of guided walks and other events involving local communities and visitors).

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PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- Plan for the future restructuring of mixed plantations on the Merthyr Mawr Estate with native broadleaves (of climate hardy species), retaining their presence within the landscape whilst enhancing their nature conservation interest and water storage capacity.
- Encourage the reversion of improved pastures and arable land along the Ogmores floodplain to wet grassland and marsh, increasing the landscape's resilience to increased flooding events. This should form part of a wider catchment-scale approach considering adjacent landscapes (through BCBC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans).

11: MERTHYR MAWR FARMLAND, WARREN AND COASTLINE

- Plan for sea level rise and increased levels of coastal erosion, allowing the coastline to respond naturally, following the policies set out in the Shoreline Management Plan¹⁰ (managed realignment - enabling long term habitat management whilst introducing measures, as necessary, to manage and control recreational pressures).

¹⁰ Lavernock Point to St Ann's Head SMP2 (2009): Policy Statement for Nash Point to Porthcawl. <http://www.southwalescoast.co.uk/content.asp?id=58>

12: NEWTON DOWN LIMESTONE PLATEAU

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA is located in the south-central part of the County Borough, located between the settlements of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Pyle. It is a distinctive elevated limestone plateau defined by a steep scarp slope to the south and west, classified by LANDMAP as 'Lowland' (Level 2 of the Visual & Sensory aspect).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The eastern half of the LCA falls within the Laleston SLA. **Other designations** include Gaen and Pant Mawr quarries RIGS, Stormy Down SSSI, RIGS and SINC, Tythegston Court Grade II Registered Park and Garden, Tythegston and Laleston Conservation Areas and several Scheduled Monuments.

12: NEWTON DOWN LIMESTONE PLATEAU

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently undulating plateau, with occasional hill summits rising to just over 100 metres AOD. Southern boundary defined by a steep scarp slope dropping away from Newton Down towards the coast.
- Primarily Carboniferous Limestone geology, with a band of Mercia Mudstones to the north-west and Lower Lias to the east. Glacial till, sand and gravel found around the northern fringes. The disused Gaen and Pant Mawr quarries are designated as RIGS.
- SSSI-designated rock exposures on Stormy Down (also a RIGS), containing a mixture of marine and terrestrial fossil remains (of fish, molluscs and dinosaurs) from the Triassic period.

Woodland cover

- Intensively farmed landscape around Tythegston softened by the presence of parkland trees, retaining an estate character.
- Mixed and broadleaved plantations on prominent ridgelines (e.g. The Beacons).

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Improved pasture with some fields of arable cultivation.
- Closely trimmed hedgerows or walls dividing a regular pattern of medium-large fields on the plateau, becoming smaller and more irregular on slopes.

Semi-natural habitat

- Bracken, semi-improved grassland and broadleaved plantation on Stormy Down (designated as a SINC).
- Other locally important habitats including broadleaved semi-natural woodlands on slopes, patches of relict calcareous grassland on the downs, and scrub colonising the limestone cliffs of Cornelly Quarry.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Small Grade II listed house, garden and parkland at Tythegston Court (late 18th century).
- Prehistoric barrows and settlement remains found on some hill summits, with the medieval motte of Stormy Castle being a feature in the north.
- Industry relating to the landscape's rich mineral resource forming a key historic driver of the local economy in the wider region (including the steelworks of Neath Port Talbot).

Settlement and road pattern

- A lightly settled landscape fringing onto dense development at Bridgend, Pyle and Porthcawl – with nucleated villages at Tythegston and Laleston. Dispersed farms linked by minor roads and tracks.
- Local vernacular of limestone buildings with slate roofs – with examples of historic significance within the Conservation Areas of Tythegston and Laleston.
- Main A48 and A4106 passing through the landscape, linking Bridgend, Porthcawl and Pyle. The M4 and mainline London-Swansea railway line cuts through the northern part of the landscape.
- The Bridgend Circular Walk passes through the east of the LCA, and Stormy Down provides open access for further recreational opportunities.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Industrial land uses and infrastructure dominating parts of the plateau, including Cornelly Quarry and several other disused quarries.
- Industrial structures on Stormy Down, including a solar farm, prominent in views from across the plateau and beyond (e.g. from Cefn Cribwr).
- Views south from the Newton Down scarp slope to development at Porthcawl and its coastal hinterland. The northern part of the LCA has views to the ridgetop settlement of Cefn Cribwr.

12: NEWTON DOWN LIMESTONE PLATEAU

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR CHANGE

- **Industry and infrastructure:** A landscape greatly affected by industrial and infrastructure developments, with quarries and main transport corridors cutting into the landscape – impacting significantly on levels of tranquillity and remoteness.
- **Agricultural intensification:** Intensive farming practices on the plateau have reduced areas of semi-natural habitat to fragmented sites. In addition, the landscape's wider estate influence perceived only through the presence of specimen trees within fields. The national drive for increased domestic food production is likely to put further pressure on unimproved agricultural land.
- **Hedgerows:** Intensive farmland enclosed by closely trimmed hedgerows with few hedgerow trees and little species diversity.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Bracken and scrub encroachment on Stormy Down due to inappropriate management and a lack of grazing, further reducing the extent of semi-natural habitats within the LCA.
- **Human influences:** Prominent pylon lines, large-scale modern agricultural sheds and views to ridgeline developments in settlements fringing the LCA, contributing to a strong human influence perceived within the landscape.
- **Pressure for renewables:** Open landscape and existing industrial land uses leading to pressure for wind (particularly on Newton Down) and solar energy developments (a solar farm is already located next to industry on Stormy Down).
- **Development pressure** due to the proximity of the landscape to the M4 and Bridgend.

