

Mynydd Llanhilleth Wind Farm

Appendix 6C: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas Assessment of Effects

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1. LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas Filtering Process

- 1.1 In accordance with best practice guidance, the following filtering process has been applied to this Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas (VSAA) detailed assessment set out herein. The filtering process described in **Table EDP 1.1** is informed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) guidance using *LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments TGN46*¹, in combination with professional judgement and has been used to in order make the assessment proportionate.
- 1.2 Beyond the extents of the Site and following the best practice guidance filtering process, VSAA that overlap with the 26km zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) to blade tip were identified. In order to take a pragmatic approach to the assessment, additional filters have been applied to reduce the scope of assessment where significant effects are deemed highly unlikely. This aligns with GLVIA3, which requires a proportionate assessment of impacts to be undertaken.
- 1.3 The approach taken in the Environmental Statement considers the extent of visibility verses the likelihood for significant effects. Where the proposals are theoretically visible (tip height ZTV used) from less than 20% of a given aspect area, the aspect areas have been scoped out from further assessment as it is reasonable to assume that potential indirect landscape effects on a small proportion of a LANDMAP aspect area is unlikely to give rise to significant effects.

Table EDP 1.1: VSAA Filtering Process.

Filtering Steps
Filter 1: Run initial search area with VSAA 26km study area.
Filter 2: Refine to VSAA visible with ZTV (blade tip ZTV 180m).
Filter 3: Identify and retain filtered aspect areas that are evaluated overall as outstanding or high (LANDMAP Q50).
Filter 4: Identify and retain filtered aspect areas evaluated overall as moderate in Visual & Sensory (LANDMAP Q50) when evaluated as outstanding or high in character (LANDMAP Q48).
Filter 5: Remove aspect areas with less than 20% of the area visible within the blade tip ZTV.

- 1.4 The location of all the filtered VSAA (where they overlap with the ZTV to blade tip) assessed are shown on **Figure 6.23** (Level 3 Classifications of LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas included in Assessment) and **Figure 6.24** (Overall Evaluation of LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas included in Assessment), which should be referred to in relation to the assessment herein.

¹ Natural Resources Wales. (2021). *Using LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments TGN46*.

VSAA Assessment Overview

- 1.5 VSAA within or adjacent to the Site are assessed below in detail as these ‘Host’ aspect areas are the only ones with potential for direct landscape effects (physical and perceptual effects on the landscape). Non-host VSAA identified and incorporated into the appraisal are discussed and assessed in groups according to distance, and primary direction from the Site (NW, NE, SE and SW) rather than as individual aspect areas. This is because potential effects upon these VSAA would primarily be in the form of indirect visual influences resulting from a similar direction of view where the proposal is visible. This approach is considered to provide a method of identifying the effects anticipated in a manageable, systematic, and proportionate assessment.
- 1.6 As well as assigning overall evaluation to a given aspect area, LANDMAP also ascribes a value (LANDMAP Q26). The ‘value’ findings set out for each aspect area have been interpreted and overall sensitivity ascribed to a given aspect area or group following the LVIA methodology contained at **Appendix 6A** of the Environmental Statement.
- 1.7 An appreciation of Visual and Sensory characteristics is largely perceived by a visual connection with the landscape. Other feelings are evoked by the activation of other senses such as touch, olfactory and aural, but these sensory characteristics are more intrinsic to an individual and are therefore more difficult to characterise. The physical makeup of the landscape influences our collective experience, and an understanding of character and quality is typically informed by condition and aesthetic value, landscape patterns and the physical attributes, which are read in combination with scale, sense of place and variation.
- 1.8 The filtering process resulted in 73no. VSAA requiring assessment. The unique area ID for each VSAA is annotated on **Figure 6.24**, and summarised in **Tables EDP 1.2** to **1.7**:

Table EDP 1.2: VSAA on or within the Site.

VSAA Within or Adjoining Site (6 No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
1	BLNGWVS226	St. Illtyd
2	BLNGWVS688	Mynydd Bedwellte
3	BLNGWVS985	Lower Ebbw valley
4	TRFNVS019	N/A
5	TRFNVS022	N/A
6	TRFNVS024	N/A

Table EDP 1.3: VSAA within 5km of the Site at Closest Point.

VSAA Within 5km of Site (7No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
7	BLNGWVS119	Mynydd Pen-y-fan
8	BLNGWVS404	Ebbw/Ebbw Fach valley
9	BLNGWVS713	Sirhowy, Ebbw Fawr and Ebbw Fach valley
10	BLNGWVS808	Cwm Tyleri
11	MNMTHVS010	Mynydd Garnlochdy

VSAA Within 5km of Site (7No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
12	TRFNVS027	N/A
13	TRFNVS033	N/A

Table EDP 1.4: VSAA within 5–10km of the Site at Closest Point.

VSAA Within 5–10km of Site (11 No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
14	CYNONVS404	Gelligaer Common
15	CYNONVS605	Cefn Y Brithdir
16	CYNONVS854	Mynydd Y Lan
17	MNMTHVS003	The Bloreng
18	MNMTHVS009	Garnlochdy Hills
19	MNMTHVS016	Cilfeigan Park and Woodlands
20	MNMTHVS036	Sor Brook valley
21	MNMTHVS085	Llandegfedd Reservoir
22	TRFNVS011	N/A
23	TRFNVS013	N/A
24	TRFNVS014	N/A

Table EDP 1.5: VSAA within 10–15km of the Site at Closest Point.

VSAA Within 10–15km of Site (19 No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
25	BLNGWVS307	Carno forest
26	BLNGWVS399	mynydd llangynidr
27	BRCKNVS372	Mynydd Llangynidr and Mynydd Llangattock
28	CYNONVS129	Mynydd Y Grug
29	CYNONVS317	Mynydd Eglwysilon & Mynydd Meio
30	CYNONVS361	rhoslas
31	MNMTHVS015	Northern Hills
32	MNMTHVS017	Gwehelog
33	MNMTHVS018	Llangeview
34	MNMTHVS037	Llanhennock Valley
35	MNMTHVS038	Northen Raglan
36	MNMTHVS045	Lower Usk Valley
37	MNMTHVS068	Usk
38	MNMTHVS100	Olway Brook
39	MRTHRVS119	Gelligaer Farmlands
40	MRTHRVS858	Gelligaer Common
41	NWPRTVS011	River Usk
42	NWPRTVS026	Usk Floodplain
43	NWPRTVS049	Caerleon

Table EDP 1.6: VSAA within 15–20km of the Site at Closest Point.