12: NEWTON DOWN LIMESTONE PLATEAU

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **The open, elevated downland**, providing strong intervisibility with other landscapes in the County Borough.
- **Nationally and regionally important geological exposures**, at Stormy Down SSSI and the Gaen and Pant Mawr quarries.
- **Important patches of semi-natural habitat**, including species-rich limestone grasslands, bracken and scrub.
- **Nationally important historic features**, including prehistoric sites and the 18th century Tythegston estate.
- **The historic villages of Tythegston and Laleston**, both designated as Conservation Areas.
- **A lightly settled landscape** with a strong rural character.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect long views to and from the elevated, open landscape – including to the coast and northwards towards Cefn Cribwr.
- Protect the landscape's archaeological and historic features, including prehistoric remains crowing hill summits, the medieval motte of Stormy Castle (all Scheduled Monuments) and the Grade II Listed Tythegston Court. This includes through sensitive grazing regimes, scrub management and the protection of specimen trees.
- Protect the landscape's lightly settled character, avoiding further development on the most prominent hill summits and protecting the clustered form of the LCA's historic villages.
- Protect the character and setting of the Conservation Areas at Tythegston and Laleston, ensuring any new development incorporates the local limestone vernacular and building styles wherever possible.

12: NEWTON DOWN LIMESTONE PLATEAU

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

Design Guide
Theme

- Manage and where possible extend areas of semi-natural habitat (including remnant limestone grassland on downland and verges; patches of scrub and bracken), providing ecological connections between fragmented sites where opportunities allow. Support community initiatives to enhance the landscape, such as Laleston Community Council's Biodiversity Improvement Scheme.
- Manage hedgerow and stone wall field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges to strengthen field patterns. Utilise native and climate-hardy hedgerow species in any new planting. Use local limestone and respect the building styles of the area's stone walls when undertaking repairs or building new sections.
- Manage characteristic mixed and broadleaved plantations on ridgelines, seeking to move towards a greater balance of climate-hardy broadleaves to enhance longevity and their nature conservation interest within the farmed landscape.

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PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- Explore opportunities to restore former industrial sites to semi-natural habitats, particularly limestone grasslands and scrub within discussed quarries, incorporating opportunities for public access and enjoyment (as part of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County Borough).

13: PORTHCAWL COASTLINE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA comprises the coastline surrounding Porthcawl, from Newton Point to Sker Rocks, extending inland to the base of the limestone scarp defining LCA 12. It is classified as a combination of 'Coastal' and 'Flat Lowland/Levels' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The coastal edge falls within the Porthcawl Coast SLA. **Other designations** include Locks Common RIGS and LNR and several SINC.

13: PORTHCAWL COASTLINE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Simple, low coastal plateau rising gently inland to approximately 50 metres AOD (at the edge of the limestone scarp slope).
- Simple topography underlain by complex geology; Lower Carboniferous limestone outcropping along the coast (including at Locks Common RIGS). Remainder of the LCA sits above a band of Mercian mudstones.
- Limestone pavements and rocky headlands punctuating wide sandy bays: Trecco Bay, Sandy Bay and Rest Bay.

Woodland cover

- Tree/woodland cover generally limited to outgrown hedgerows, shelterbelts and secondary woodland colonising unmanaged land.
- The coast is open and exposed to the elements.

Agricultural land use and field pattern

- South-west facing hinterland the most agriculturally productive in the borough, with small rectangular improved pasture fields dominating. Significant areas converted to pony paddocks.
- Square-cut hedgerows, stone walls and wire fences conveying a tidy, well-managed appearance to the farmed landscape.
- Amalgamated pony paddocks divided by pony tape or fencing.

Semi-natural habitats

- Rocky shores, cliffs and maritime grassland valued along the coast (Locks Common LNR, Pink Bay, Rhych Point and Newton Point SINC).

- Occasional areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland (e.g. Nottage Court Wood SINC) and fragments of unimproved grassland and wetlands inland (e.g. Pink Bay Pond SINC).

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Ancient tumuli near Kenfig Dunes, and a number of Listed Buildings within the landscape, such as the Grade II Listed remains of Sker House (originally built as a Cistercian monastic grange and made famous as the basis of R. D. Blackmore's book *The Maid of Sker*).
- Former tramline and railway bridge (Grade II Listed) on the outskirts of Nottage, and a dismantled railway line providing evidence of the landscape's industrial past (particularly links with nearby quarrying).

Settlement and road pattern

- Villages of Mawdlam and South Cornelly on the eastern edge of the LCA, with road links from the nearby M4.
- Sparse settlement elsewhere, with farmsteads and individual properties dispersed throughout and displaying mixed 20th century vernacular styles.
- Significant tracts of land under recreational uses– including the Royal Porthcawl and Grove golf courses, outdoor adventure centre and caravan/camping sites.
- Coastal edge is open access land, crossed by the Wales Coast Path, with some lengths following minor roads. The A4229 crosses through the eastern part of the LCA linking the M4 with Porthcawl.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Views along the coast and seascape; in clear conditions across to the North Somerset coastline.
- Beaches popular for surfing and other watersports.
- A rural landscape influenced by the proximity of development at Porthcawl, major road corridors and views of the Port Talbot steelworks.

13: PORTHCAWL COASTLINE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Habitat loss/fragmentation:** Limited/fragmented semi-natural habitats due to intensive agricultural and recreational uses.
- **Pony paddocks/horse keeping:** Traditional pastoral character being eroded by large-scale conversion/amalgamation of pastures to pony paddocks, also impacting on traditional field patterns and the loss of hedgerow field boundaries.
- **Agricultural abandonment:** Areas of neglect/abandonment on the fringes of Porthcawl, where livestock farming is no longer economically viable.
- **Agricultural intensification:** Drive for increased domestic food production, putting further pressure on unimproved agricultural land.
- **Hedgerows:** Lengths of closely cut hedgerows with little species diversity and few hedgerow trees.
- **Offshore dredging:** Sand dredging off the coast potentially impacting on the loss of sand from the beaches.
- **Coastal erosion, sea level rise and defences:** Porthcawl increasingly vulnerable to the effects of sea level rise and coastal erosion, requiring the maintenance and upgrading (including heightening) of existing flood defences over the long-term. Intertidal beaches within the LCA likely to reduce in width (through coastal squeeze). Resistant cliffs from Locks Common to Sker Rocks will provide a natural defence to coastal erosion here¹¹.
- **Development and recreational pressures** on the fringes of Porthcawl, including golf courses and caravan/camping sites.
- **Levels of tranquillity:** Proximity of the popular tourism destination of Porthcawl and the presence of major transport corridors within the landscape, eroding perceptions of relative tranquillity.

¹¹ Lavernock Point to St Ann's Head SMP 2 (May 2009): Annex A1. <http://www.southwalescoast.co.uk/content.asp?id=58>

13: PORTHCAWL COASTLINE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Sections of undeveloped, geologically important coastline** forming a scenic frontage to Porthcawl and the County Borough.
- **Locally valued habitats** along the coast (including Locks Common LNR) and interspersed within the farmed hinterland.
- **Strong pattern of small pastoral fields** backing the coast.
- **Important archaeological sites** and historic features, including those related to the wider area's industrial past.
- **Long views** along the coastline and surrounding seascape, including across the Bristol Channel to North Somerset.
- **The landscape's importance as a tourism destination** and recreational resource for local communities.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect the landscape's visual connections and long views along the coastline and to adjacent seascapes (including across the Bristol Channel to the North Somerset coast).
- Protect the landscape's archaeological and historic features, including ancient tumuli near Kenfig Dunes (through appropriate grazing management) and relicts of the area's industrial past, including former transport infrastructure.
- Protect the landscape's open undeveloped sections of coastline, maintaining (and where possible softening) the transition between the naturalistic coastal edge and the urban form of Porthcawl. Protect the sparsely settled farmed character of the rural hinterland, preserving its function a peaceful backdrop to the town.

13: PORTHCAWL COASTLINE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

| GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES | Design Guide Theme |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage through grazing and where possible extend areas of semi-natural habitat (including maritime grassland and scrub, unimproved grasslands and wetlands), providing ecological connections between fragmented sites where opportunities allow. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland through coppicing and appropriate grazing levels, providing links to the hedgerow network to form an intact ecological network. Explore creating areas of new woodland planting, particularly along slopes to reduce levels of run-off and diffuse pollution. Avoid new planting along the coastal edge to maintain its open character. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support farmers to continue to manage and graze more 'marginal' areas of the landscape, such as the urban fringe, including through involvement in agri-environment schemes. Explore establishing local grazing schemes for land unable to be conventionally grazed (e.g. through the local Wildlife Trust or PONT¹²). | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage hedgerow and stone wall field boundaries, replanting lost or gappy hedges and lengths replaced by post-and-wire fencing to strengthen the small-scale field pattern. Utilise native and climate-hardy hedgerow species in any new planting. Use local limestone and respect the building styles of the area's stone walls when undertaking repairs or building new sections. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; background-color: #fff;"> B </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; background-color: #ccc;"> App 1 </div> </div> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage tourism and recreational pressures along the coast, providing sensitive on-site interpretation and interactive opportunities to raise awareness about the area's physical, natural and cultural assets (e.g. through a programme of guided walks and other events involving local communities and visitors). | |
| PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for sea level rise and increased levels of coastal erosion, following the policies set out in the Shoreline Management Plan¹³ (maintaining and upgrading existing defences protecting Porthcawl, and allowing natural processes to prevail from Hutchwns Point to Sker Rocks). | |