VSAA Within 15–20km of Site (11 No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
44	BRCKNVS369	Sugar Loaf Mountain
45	CRDFFVS030	Wentlooge Levels south west

VSAA Within 15–20km of Site (11 No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
46	MNMTHVS012	Ysgryd Fawr
47	MNMTHVS027	Devauden scarp slope
48	MNMTHVS031	King coed scarp slope
49	MNMTHVS034	Llangoven Foothills
50	MNMTHVS035	Trothy valley
51	MNMTHVS069	Raglan
52	NWPRTVS005	Nash Wetlands
53	NWPRTVS030	Kemeys Graig
54	NWPRTVS037	Caldicot Level

Table EDP 1.7: VSAA within 20–26km of the Site at Closest Point.

VSAA Within 20–26km of Site (19 No.)	VSAA ID	VSAA Name
55	CRDFFVS003	Garth- west
56	CRDFFVS004	Garth Hill
57	CRDFFVS031	Rumney Great Wharf
58	CRDFFVS032	Severn Estuary
59	CRDFFVS039	Cardiff Flats
60	CRDFFVS040	Cardiff Castle
61	CRDFFVS041	Bute Park
62	MNMTHVS006	Olchon Valley Ridge
63	MNMTHVS014	Graig Syfyrdin
64	MNMTHVS023	Trellech plateau
65	MNMTHVS030	Kings Wood scarp slope
66	MNMTHVS047	River Trothy valley floor
67	MNMTHVS053	Western coastal grasslands
68	MNMTHVS057	Western saltmarsh and mudbanks
69	MNMTHVS093	Chepstow Park Wood
70	NWPRTVS006	Estuary Saltmarsh
71	NWPRTVS007	Estuary Mudflats
72	NWPRTVS008	Severn Estuary
73	NWPRTVS035	Wilcrick Hill

1.9 The criteria set out in published LANDMAP Aspect Area Assessments, which has been interpreted to determine value and susceptibility to change in this study are as follows:

Table EDP 1.8: LANDMAP VSAA Key Criteria.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics
CI_3	Level 3 Classification
Q4	Topographic Form
Q5	Landcover Pattern
Q6	Settlement pattern
Q8	Scale
Q9	Sense of enclosure
Q18	Level of Human Access

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness
Q26	Value
Q27	Condition
Evaluation Matrix	
Q46	Scenic quality
Q47	Integrity
Q48	Character
Q49	Rarity
Q50	Overall Evaluation
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation

VSAA Assessment of Effects: (6) VSAA Within or Adjacent to The Site

(1) BLNGWVS226 St Illtyd

Table EDP 1.9: BLNGWVS226 St Illtyd LANDMAP Summary.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(1) BLNGWVS226 St Illtyd
Cls_3	Level 3 Classification	Upland Grazing
Q4	Topographic Form	Hills/Valleys
Q5	Landcover Pattern	Field Pattern/Mosaic
Q6	Settlement pattern	Scattered Rural/Farm
Q8	Scale	Medium
Q9	Sense of enclosure	Open
Q18	Level of Human Access	Infrequent
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities	Attractive. Tranquil
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness	Strong
Q26	Value	High
Q27	Condition	Fair
Evaluation Matrix		
Q46	Scenic quality	High
Q47	Integrity	High
Q48	Character	High
Q49	Rarity	Moderate
Q50	Overall Evaluation	High
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation	Attractive 'traditional' farmland with good trees, views etc.

Table EDP 1.10: BLNGWVS226 St Illtyd Assessment of Effects.

<p>(1) BLNGWVS226 St Illtyd summary description: <i>“Gentle west-facing upper slopes overlooking main Ebbw valley. All farmland with pattern of small fields still bounded in parts by stone walls and large hedges, predominately beech, all part of ancient countryside and giving strong sense of place. Hedges give well-treed skyline from valleys below. Small pre-industrial village of St. Illtyd is focal point, separate and isolated from valleys. Fine views generally west and south into valleys and across to similar areas (beyond Blaenau Gwent). Generally remote and tranquil with some poorer quality parts adjacent to housing estates at western edge..”</i></p>		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
High	Medium	High
Justification:		
<p>Tranquil, medium scale landscape with few detracting features and a strong sense of place. The VSAA is outwith any national landscape designations but is covered by locally designated Blaenau Gwent Special Landscape Areas (SLA). The VSAA sits within The St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides (Blaenau Gwent CBC) SLA which, similarly to the LANDMAP assessment, notes of relevance to this assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Panoramic views especially west and south, to other plateau landscapes;</i> • <i>Remote from busy valleys, with ‘other world’ atmosphere due to obvious pre-industrial character; and</i> • <i>Valley sides form attractive backdrop to main valley settlements and routes, due to convoluted topography and a variety of semi-natural vegetation.”</i> <p>This VSAA is located within the west of the Site and extends c.1.6km west and 2.6km south-west along three ‘prongs’. Approximately 17 hectares (ha) of the VSAA extends into the south-western edge of the Site. Reflecting the published assessments and from site visits, the landscape value is considered high. However, identified key views are orientated west and south away from the Site, and susceptibility to the Proposed Development is reduced due to the presence of existing features such as turbines and pylons within the VSAA and vicinity of the Site. Overall sensitivity is considered high.</p>		
Magnitude of Change:		
<p>There would be a direct landscape effect on this VSAA whereby one turbine (Turbine 8) and associated ancillary is proposed within the aspect area. The turbine is located in an area of poor semi-improved grassland and access would be provided along an existing road (Blaen Cwm Road), which forms the eastern boundary of the VSAA and would be improved to all for construction. Cabling would be underground within this VSAA.</p> <p>The uplands are considered medium scale due to the field pattern. The Proposed Development would have a minor physical effect on a very small area of the VSAA and would be limited to construction of concrete pad foundations for the turbine and access road widening. Cable routing would be infilled following construction. Construction effects would be minor and low but the change would be very high with addition of a new very large turbine being a ‘major alteration to key characteristics of the baseline, and addition of incongruous elements’. The physical effects and perceptual changes would be very high as over 90% of the VSAA would have a perceptual connection to the proposals.</p>		

Overall Effect:
Major and Significant direct landscape effects including physical effects and perceptual effects. The nature of the direct effects would be permanent, and adverse in terms of physical changes from the implementation of foundations and road upgrades, whilst direct perceptual effects resulting from changes to views would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.

(2) BLNGWVS688 Mynydd Bedwellte

Table EDP 1.11: BLNGWVS688 Mynydd Bedwellte LANDMAP Summary.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(2) BLNGWVS688 Mynydd Bedwellte
Cls_3	Level 3 Classification	Upland Moorland
Q4	Topographic Form	Hills/Valleys
Q5	Landcover Pattern	Open Land
Q6	Settlement pattern	No settlements
Q8	Scale	Vast
Q9	Sense of enclosure	Exposed
Q18	Level of Human Access	Occasional
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Threatening. Remote. Wild. Spiritual. Other
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness	Strong
Q26	Value	High
Q27	Condition	Good
Evaluation Matrix		
Q46	Scenic quality	High
Q47	Integrity	High
Q48	Character	High
Q49	Rarity	High
Q50	Overall Evaluation	High
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation	Clear 'backbones' to valley character...