¹² <http://www.pontcymru.org/>

¹³ Lavernock Point to St Ann's Head SMP2 (2009): Policy Statement for Nash Point to Porthcawl. <http://www.southwalescoast.co.uk/content.asp?id=58>

14: KENFIG DUNES AND COASTLINE

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA is centred on Kenfig Dunes and Sands, located on the coast in the far west of the County Borough next to Pyle, and on the border with Neath Port Talbot County Borough. The majority of the landscape is defined as 'Coastal' in LANDMAP's Visual & Sensory aspect (Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: The majority of the LCA falls within the Kenfig Burrows SLA, with a small section in the far south falling within the Porthcawl Coast SLA. **Other designations** include Kenfig SAC, SSSI and NNR, the Scheduled Monument of Kenfig Castle and medieval borough, and the majority of the LCA is designated as a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance.

14: KENFIG DUNES AND COASTLINE

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Landscape dominated by one of the largest sand dune systems in Wales, comprising superficial deposits of wind-blown sand over Mercia Mudstones.
- LCA meets the sea at Kenfig Sands – a westerly-facing, wide sandy beach exposed to the prevailing westerly winds.
- The landscape includes Kenfig Pool – the largest freshwater lake in South Wales.

Semi-natural habitats

- Nationally and internationally valued wildlife habitats including dune grassland, slack, scrub and woodland as part of the Kenfig SAC, SSSI and NNR. The coastal habitats support internationally important bird populations.
- Pyle and Kenfig Golf Course in the south-east of the LCA, with significant tracts of dune habitats – grasslands, scrub and bracken – interspersed within and between the fairways.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- A Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales owing to its rich buried archaeological remains, including the early medieval castle and fortified borough of Kenfig (a Scheduled Monument submerged in the sand, which has been described as '*the Pompeii of Britain*').
- Notorious wrecking site of Sker Rocks marking the southern edge of the LCA¹⁴¹⁵, with remains of historic wrecks still visible at low tide.

Settlement and road pattern

- Largely unsettled landscape, with the nature reserve's visitor centre, car park, a caravan park and row of 20th century housing overlooking the dunes in the east.
- Dunes are designated open access land, crossed by the Wales Coast Path and a series of waymarked trails, providing a popular site for informal recreation (particularly for dog walkers and beach users).

Views and perceptual qualities

- Much of the LCA inaccessible by road, enhancing a strong sense of relative remoteness across much of the landscape.
- The eastern fringes of the LCA include a busy minor road and the M4; the distant hum of traffic is perceived from within the dunes.
- Wild and naturalistic character of the coastal landscape also broken by the proximity of development at Pyle and northern coastal views dominated by Port Talbot steelworks.

¹⁴ 17 local people were arrested for looting the cargo of the stricken French merchant ship *Le Vainqueur* in 1753; and where the SS Samtampa cargo ship hit the rocks in 1947, losing all 39 crew along with the eight lifeboatmen that came to the rescue from The Mumbles

¹⁵ <http://www.kenfig.org.uk/coast/>

14: KENFIG DUNES AND COASTLINE

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Vegetation encroachment:** Dunes vulnerable to encroachment by scrub and young trees due to a lack of traditional grazing management.
- **Offshore dredging:** Sand dredging off the coast potentially impacting on the loss of sand from the beach and dunes.
- **Coastal erosion and sea level rise:** Increased threat of coastal erosion of the dune frontage expected over the next 50 years due to sea level rise and increases in the frequency of stormy sea conditions¹⁶.
- **20th century development:** Historic extent of Kenfig Dunes encroached upon and severed by development and other land uses – including the M4 and the adjacent golf course.
- **Recreational pressures** due to area's popularity for tourism and informal recreation, with large numbers of people (and dogs) crossing through the dunes, particularly during the summer months (paths are widened and heavily trodden in places, encroaching into the surrounding vegetation)
- **Urbanising influences:** Area around the visitor centre/car park has a 'Country Park' / urban fringe feel, with excessive signage and urbanising features/surfaces contrasting with the naturalistic character of the nearby dunes.
- **Levels of tranquillity:** The dunes' wild and naturalistic character impacted upon by the sounds of traffic on the M4 and dominating views of the Port Talbot steelworks.

¹⁶ Laverneck Point to St Ann's Head SMP 2 (May 2009): Annex A1. <http://www.southwalescoast.co.uk/content.asp?id=58>

14: KENFIG DUNES AND COASTLINE

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Distinctive seascape character** – one of the largest sand dune systems in Wales sandwiched between areas of development.
- **Internationally important coastal habitats** within the Kenfig SAC, SSSI and NNR.
- **Nationally important** archaeological and cultural heritage, designated as a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance in Wales.
- **A wild and naturalistic landscape** standing in contrast to nearby urban areas and busy transport infrastructure.
- **Its importance as a recreational resource** for local communities and visitors to the County Borough.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect the landscape's relative sense of remoteness and wild character, maintaining visual connections and long views along the coastline and adjacent seascapes (including across the Bristol Channel to the North Somerset coast).
- Protect the nationally important archaeological and cultural heritage of the landscape, including the early medieval castle and fortified borough of Kenfig. Implement management strategies for their continued survival within this dynamic coastline, including through appropriate land management practices and recreation management.
- Protect the integrity of the landscape by resisting further encroachments by development or recreational land uses, softening the fringes of the National Nature Reserve as it abuts areas of development (e.g. through incorporating sand dune vegetation and trees around the car park/visitor centre facilities to provide sympathetic screening whilst deterring vehicular access onto the dune edges).

14: KENFIG DUNES AND COASTLINE

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Manage the internationally coastal habitats, including dune grassland, slack, scrub, woodland and the freshwater lake of Kenfig Pool. This should be through a combination of controlled livestock grazing and mechanical scrub control, fisheries management and recreation management. The reserve is owned and managed by BCBC.
- Manage tourism and recreational pressures within the National Nature Reserve, continuing to provide sensitive on-site interpretation and interactive opportunities to raise awareness of the area's internationally important natural and cultural assets (e.g. through a programme of guided walks and other events involving local communities and visitors). Minimise signage within the dunes themselves to preserve their wild character.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- Plan for sea level rise and increased levels of coastal erosion, allowing the coastline to respond naturally, following the policies set out in the Shoreline Management Plan¹⁷ (managed realignment - enabling long term habitat management whilst introducing measures, as necessary, to manage and control recreational pressures).

¹⁷ Lavernock Point to St Ann's Head SMP2 (2009): Policy Statement for Nash Point to Porthcawl. <http://www.southwalescoast.co.uk/content.asp?id=58>

15: CEFN CRIBWR RIDGE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 1: DESCRIPTION



LCA LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT

This LCA is located between the settlements of Pyle and Bridgend in the west of the County Borough, and is defined by the prominent ridgeline and settlement of Cefn Cribwr. It is classified by LANDMAP as 'Rolling Lowland' (Visual & Sensory aspect, Level 2).

Link to Special Landscape Areas: There are no SLAs within this LCA. **Other designations** include the Cefn Cribwr Grasslands SAC, Waun Cimla SSSI, Panycastell SSSI, Waun-Fawr SSSI, Caeau Cefn Cribwr SSSI, Bryn-Bach SSSI, Frog Pond LNR and a number of SINCs (including Parc Sliip Nature Park). The LCA also includes a number of Scheduled Monuments, including Tondy Ironworks, Cefn Cribwr Ironworks, Pen-y-Castell Iron Age hillfort, Cefn Cross prehistoric standing stone and the medieval remains of Llangewydd church. Court Colman is a Grade II Listed Registered Park and Garden.

15: CEFN CRIBWR RIDGE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Topography, geology and drainage

- Broad valley at the southern edge of the Coalfield plateau, rising steeply up to the prominent Millstone Grit ridge of Cefn Cribwr (132 metres). Land falls away from the ridge to the south, comprising an intricate landscape of undulating slopes.
- Numerous springs and streams draining from the ridge, with ponds and water-filled former quarries on the valley floor.
- Open cast workings (filled with water) forming a major feature in the western part of the valley.

Woodland cover

- Extensive mixed plantations at Parc Slip Nature Park (a reclaimed spoil tip) and conifer-dominated woodland at Pennsylvania Wood on the eastern end of the ridge.
- Frequent bands of woodland following streamlines and estate plantings around Court Colman.

Agricultural land use and field patterns

- Pastoral farming dominates, with medium-scale fields bounded by thick hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees, or wooded banks. Boundaries on higher ground with bracken, bramble and gorse, conveying an upland feel.
- Tightly grazed horse paddocks in some locations, as well as remnant commons and unmanaged land on the fringes of settlements.
- Farming becomes more intensive, with larger improved pasture fields, on the fringes of LCA 12.

Semi-natural habitats

- Parc Slip Nature Park with ponds, meadows, rush pasture, neutral grasslands and mixed plantation woodland.

- SAC-designated fen meadows with purple moor grass, neutral grassland and scrub; SSSI-designated marshy grasslands with species-rich neutral grassland, wet heath and semi-natural woodland (supporting the locally rare bog myrtle plant and marsh fritillary butterflies).
- A number of SINCs, including acid grassland, bracken and scrub on Penfai Common, and the Local Nature Reserve of Frog Pond Wood (broadleaved woodland and freshwater pond).

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- Nationally important archaeological features including Tondu Ironworks, Cefn Cribwr Ironworks, Pen-y-Castell Iron Age hillfort, Cefn Cross prehistoric standing stone and the medieval remains of Llangewydd church.
- Grade II Listed Court Colman (now a hotel) surrounded by ornamental and mixed estate woodlands and specimen trees.

Settlement and road pattern

- Main settlement at Cefn Cribwr, with colourful Victorian terraces interspersed with 20th century developments stretching in linear form along the ridgetop.
- Elsewhere settlement is sparse, with individual properties and farmsteads linked by rural roads and sunken lanes frequently passing through wooded 'tunnels'.
- Parc Slip Nature Park crossed by a number of footpaths. Areas of open access land (e.g. Pennsylvania Wood, Ty'n y garn), lengths of the Bridgend Circular Walk and rights of way providing opportunities for recreation elsewhere.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Long, panoramic views from Cefn Cribwr across the surrounding landscape; including to Pyle and Bridgend, southwards towards the Bristol Channel and beyond, and north to the uplands. Strong intervisibility between the ridgeline and the opposite slopes of Mynydd Baedan (LCA 1).
- Landscape intersected by the M4 and mainline rail corridors. Along with pylon lines, these introduce prominent man-made features into an otherwise highly rural landscape.