Table EDP 1.12: BLNGWVS688 Mynydd Bedwellte Assessment of Effects.

<i>(2) BLNGWVS688 Mynydd Bedwellte</i> summary description: “Series of north-south high open rounded ridges forming ‘backbones’ of Blaenau Gwent... Consisting of Mynydd Bedwellte, Cefn Manmoel, Mynydd Carn-y-cefn, and Mynydd Coety... They are open, with mainly grass/heather moorland, with sheep, and no settlement. There are a few remnants of quarrying and tipping and associated disturbance in past... They provide sweeping skylines to both sides of most settled valleys, giving great contrast... Uncluttered, wild, unpeopled character contrast with/is antithesis of valleys giving strong sense of place... 360 degree long-distance views from tops, with valleys totally hidden, gives very important remote quality, appears to be just miles and miles of open country from the tops... None of the ridges have any road access apart from sections of minor, little-used roads along edges of the areas, well away from the highest points... There are a few places where fly-tipping, etc... near roads detract from close-up views...Also continuing bike activity. Recent washery above Cwm Big is local detractor.”		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
High	Medium	High

Justification:
<p>Tranquil, vast scale, exposed landscape in good condition and strong sense of place. Unsightly fly tipping and washery present as well as an existing wind turbines and pylons in the vicinity of the Site providing some existing detracting features and development context. This VSAA is located within the north-west of the Site and extends c.10km north. Further, fragmented, areas of this VSAA cover hills to the north-west of the Site. Approximately 36ha of the VSAA extends into the north-western edge of the Site and would include one turbine (Turbine 3) and new access tracks.</p> <p>The VSAA is outwith any national landscape designations but is covered by locally designated Blaenau Gwent SLAs. The area of this VSAA contiguous with the Site crosses over both The Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James SLA (within the Site) and The St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides (outside the Site) SLA. The southern extent of The Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James SLA, which extends into the Site borders the east of The St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides SLA.</p> <p>The Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James SLA notes with regards to its upland areas qualities' to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Remote and bleak in contrast to adjacent valley, with panoramic and distant views, and forming distinctive and remote skylines.</i> • <i>Spectacular but secluded gorge in southernmost forestry.”</i> <p>It also notes that its valley sides <i>“Form varied backdrops for valley settlements and routes throughout”</i>, and for its northern slopes <i>“Prominent backdrop and skylines from Brynmawr and Heads of the Valleys road.”</i> Of relevance to the Proposed Development, the SLA identifies key management policies for upland areas to <i>“Conserve ‘unspoilt’ qualities”</i> including to <i>“Resist large-scale development, including tree planting, especially on skylines”</i>.</p> <p>Site visits generally concur with the assessed observations, and the landscape value is considered high. Susceptibility to the Proposed Development is reduced due to the presence of existing features such as turbines and pylons within the VSAA and vicinity of the Site. Overall sensitivity is considered high.</p>
Magnitude of Change:
<p>There would be a direct landscape effect on this VSAA whereby Turbine 3 and associated ancillary is proposed within the aspect area. The upland moorland is considered very large scale due to its open and exposed nature and lack of trees. The Proposed Development would have a small physical effect on the area, which would be minor but permanent. The direct perceptual change to the landscape aspect area would be high as over 60% of the VSAA would have a perceptual connection to the proposals.</p>
Overall Effect:
<p>Major/Moderate and Significant direct landscape effects. The nature of the direct effects would be permanent, and adverse in terms of physical changes from the implementation of foundations and road upgrades, whilst direct perceptual changes resulting from effects on views would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.</p>

(3) *BLNGWVS985 Lower Ebbw Valley*

Table EDP 1.13: BLNGWVS985 Lower Ebbw Valley LANDMAP Summary.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(3) BLNGWVS985 Lower Ebbw valley
Cls_3	Level 3 Classification	Open/Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys
Q4	Topographic Form	Hills/Valleys
Q5	Landcover Pattern	Woodland
Q6	Settlement pattern	Scattered Rural/Farm
Q8	Scale	Small
Q9	Sense of enclosure	Enclosed
Q18	Level of Human Access	Infrequent
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities	Attractive. Tranquil. Sheltered
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness	Strong
Q26	Value	High
Q27	Condition	Fair
Evaluation Matrix		
Q46	Scenic quality	High
Q47	Integrity	High
Q48	Character	High
Q49	Rarity	Moderate
Q50	Overall Evaluation	High
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation	Important backdrop to local settlements

Table EDP 1.14: BLNGWVS985 Lower Ebbw Valley Assessment of Effects.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (3) BLNGWVS985 Lower Ebbw valley summary description: <i>“Steep eastern slopes and series of small side valleys, smaller scale and more enclosed and convoluted than upper valleys. Predominately wooded, including coniferous and deciduous, or well-treed with rough grassland and bracken giving variety of textures and colours. Access only by few steep minor roads and paths so quiet and no settlement. Viewed across valley from main road giving contrast and clear separation between settlements and between open plateau and valley. Forms backdrop to valley bottom/side small towns.”</i> 		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
High	Low	Medium
Justification:		
<p>Tranquil and sheltered, small scale, enclosed landscape of woodland mosaic in fair condition and strong distinctiveness although small areas of tipping and neglect are noted within the LANDMAP. The VSAA is outwith any national landscape designations but is covered by locally designated Blaenau Gwent SLA. The VSAA crosses into The St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides SLA within the Site and slightly beyond into a small extent of The Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James SLA north of the Site (Blaenau Gwent CBC). The St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides SLA assessment notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Panoramic views especially west and south, to other plateau landscapes;</i> <i>Remote from busy valleys, with ‘other world’ atmosphere due to obvious pre-industrial character; and</i> 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valley sides form attractive backdrop to main valley settlements and routes, due to convoluted topography and a variety of semi-natural vegetation.” <p>However, this VSAA is considerably smaller than the SLA comprising its steep wooded valley slopes component as opposed to the wider, more open field and upper hillside landscapes. Key management policies applicable include that “Any developments to be sensitive to setting/landscape”.</p> <p>This VSAA is fragmented with four isolated areas located to the west of the Site, one of which crosses c.260m into the Site to the west of Turbine 8. The landscape value is considered high; however, no physical changes are proposed within this area and so no direct effects are likely to this VSAA. As such, any effects on the VSAA would be indirect perceptual effects resulting from changes to views. As a wooded landcover, views would be largely restricted to its perimeters on valleys whose aspects typically face away from the Site. Susceptibility of the VSAA to the Proposed Development is therefore considered reduced despite a high value leading to a medium sensitivity overall.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change:</p> <p>There would be no direct landscape changes to this VSAA as no development is proposed within this steep area of the VSAA located within the Site. The wooded upland valleys are considered small scale and enclosed and an important backdrop to settlements. The Proposed Development would not affect the VSAA’s backdrop to settlements. and indirect visual changes would be greatly limited to perimeter areas only due to its wooded character. The magnitude of change on the aspect area would be medium as over 60% of the VSAA would have a perceptual connection to the proposals as available from its wooded character.</p> <p>Overall Effect:</p> <p>Moderate/Minor and Not Significant. Effects would be indirect, long-term (reversible), and adverse.</p>