15: CEFN CRIBWR RIDGE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 2: EVALUATION

FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

- **Habitat fragmentation:** Significant areas of locally, nationally and internationally important semi-natural habitats, but these are fragmented due to agricultural improvements, afforestation and development. Longer growing season and enhanced growth rates of vegetation including bracken, gorse and secondary woodland (as a result of climate change) resulting in a further decrease in remaining areas of semi-natural habitat.
- **Decline in common land management:** Poorly managed remnant common land which is valued both culturally and for its biodiversity interest – with scrub and bracken encroachment. This includes wayside commons within the settlement of Cefn Cribwr, which is encroached upon in parts by other land uses such as play areas.
- **Increase in small-holdings:** Increased popularity of hobby farming/horse keeping – with pastures converted to pony paddocks, overgrazed in places.
- **Neglected farmland:** Farmland immediately surrounding Cefn Cribwr can have a neglected feel, with incidences of fly tipping, abandoned machinery and untidy farms.
- **Agricultural intensification:** Drive for increased domestic food production, putting further pressure on unimproved agricultural land.
- **Woodland management:** Plantation woodland (e.g. Parc Slip Nature Park, Pennsylvania Wood) displaying an even age structure and poor species diversity – lack of woodland management.
- **Impacts of climate change:** Change in woodland / tree species composition as new pests/diseases spread (particularly phytophthora pathogens) and species intolerant of water level extremes die back. Individual trees, including valued parkland/veteran specimens, may become more susceptible to damage from the increasing frequency and magnitude of storm events. More intense periods of drought leading to the drying out of important wetlands.
- **Poor drainage:** impeded drainage due to underlying geology and ground conditions.
- **Ridgeline development:** Visually prominent ridgeline settlement of Cefn Cribwr, with 20th century/modern development spreading in linear form along the B4281 to virtually coalesce with Pyle. Some older houses are derelict or falling into a state of disrepair.
- **Local vernacular and development settings:** Housing within the settlement poorly integrated into its landscape setting, with no recognisable local vernacular styles/materials.
- **Other structures:** Prominent pylon lines producing visual clutter on skylines, out of scale with landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. A domestic turbine is located in the south of the area – a force for change likely to become increasingly apparent.

15: CEFN CRIBWR RIDGE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

PART 3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES AND GUIDELINES

KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITIES TO DEVELOPMENT-LED CHANGE

The following landscape qualities and features would be particularly sensitive to development-led change:

- **Prominent Millstone Grit ridge of Cefn Cribwr**; a distinctive landform feature in the County Borough
- **Internationally important fen meadows (within the Cefn Cribwr Grasslands SAC)** and a range of other semi-natural habitats, including at Parc Slip Nature Park and Frog Pond Local Nature Reserve.
- **Strong woodland and hedgerow framework**, including ornamental estate plantings around Court Coleman.
- **Nationally significant archaeological features**, including Tondu and Cefn Cribwr Ironworks.
- **Strongly rural character** away from areas of development, with panoramic views to adjacent landscapes from ridgelines.

GUIDELINES TO PROTECT / CONSERVE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Protect and sensitively manage the landscape's rich archaeological resource, including Tondu and Cefn Cribwr ironworks, Pen-y-Castell Iron Age hillfort, Cefn Cross prehistoric standing stone and the medieval remains of Llangewydd church. Establish and maintain appropriate grazing regimes for ancient earthworks to retain their traceability within the landscape.
- Protect important panoramic views from the ridgeline to adjacent landscapes, including the uplands to the north. Avoid locating new development outside the existing settlement boundaries of Cefn Cribwr and Pyle to retain important undeveloped sections (protecting the ridge as a prominent skyline feature in many views from other LCAs).
- Protect the strongly rural character of much of the landscape, with its dispersed pattern of individual properties and farmsteads linked by rural roads and distinctive sunken lanes (forming 'tunnels' through woodland).

15: CEFN CRIBWR RIDGE AND SETTLED FARMLAND

GUIDELINES TO MANAGE / ENHANCE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND FEATURES

- Manage and where possible extend areas of semi-natural habitat, particularly internationally and nationally important remnants of fen meadow, marshy grasslands, wet heath and purple moor grass, providing ecological connections between fragmented sites where opportunities allow.
- Support farmers to continue to manage and graze more ‘marginal’ areas of the landscape, such as remnant commons and the fringes of Cefn Cribwr village, including through involvement in agri-environment schemes. Explore establishing local grazing schemes for land unable to be conventionally grazed (e.g. through the local Wildlife Trust or PONT).
- Manage the landscape’s strong patchwork pattern of thick hedgerows and wooded banks, replanting lost or gappy sections particularly along slopes to minimise soil erosion and run-off. Utilise native hedgerow species in any new planting, encouraging the planting of climate-hardy trees (locally sourced wherever possible) to replace ageing hedgerow specimens.
- Manage areas of semi-natural, estate woodlands and specimen trees through coppicing and appropriate grazing levels, providing links to the hedgerow network to form an intact ecological network. Explore creating areas of new woodland planting, particularly along slopes to reduce levels of run-off and diffuse pollution.
- Manage the area’s plantations to encourage a varied age structure, and gradual move towards a greater balance of climate-hardy broadleaves (of local provenance wherever possible) over time.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR FUTURE LANDSCAPE CHANGE