(4) TRFNVS019

Table EDP 1.15: TRFNVS019 LANDMAP Summary.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(4) TRFNVS019
Cls_3	Level 3 Classification	Upland Grazing
Q4	Topographic Form	High Hills/Mountains
Q5	Landcover Pattern	Open Land
Q6	Settlement pattern	Scattered Rural/Farm
Q8	Scale	Vast
Q9	Sense of enclosure	Exposed
Q18	Level of Human Access	Rare
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities	Exposed
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness	Strong
Q26	Value	High
Q27	Condition	Fair
Evaluation Matrix		
Q46	Scenic quality	High
Q47	Integrity	High
Q48	Character	High
Q49	Rarity	High
Q50	Overall Evaluation	High

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(4) TRFNVS019
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation	all criteria high

Table EDP 1.16: TRFNVS019 Assessment of Effects.

(4) TRFNVS019 summary description: “Outlier of upland ranging from approximately 350m to 385mAOD. Open grazed hilltops with panoramic views over adjacent valleys and to other areas of upland to the north. Some damage by joyriders/bikes. Windy, quiet, exposed - dominant position over valleys below.”		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
High	High	High
Justification:		
<p>This VSAA occupies the Cefn Crib upland hilltop and extends c.1.75km south from just within the south-western corner of the Site. As with BLNGWVS985, despite extending into the Site, no development is proposed within this VSAA, and as such, any effects would not be direct upon landscape fabric but potential indirect effects would arise on its visual and perceptual qualities. It is characterised as a vast, exposed, rugged hilltop landscape with strong sense of place, high scenic quality with panoramic views and a “dominant position over valleys below”, and fair in condition.</p> <p>The VSAA is outwith any national or local landscape designations. The landscape value is considered high due to its recognised scenic value and distinctive landscape characteristics with few landscape detractors. Given the importance of open views as a key characteristic of this VSAA and the degree of intervisibility with the Proposed Development (where 99% of the VSAA is within the Proposed Development’s ZTV), and expectation that multiple new turbines are likely to be visible in the same frame of views, the susceptibility of the VSAA to the Proposed Development is considered to be high leading to a high sensitivity overall.</p>		
Magnitude of Change:		
<p>There would be no direct effects upon the landscape fabric of this VSAA, however it is located in close proximity (c.120m) to the proposed location of turbine 8, which would influence the visual/perceptual characteristics.</p> <p>The uplands are considered vast scale and open with few physical boundaries breaking up the landscape. The indirect landscape change on the aspect area would be very high as over 99% of the VSAA would have a perceptual connection to the proposals.</p>		
Overall Effect:		
<p>Major and Significant effects. The nature of the indirect effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.</p>		

(5) TRFNVS022

Table EDP 1.17: TRFNVS022 LANDMAP Summary.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(5) TRFNVS022
Cls_3	Level 3 Classification	Hillside and Scarp Slopes Grazing
Q4	Topographic Form	High Hills/Mountains
Q5	Landcover Pattern	Mixture
Q6	Settlement pattern	Scattered Rural/Farm
Q8	Scale	Large
Q9	Sense of enclosure	Exposed

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(5) TRFNVS022
Q18	Level of Human Access	Occasional
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities	Other, upland feel
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness	Moderate
Q26	Value	Moderate
Q27	Condition	Good
Evaluation Matrix		
Q46	Scenic quality	High
Q47	Integrity	High
Q48	Character	Moderate
Q49	Rarity	Moderate
Q50	Overall Evaluation	Moderate
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation	50% high/mod - character single most important criteria (mod) therefore overall moderate

Table EDP 1.18: TRFNVS022 Assessment of Effects.

(5) TRFNVS022 summary description: <i>“Lower spur/slopes of upland grazing ranging from approximately 300m to 380mAOD, with a predominant southerly aspect. enclosed grazed moorland - plateau form, forest fringes, sense of remoteness despite being adjacent to developed valleys.”</i>		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
Medium	High	High
Justification:		
<p>This VSAA occupies the elevated hilltops in the south-eastern corner of the Site and extends c.1.25km south as the hills descend toward Gelli-deg. It displays a large scale, exposed landscape in good condition and high scenic quality with a primarily southerly aspect (i.e. away from the Site). Approximately 47ha (just under 50%) of this VSAA extends into the Site area, and two turbines, a Met Mast, as well as new and upgrading of existing tracks would be installed in this area of the VSAA.</p> <p>The VSAA is outwith any national or local landscape designations. The landscape value is considered medium as undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics and few landscape detractors. The susceptibility of the VSAA is considered to be high given the area of the VSAA within the Site, and erection of three new large vertical elements within it that could have a strong effect on one of its primary characteristics – scenic quality.</p> <p>Given the importance of views as a key characteristic of this VSAA, the wide degree of intervisibility with the Proposed Development (where almost 100% of the VSAA is within the Proposed Development’s ZTV), and where multiple new turbines are likely to be visible in the same frame of views, the susceptibility of the VSAA to the Proposed Development is considered to be high leading to a high sensitivity overall.</p>		
Magnitude of Change:		
<p>There would be a direct landscape effect on this VSAA whereby Turbines 6 and 7 and the associated infrastructure is proposed within the aspect area. The Proposed Development would have small physical effects on the aspect area, which would be minor, but much wider visual changes, which would be very high as elements of the Proposed Development would be visible from almost the entire VSAA and as such, would have a perceptual connection to the proposals.</p>		

Overall Effect:
Major and Significant. The nature of the direct effects from physical changes would be permanent, and adverse, and from visual changes would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.

(6) TRFNVS024

Table EDP 1.19: TRFNVS024 LANDMAP Summary.

LANDMAP Question	Key Characteristics	(6) TRFNVS024
Cls_3	Level 3 Classification	Upland Grazing
Q4	Topographic Form	High Hills/Mountains
Q5	Landcover Pattern	Open Land
Q6	Settlement pattern	Scattered Rural/Farm
Q8	Scale	Vast
Q9	Sense of enclosure	Exposed
Q18	Level of Human Access	Infrequent
Q24	Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities	Exposed
Q25	Sense of Place/distinctiveness	Strong
Q26	Value	High
Q27	Condition	Good
Evaluation Matrix		
Q46	Scenic quality	High
Q47	Integrity	High
Q48	Character	High
Q49	Rarity	High
Q50	Overall Evaluation	High
Q51	Justification for overall evaluation	100% high

Table EDP 1.20: TRFNVS024 Assessment of Effects.