**Design
Guide
Theme**

- Take a whole catchment approach to the future management of watercourses within the LCA, considering adjacent LCAs and the context of the wider County Borough (including through BCBC’s Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans).
- Explore future opportunities for the potential restoration of former coal mining areas and quarries on the valley floor to semi-natural habitats and recreational spaces (building on the success of Parc Slip Nature Park).

D

Appendix 1

Report from Drop-in Session, 26 March 2013

Drop-in session to inform the Landscape Character Assessment (26 March 2013)

Purpose of the drop-in session

A range of stakeholders and community representatives were invited to attend a drop-in session at BCBC's Civic Offices to inform the first draft of the Landscape Character Assessment. An explanation of the purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment was given to each attendee on arrival, including in particular the framework of the fifteen Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

Attendees were then asked to contribute their thoughts to three key questions:

- **What is special about the different landscapes of the County Borough?**
- **What are the main threats / forces for change affecting the different landscapes?**
- **How should the landscapes of the County Borough be managed and planned for the future? (with any thoughts on links to policy/initiatives).**

For each of the above questions, attendees were asked to contribute their thought on post-it notes, to add to large maps of the LCA (i.e. for comments to be assigned to their LCA(s) of relevance). More general thoughts, which might be applicable to all of the landscapes of the County Borough, were also collected.

The results of the drop-in sessions are presented below in tables for each of the three main questions. A list of attendees at the event is included at the end of this report.



Question 1: What is special about the different landscapes of Bridgend County Borough?

| Landscape Character Area | Responses |
|--|--|
| LCA 1 – Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient settlements and monuments, both scheduled and unscheduled |
| LCA 2 – Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | |
| LCA 3 – Garw Forest and Surrounding Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleak landscape, high and exposed. • Mining heritage • Important historic links on ridges with ancient settlements |
| LCA 4 – Bettws Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal areas with tips |
| LCA 5 – Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal areas with tips |
| LCA 6 – Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important historic links on ridges with ancient settlements • Wonderful wild scenery • Historical landscape, Brecon Drivers Road. |
| LCA 7 – Ogmore Valley Floor & Lower Slopes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic and ecological value of woodland at Blackmill • Ancient woodland (Blackmill) |
| LCA 8 – Ogmore Forest and Surrounding Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote relicts of past mining landscape • Important historic links on ridges with ancient settlements • Ogmore Forest • Cwm Dimbath |
| LCA 9 – Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mynydd y Gaer • Long history of common land management • Historic, post-industrial assets (both positive and negative) • Commons important for recreation |
| LCA 10 - Coity Rural Hinterland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of ancient sites, some lost to the M4 |
| LCA 11 – Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area rich in archaeology buried under dune system. • Merthyr Mawr village with traditional thatched buildings. • Archaeological relicts at Island Farm (Roman road, ancient hedges). |

Question 1: What is special about the different landscapes of Bridgend County Borough?

| Landscape Character Area | Responses |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POW camp of international importance. • Land grading 2A. • Church – rebuilt in 19th century on medieval site. Celtic stones to rear of church. • Dipping bridge on New Inn Road – medieval. • Ground water drainage through limestone at Merthyr Mawr leads to water store at Schwyll pumping station– used for emergencies • Heritage Coast in area of Coastal Path; proposed path through dune and along route to Bridgend • Sink holes where limestone is present • Coastline and seascapes |
| LCA 12 – Newton Down Limestone Plateau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limestone base is important to the economy of this region. • Quarry importance |
| LCA 13 – Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined by urban/recreation influences. • Aquifers – important for water quality. • Minerals quarrying • Recreation – popular for water sports such as surfing • Coastline and seascapes |
| LCA 14 – Kenfig Dunes and Coastline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dune system – historically and ecologically important • Lot of buried archaeology under dune system. |
| LCA 15 – Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space and ecological interest. • Historic iron works. • Area rich in industrial heritage. Ironworks, coalmines and brickworks |
| Urban areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyle – Industrial estate, with important rail and motorway links |

Question 2: What are the main threats / forces for change affecting the landscapes of the County Borough?