(6) TRFNVS024 summary description: <i>“Upland area ranging from approximately 400m to 550mAOD... land cover dominated by open grazed hill tops of rough grassland/heath, exposed/windy and with panoramic views over upland areas and over valleys... Strong sense of place result of views and simple set of defining /distinctive elements (open/ hilly /rough grassland/exposure/elevation).”</i>		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
High	High	High
Justification:		
<p>This VSAA is another large Aspect Area that is fragmented across four areas associated with the tops of hills running approximately north to south in direction. The central part of this VSAA extends over the central part of the Site at Mynydd Llanhilleth whilst the access road to the Site connecting to Farm Road and Heol Albert at Talywain runs through another part of this VSAA to the north and would be upgraded (widened and realigned where necessary) to allow for development at the Site.</p> <p>The VSAA is outwith national landscape designations and the main site area within the VSAA is outside any local landscape designations. The northern part of the main site borders the locally designated Torfaen Western Uplands SLA, which is bisected by a section of the access route proposed to be upgraded (where required) as part of the proposal.</p>		

Primary landscape qualities of this SLA are described as “*mixed landscapes including an open upland plateau ... dissected by a series of small valleys...*” Of note to this assessment it states that “*The uplands have a vast, open character, mostly covered in dry heathland and acid grasslands but with a strong sense of place.*” Site visits concur with these characterisations, and the value of the VSAA is therefore considered high. The very northern extent of this VSAA crosses into the Blaenavon Heritage Landscape SLA, which is predominantly outside the ZTV from blade tip (**Figure 6.15**).

Changes to the VSAA within the main site would include direct physical changes from the construction of one turbine located centrally within the Site and upgraded access roads and direct perceptual changes associated with being in the middle of a new large-scale windfarm. Susceptibility of the VSAA to the Proposed Development is considered high, leading to a high overall sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change:

There would be a direct landscape effect on this VSAA whereby Turbine 4 and associated infrastructure results in changes to the landscape fabric. Far larger impacts are anticipated from visual and perceptual change to the VSAA by way of creation of a new large windfarm in an area with previously few detracting elements albeit existing turbines, pylons and other littering features are present in its context. These direct landscape changes to the VSAA within the Site would be very high as a fundamental change in baseline. However, this is a very large and fragmented VSAA and overall just over half of the wider VSAA (54%) is within the Proposed Development’s ZTV with potential intervisibility. As such, it can be reasonably concluded that change to the VSAA as a whole would reduce to **high**.

Overall Effect:

Major/Moderate and **Significant** direct landscape effects. The nature of the direct physical effects would be permanent, and adverse, whilst visual/perceptual effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.

Assessment of Effects: VSAA within 5km

- 1.10 7 VSAA were identified within 5km of the Site at their closest point. **Table EDP 1.21** summarises key characteristics identified by LANDMAP for each VSAA.

Table EDP 1.21: Key Characteristics of VSAA within 5km.

VSAA WITHIN 5KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS Q24
7	BLNGWVS119	Mynydd Pen-y-fan	Upland Grazing	Open	Attractive. Tranquil. Sheltered. Safe
8	BLNGWVS404	Ebbw/Ebbw Fach valley	Wooded Upland Valleys	Enclosed	Tranquil. Sheltered
9	BLNGWVS713	Sirhowy, Ebbw Fawr and Ebbw Fach valley	Open/Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys	Open	Sheltered. Exposed. Threatening
10	BLNGWVS808	Cwm Tyleri	Open/Wooded Mosaic Upland Valleys	Enclosed	Attractive. Tranquil. Sheltered. Wild. Other

VSAA WITHIN 5KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS Q24
11	MNMTHVS010	Mynydd Garnlochdy	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Attractive. Exposed. Wild
12	TRFNVS027	N/A	Hillside & Scarp Slopes Mosaic	Exposed	Settled
13	TRFNVS033	N/A	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed

1.11 All of the VSAA in **Table EDP 1.21** have a high value ascribed through LANDMAP, and six out of seven have a high scenic value and sense of integrity. A nominal part of the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) extends within 5km of the Proposed Development to the north-east of the Site, however, none of the VSAA were assigned an ‘outstanding’ evaluation across LANDMAP’s overall evaluation matrix (LANDMAP’s evaluation for scenic quality, integrity, character and rarity) used to assign the overall evaluation. A number of locally designated sites are present across these Aspect Areas, however; including ten SLAs - five in Blaenau Gwent (generally west and north-west); four north-east and one south-east in Torfaen), and one Visually Important Local Landscape (VILL) located south of the Site in Abercarn (Caerphilly) as shown on **Figure 6.15**. These Designations support the assessment of high value attributed to the VSAA in this area.

1.12 The SLA within Blaenau Gwent include H (Cefn Manmoel), A (Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail), D (Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James), F (Cwm Tyleri and Cwm Celyn), and E (St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides). SLA E and D extend into VSAA that contain the Site that have been discussed already, whilst others would incur only potential indirect effects associated with perceptual changes. SLA H (Cefn Manmoel), A (Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail), and F (Cwm Tyleri and Cwm Celyn), are outside the Site area, and would not be directly affected by the Proposed Development. Of relevance to this assessment the Blaenau Gwent SLA H and A include key characteristics including *“Distinctive open skyline seen from valleys on either side...Panoramic views across to other ridges...Good views into valley... Varied backdrop to valley settlements...Enclosed quality of steep forested sides”*, whilst SLA F displays a *“Hidden, ‘tucked away’ quality”*.

1.13 To the north-east of the Site Torfaen SLA H Western uplands extends into the Site and VSAA that contain the Site that have been discussed already. The ZTV of the Proposed Development overlaps minimally with The Blaenavon Heritage Landscape SLA (Torfaen SLA E), described as:

“A prominent area of open upland hillside and scarp with strongly defined slopes rising to the head of the valley, ... A large scale landscape, characterised by a sense of exposure, panoramic views and a strong sense of place ... It forms the edge of the County Borough, abutting neighbouring authorities on the prominent skyline formed by the distinctive upland outcrops such as Coity Mountain and Cefn Coch” and is *“closely associated with the Blaenavon World Heritage Site”* of international value.”

1.14 With little visibility of the Proposed Development itself (limited to the higher southern fringes of the SLA), the SLA crosses into the northern extent of VSAA **TRFNVS024**, which extends

southwards into the Site. Avon Lwyd Valley SLA (Torfaen SLA G) crosses into the ZTV of the Site but is outside of any assessed VSAA deemed to have potential significant effects from the Proposed Development through the VSAA filtering process. Torfaen SLA F: Eastern Uplands corresponds largely to VSAA **TRFNVS033** and is described as a “Dominant ridgeline ... An open, exposed landscape of medium scale and uniform character it includes areas of upland karst landscapes. Historically an important relict landscape of upland common, with Bronze Age funerary deposits. Forms part of the Registered Historic Landscape and World Heritage Site”.

- 1.15 South of the Site within 5km is the Torfaen South West Uplands SLA (D) described as “An area of upland hillside and scarp slopes, typified by rough pasture”. A very minor area of VSAA **TRFNVS024** extends into this SLA within the ZTV of the Proposed Development and any effects would be **Negligible**. The remaining Local Landscape designation within 5km of the Site is the Abercarn VILL. However, no VSAA in this area came through the filtering process employed and as such, it can be surmised that likely effects on this VILL would be Not Significant.
- 1.16 The first three VSAA listed in **Table EDP 1.21** are located to the north-west of the Site and these have been listed in a clockwise order. These aspect areas run broadly north-west to south-east along the slopes of the valleys. Their landscapes are open for the most part with the exception of the wooded VSAA (**BLNGWVS404**), and the condition of this VSAA is good whereas for the other two to the north-west it is fair. Out of the three VSAA to the north-west, **BLNGWVS713** has least intervisibility with the proposals with less than 35% of its area covered.
- 1.17 In the second set of VSAA within 5km, two VSAA have a ‘Vast’ scale, which makes them less susceptible to larger scale developments, and the condition of these are listed as fair and unassessed. One with a large scale is located to the north-east, (**TRFNVS027**) within 5km at its closest point, and it has a settled character listed as good condition. The VSAA description suggests that from within settled areas steep, wild hillsides form major backdrop and enclosing elements of all settlements’. Another VSAA (**BLNGWVS808**) located to the north-west within 5km at its closest point has a medium scale and is listed as enclosed, with an attractive tranquil character, in good condition.
- 1.18 The proposals would be theoretically visibly from over 90% of the area of three of the VSAAs grouped within 5km. Those with less intervisibility and therefore reduced perceived connections with the Proposed Development averaged less than 50% of respective areas intervisible with the proposals.

Table EDP 1.22: VSAA within 5km Assessment of Effects.

VSAA within 5km Summary of Effects		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
High	Medium	High
Justification:		
Given the high levels of intervisibility with VSAA within 5km in the round, the worst-case effects are considered to be for those aspect areas to the north-west. As a group the VSAA within 5km are mainly open or exposed, medium to vast scale landscapes, in fair to good condition (one unassessed).		

The VSAA include some distinctive landscape elements and aesthetic/perceptual aspects including views from elevated hills and ridges across valleys; some steep and some wide, and few landscape detractors.
Magnitude of Change:
The Site does not extend into these VSAA and as such, no direct effects on their physical fabric or character would be incurred. Indirect effects on perceptual and sensory qualities due to intervisibility with aspects of the Proposed Development and nature of these VSAA may occur. The magnitude of change on the aspect areas would be high at worst as there would be a notable alteration of the baseline which may conflict with the smaller scale parts of the landscape within these areas. Due to the scale and proportion of the landscape that would be affected at relatively close to medium range, to VSAA within 5km, it's likely that the perceptual and other sensory qualities would be affected.
Overall Effect:
Major/Moderate and Significant at worst. The nature of the indirect effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.

Assessment of Effects: VSAA within 5–10km

1.19 Eleven VSAA were identified within 5–10km of the Site at their closest point. **Table EDP 1.23** summarises key characteristics identified by LANDMAP for each VSAA.

Table EDP 1.23: Key Characteristics of VSAA within 5–10km.

VSAA WITHIN 5–10KM	VSAA ID	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
14	CYNONVS404	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed. Wild	Unassessed
15	CYNONVS605	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed	Unassessed
16	CYNONVS854	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed	Unassessed
17	MNMTHVS003	Upland Moorland	Exposed	Exposed. Attractive. Wild. Spiritual	Good
18	MNMTHVS009	Upland Moorland	Exposed	Exposed. Attractive. Wild. Spiritual	Good
19	MNMTHVS016	Wooded Hillside & Scarp Slopes	Enclosed	Attractive. Sheltered. Settled	Good
20	MNMTHVS036	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	Open	Attractive. Tranquil. Settled	Good
21	MNMTHVS085	Lake	Open	Attractive. Tranquil	Fair
22	TRFNVS011	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	Open	Settled	Good

VSAA WITHIN 5-10KM	VSAA ID	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
23	TRFNVS013	Lake	Enclosed	Tranquil	Fair
24	TRFNVS014	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	Open	Settled	Good

- 1.20 All the VSAA within 5-10km of the Site are ascribed high or outstanding value in LANDMAP with the exception of the unnamed VSAA **TRFNVS014**, which is considered of moderate value. At a wide scale 18 locally designated SLA/VILL cross within this area with varying degrees of crossover within the ZTV (**Figure 6.15**) supporting a high value, and The BBNP extends into two aspect areas in the north-east, (**MNMTHVS003** - The Blorengé) and (**MNMTHVS009** Garnlochdy Hills), which are considered outstanding in LANDMAP's overall evaluation matrix. However, the Garnlochdy Hills aspect area (**MNMTHVS009**) is stated as being “*considered as part of the Blorengé aspect area 003*” (**MNMTHVS003**) and as such they are considered here together as one aspect area.
- 1.21 Running in a roughly north to south direction they are both described as “*upland plateau landscape affording long panoramic views across deep “U” shaped valleys towards the Sugar Loaf in the distance and Abergavenny within the valley bottom*”. The key views described are directed away from the Site, therefore the Proposed Development would not impact this key characteristic of **MNMTHVS003/MNMTHVS009**. Taken together less than 40% of these combined VSAA's resides within the ZTV and displays potential intervisibility with the development.
- 1.22 Continuing clockwise around the Site within 5-10km, there is a cluster of six VSAA east to south-east of the Site at their closest points (including from north to south; **MNMTHVS016**; **MNMTHVS085**; **TRFNVS013**; **TRFNVS014**; **MNMTHVS036**; and **TRFNVS011**). These are a mixture of ‘hills/valleys’ and ‘rolling/undulating’ topography, from small to large scale. Two VSAA are listed as enclosed and each are considered settled, tranquil or both in character. Five of the VSAA are considered high in value (one moderate), with four of the six being of good condition with two listed as fair condition. In terms of evaluations, five of six VSAA are considered high in scenic quality and integrity (one moderate in each case), whilst four of six are considered as high character (two moderate). Overall evaluations of high are identified for five of the VSAA with one VSAA (**TRFNVS014**) moderate, characterised as a settled rolling/undulating field land and said to display a “*contrast between rural character and urban development*” in its description and “*strong views over Cwmbran*” located to its south and away from the Site.
- 1.23 Additionally, it is notable that two of these VSAA are classified as ‘lake’ associated with Llandegfedd Reservoir. **MNMTHVS085** (Llandegfedd Reservoir), and the unnamed **TRFNVS013** is described as open and enclosed respectively, with the reservoir “*enclosed and contained by the steep wooded slopes to the south, becoming more open and exposed to the north*”. Distant views “*of the rising slopes of Cwmbran and Pontypool*”, in the direction of the Site are noted for **MNMTHVS085**. For **TRFNVS013** views “*to distant hills to North*”, away from the Site are

available, but also that “*treatment works dominate section of shoreline*” which would reduce susceptibility to the Proposed Development. Excluding VSAA **TRFNVS014** (listed as settled and moderate in overall valuation), which has 80% of its area within the ZTV the remainder of these VSAA range from 40% to 65% of their areas within the ZTV and average just over 50%.