| Landscape Character Area | Responses |
|--|---|
| LCA 1 – Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry. • Post-industrial landscape issues e.g. old culverts impeding drainage. • Surface water an issue – fast run-off from the uplands which can affect downstream water quality (e.g. in Maesteg). |
| LCA 2 – Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | |
| LCA 3 – Garw Forest and Surrounding Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent clearfell due to diseased larch – knock-on effect with run-off and water quality • Concerns that forestry contains disease-prone species – time for re-stocking with more resilient species. |
| LCA 4 – Bettws Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor drainage at Bettws |
| LCA 5 – Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues relating to poor drainage (e.g. blocked culverts) |
| LCA 6 – Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure for wind farm developments – peaceful areas needed within the County Borough |
| LCA 7 – Ogmore Valley Floor & Lower Slopes | |
| LCA 8 – Ogmore Forest and Surrounding Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent wind farm development within the landscape (Fforch Nest) |
| LCA 9 – Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsies setting up caravans on the commons • Very wet, poor drainage, not good quality land • Some occasional fly tipping but people on common good at reporting problems. • Very busy roads leading from motorway and B4280 crossing the LCA. |
| LCA 10 - Coity Rural Hinterland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of ancient sites to the M4 |
| LCA 11 – Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunes under threat from vegetation encroachment. • Concern about recreational use of dunes having adverse environmental effect. • Concern about the effect the proposed Sports Village will have on the landscape. |

Question 2: What are the main threats / forces for change affecting the landscapes of the County Borough?

| Landscape Character Area | Responses |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal and application passed for 3 Stadia, the largest being a 15000 seat stadium. This will also affect the tranquillity of this beautiful area. • Impact of the increased traffic through future development • Ogmore dipping bridge – much more recent flooding. • Dredging for sand off coast which locals believe leading to coastal sand loss. |
| LCA 12 – Newton Down Limestone Plateau | |
| LCA 13 – Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaches under threat from sand dredging • Coastal erosion and coastal defences |
| LCA 14 – Kenfig Dunes and Coastline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaches under threat from sand dredging • Kenfig pool drainage under threat from adjacent mining is a possibility |
| LCA 15 – Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently unmanaged opencast workings. Danger of flooding into other mining areas (pumps currently turned off) • Surface water drainage an issue |
| Urban areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencoed – Former brickworks – clay soils resulting in impeded drainage and high flood risk. |
| All areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising sea levels will threaten large areas of coastline • Development on floodplains – potential for flooding up and downstream. • All valleys – ribbon development suffering from runoff from uplands above. Terraces built along slopes impeding drainage |

Question 3: How should the landscapes of the County Borough be managed or planned for the future?

| Landscape Character Area | Responses |
|--|--|
| LCA 1 – Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green corridors into Maesteg to reduce and delay runoff from uplands. • Restoration of wetlands in uplands to reduce downstream flooding |
| LCA 2 – Llynfi Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | |
| LCA 3 – Garw Forest and Surrounding Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of wetlands in uplands to reduce downstream flooding. |
| LCA 4 – Bettws Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved drainage, e.g. through the restoration of culverts |
| LCA 5 – Garw Valley Floor and Lower Slopes | |
| LCA 6 – Mynydd Llangeinwyr Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist industry to be encouraged • Transport links desperately needed from valleys • Restoration of wetlands in uplands to reduce downstream flooding |
| LCA 7 – Ogmore Valley Floor & Lower Slopes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve the value of the woodlands at Blackmill |
| LCA 8 – Ogmore Forest and Surrounding Uplands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of wetlands in uplands to reduce downstream flooding |
| LCA 9 – Hirwaun Common and Surrounding Ridges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hirwaun Common – forthcoming work to restore common and retain traditional land management practices (BIFA funded). • Retain common land management. • Promote initiatives with local schools – visits to woodland/commons to raise awareness. This is already happening in Coed Iestyn – ‘Woodland Experience’, organised by Pencoed Town Council and BCBC’s Countryside Officer. |
| LCA 10 - Coity Rural Hinterland | |
| LCA 11 – Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to retain rural character of area. • Dunes management essential |
| LCA 12 – Newton Down Limestone Plateau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Trust is helping Laleston County Council with wildlife study and biodiversity including management of grassland verges for flora species and |

Question 3: How should the landscapes of the County Borough be managed or planned for the future?

| Landscape Character Area | Responses |
|---|--|
| | habitats for invertebrates (Laleston Community Council Biodiversity Improvement Scheme, July 2012, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales). |
| LCA 13 – Porthcawl Coastline and Settled Farmland | |
| LCA 14 – Kenfig Dunes and Coastline | |
| LCA 15 – Cefn Cribwr Ridge and Settled Farmland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future management of open-cast mining site very important – requiring cross border co-operation with Neath Port Talbot |
| Urban areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridgend – Culverted water courses. Some limited opportunities to open these up to improve drainage. • Multi amenity schemes – ponds created for water capture as well as a local amenity resources (win: wins) |
| All areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to restore water courses – open up culverts etc. where possible • Coastal - link to the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP 2) • Link to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (consultation draft just produced) • Essential to protect floodplains from development • Attenuation schemes resulting in amenity sites |

Attendees

The workshop was attended by representatives from the following organisations/departments:

BCBC Members

BCBC, Conservation and Design

BCBC, Countryside Management

BCBC, Planning

Bridgend Town Council

Environment Agency

Laleston Community Council

Pencoed Town Council

BCBC Flood and Coastal Management

Representative for commoners on Hirwaun Common (and surrounding commons)

Merthyr Mawr Community Council