- 1.24 South-west to west of the Site between 5–10km distance three VSAA are within the ZTV at their closest points. Two located south-west of the Site include Mynydd Y Lan (**CYNONVS854**) and Gelligaer Common (**CYNONVS404**). Cefn Y Brithdir (**CYNONVS605**) VSAA is located slightly further north, and west of the Site where operational wind turbines at Grosfaen Farm and Gelliwen Farm are already present as prominent features within its landscape context. These three VSAA are listed as exposed, large scale, open land associated with either high hills/mountains or hills and valleys (Cefn Y Brithdir). Each are considered high in value, and scenic quality although condition is unassessed. All are considered high overall evaluation with two of the three scoring high in integrity and character with one moderate in each case. Up to just over 75% of the Gelligaer Common (**CYNONVS404**) VSAA is within the ZTV whilst just under 50% of the remaining two VSAA in this area are located within the Proposed Development’s ZTV. It is considered the large expansive upland VSAA’s, where the condition of these rugged landscapes are unassessed, combined with distance from the proposed turbines and existing turbines present within the context of views reduces their susceptibility to the Proposed Development.

Table EDP 1.24: VSAA within 5–10km Assessment of Effects.

VSAA within 5–10km Summary of Effects		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
Very High	Medium	High
Justification:		
<p>Given the intermediate levels of intervisibility with VSAA within 5–10km in the round, the worst-case effects are considered to be for those aspect areas to the north of the Site from west to east. The VSAA are mainly open or exposed with more settlement present to the south-east, which reduces the susceptibility in these areas. The presence of the BBNP extending within one of the VSAA raises its value to very high (the highest possible in accordance with the methodology used in this assessment, included at Appendix 6A of the ES) due to its national recognition of strong/distinctive landscape characteristics and absence of landscape detractors.</p> <p>However, despite wide views being noted for many of the VSAA they are often directed/focussed away from the Site including that evaluated as outstanding and within the BBNP. It is considered that the overall susceptibility of VSAA within 5–10km of the Site is medium due to some distinctive aesthetic/perceptual aspects, and presence of landscape detractors, as well as the distance from the development and any effects on the character of the VSAA being indirect. Balancing the worst case of very high value, and medium susceptibility, overall sensitivity would be high.</p>		
Magnitude of Change:		
<p>The indirect landscape effects on the aspect areas would be high at worst where there may be a notable alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics of the baseline and addition of prominent conflicting elements. It’s likely that a change to perceptual and other sensory qualities associated with elevated views from scenic areas would be perceived. However, overall, many of the identified key views listed for these VSAA are directed away from the location of the Site and as such, the development would not affect these key characteristics. Existing detracting elements including existing wind turbines in the landscape also form part of the landscape context for some VSAA.</p>		

Taking this into account as well as the scale and proportion of the landscape that would be affected at medium to long distances to the Site the magnitude of change would not exceed medium for VSAA between 5–10km overall. This is supported by indirect visual elements representing one component of landscape character and where the Proposed Development would have no effects on other (direct) components such as landscape quality, fabric and integrity within the aspect areas being located outside of these VSAA.

Overall Effect:

Moderate and **Significant** at worst. The nature of the effect would be long-term (but reversible), indirect and adverse.

Assessment of Effects: VSAA within 10–15km

- 1.25 Nineteen VSAA were identified within 10–15km of the Site at their closest point. **Table EDP 1.23** summarises key characteristics identified by LANDMAP for each VSAA.



Table EDP 1.25: Key Characteristics of VSAA within 10–15km.

VSAA WITHIN 10-15KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
25	BLNGWVS307	Carno forest	Wooded Upland and Plateaux	Enclosed	Tranquil. Sheltered. Remote. Smell. Other	Fair
26	BLNGWVS399	Mynydd llangynidr	Upland Moorland	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Remote. Wild. Spiritual. Other	Good
27	BRCKNVS372	Mynydd llangynidr and Mynydd Llangattock	Upland Moorland	Exposed	Exposed. Remote. Wild	Fair
28	CYNONVS129	Mynydd Y Grug	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed. Remote	Unassessed
29	CYNONVS317	Mynydd Eglwysilon and Mynydd Meio	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed	Unassessed
30	CYNONVS361	Rhoslas	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed. Wild. Other	Unassessed
31	MNMTHVS015	Northern Hills	Open Lowland Valleys	Open	Attractive. Tranquil. Settled	Fair
32	MNMTHVS017	Gwehelog	Wooded Hillside& Scarp Slopes	Enclosed	Attractive. Tranquil. Settled	Good
33	MNMTHVS018	Llangeview	Wooded Hillside& Scarp Slopes	Enclosed	Attractive. Tranquil. Settled	Good
34	MNMTHVS037	Llanhennock Valley	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	Open	Attractive. Exposed	Good
35	MNMTHVS038	Northen Raglan	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	Open	Settled	Fair
36	MNMTHVS045	Lower Usk Valley	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Open	Noisy	Fair
37	MNMTHVS068	Usk	Urban	Enclosed	Settled	Fair



VSAA WITHIN 10-15KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
38	MNMTHVS100	Olway Brook	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Open	Attractive. Noisy	Good
39	MRTHRVS119	Gelligaer Farmlands	Upland Grazing	Open	Attractive. Exposed	Fair
40	MRTHRVS858	Gelligaer Common	Upland Moorland	Exposed	Exposed	Poor
41	NWPRTVS011	River Usk	River	Enclosed	Attractive. Tranquil. Threatening. Wild	Fair
42	NWPRTVS026	Usk Floodplain	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Enclosed	Attractive	Fair
43	NWPRTVS049	Caerleon	Urban	Enclosed	Settled. Attractive. Unattractive	Good

- 1.26 All the VSAA within 10–15km of the Site are ascribed moderate or high value in LANDMAP with the majority (14 of the 19 VSAA) listed as high value. Similar proportions are identified for scenic quality (5 moderate and 14 high), character (4 moderate and 14 high with 1 low), and the overall evaluation (5 moderate and 14 high). Integrity is more balanced across the VSAA (9 moderate, 9 high with 1 low) and rarity ranges more widely including low (1), moderate (12), high (4), and outstanding (2; **MNMTHVS045** - Lower Usk Valley; and **NWPRTVS049** - Caerleon). Sense of place for each VSAA is generally given as strong (12) or moderate (5) with 2 listed as weak. At a wide scale 16 locally designated SLA/VILL cross within this area with varying degrees of crossover with the ZTV supporting a generally high landscape value for the filtered VSAA (**Figure 6.15**).
- 1.27 The BBNP extends into one VSAA (**BRCKNVS372** - Mynydd Llangynidr and Mynydd Llangattock) approximately 12km north-west of the Site raising the value of this landscape area to very high in accordance with **Appendix 6A** Methodology as a result of its designation. However, it is only considered as fair in condition and high in LANDMAPs overall evaluation (rather than outstanding) and identifies panoramic views “*particularly on its northern fringes*” i.e. away from the Site, but also notes in its general description “*...superb panoramic views ... and of the South Wales Valleys to the south ...*” leading to high sensitivity to the Proposed Development. There are three other VSAA within this area north-west of the Site, **BLNGWVS307**, **BLNGWVS399**, and **CYNONVS361**, which border **BRCKNVS372** to its south-east, and a further VSAA **MRTHRVS858** further south.
- 1.28 All of these areas show an absence of settlement and are characterised as open upland moorland or grazing and exposed and of high scenic quality with exception of the wooded and enclosed **BLNGWVS307** – Carno forest of moderate scenic quality. Overall, these VSAA (north-west of the Site) are considered to have high value and medium susceptibility (some distinctive perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition (one good, the remaining fair, poor or unassessed)). An average of 60% of these VSAA are within the ZTV and taken together, a very high - high sensitivity is deduced.
- 1.29 North-east of the Site between 10–15km there are three VSAA at their closest point - **MNMTHVS015** - Northern Hills; **MNMTHVS017** - Gwehelog; and **MNMTHVS038** - Northern Raglan. These represent large VSAA and on average less than 50% of each are covered by the ZTV of the Proposed Development. Characterised as rolling/undulating hills/valleys of medium scale mosaic field pattern they vary in their identified sense of place but are regarded as of high value in fair or good condition and low to moderate in character. Although scenic quality is rated as high for two and moderate for **MNMTHVS038**, views towards the Site are distant where possible beyond intervening high points and views tend to be drawn to medium distance hills such as the Blorenge and Sugar Loaf north of the Site. Taken together overall these VSAA are considered high value and medium susceptibility to the Proposed Development and medium sensitivity.
- 1.30 Continuing south-east of the Site, there are eight VSAA within 10–15km of the Site in this direction. They are greatly influenced by the Usk river and valley system that runs sinuously broadly north to south in this area. All are identified as high value apart from **MNMTHVS100**



(Olway Brook), which is classed as moderate and has a clustered settlement pattern. Two VSAA are identified as ‘urban’ (**MNMTHVS068** – Usk; and **NWPRTVS049** – Caerleon) whilst the remainder are either scattered rural/farm or unsettled. The scale of these VSAA ranges from intimate (one) and small (one) to medium (six) and they are generally high in scenic quality (seven of eight) and character (six of eight).

- 1.31 These VSAA vary from rolling hills and valleys to lowland levels associated with the Usk Valley, and are variously described as *“secluded landscapes overlooking the River Usk...Deep undulating “u” and “v” shaped valleys”*...*“windswept and exposed on high valley heads, with long views across the Usk valley floodplain to the east and towards Wentwood in the distance”*. *“An open flat riparian landscape, overlooked by steep scarp slopes and hills west of the A449(T)”*. For these VSAA, the majority of visual and aesthetic amenity is focused away from the Site and over the meandering Usk Valley, and less than 40% of the VSAA cross within the ZTV of the Proposed Development on average. As such, it is considered that although the value is high, susceptibility to the Proposed Development (which would incur distant and indirect visual effects only) would be low and therefore the sensitivity of these VSAA would be medium at worst.
- 1.32 South-west of the Site there are three VSAA between 10 and 15km distance. These comprise elevated areas of upland grazing, medium to large scale and exposed or open in nature. Two of the VSAA are considered moderate in value (**CYNONVS129** - Mynydd Y Grug; and **MRTHRVS119** - Gelligaer Farmlands) with one high (**CYNONVS317** - Mynydd Eglwysilon and Mynydd Meio), however, condition is given as either fair or unassessed. The character of all three is identified as high, however, scenic quality, and the overall evaluation matches the assessment of value and is given as moderate for both **CYNONVS129** and **MRTHRVS119** and high for **CYNONVS317**. In terms of visual and perceptual qualities **CYNONVS129** - Mynydd Y Grug notes *“Dramatic views all around. Feeling of separation from valley floors below. Views southwards to Caerphilly. Wind noise is a dominant aesthetic factor”*. For **CYNONVS317**, LANDMAP notes the presence of *“Some visual clutter of pylons slightly detracts from this otherwise wild/exposed typical upland area.”* An average of just over 50% of these VSAA sit within the ZTV for the Proposed Development. Overall, for these VSAA, value is considered medium and susceptibility to the Proposed Development and sensitivity would be medium at worst.

Table EDP 1.26: VSAA within 10–15km Assessment of Effects

VSAA within 10–15km Summary of effects		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
Very High – Medium	Very High -- Medium	Very High -- Medium
Justification:		
Often open and exposed, large scale upland landscapes with wide panoramic views or more enclosed valleys with views over settled valleys and a strong sense of place the Proposed Development represents potential for indirect effects only on the character of these areas. Overall sensitivity would range from very high–medium.		
Magnitude of Change:		
Given the distance from the Site and presence of intervening VSAA there would be no change on their inherent integrity or landscape fabric. Any effects of the Proposed Development would be restricted to potential indirect changes on the perceptual and other sensory qualities associated with these VSAA and as such, mostly relate to visual qualities from elevated, scenic areas.		

Overall, for these VSAA between 10–15km of the Site at their closest point less than 50% cross within the ZTV of the Proposed Development on average.

It is judged that the magnitude of change overall would not exceed **very low** for VSAA between 10–15km of the Site resulting from ‘barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.. For example, wide panoramic views where available would remain and, whilst it may be perceptible in the view, the Proposed Development would comprise a minor element and a small component of the view and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.

Overall Effect:

Moderate/Minor and Not Significant to **Minor/Negligible** and Not Significant. The nature of the effect would be long-term (but reversible), indirect and adverse.

Assessment of Effects: VSAA within 15-20km

1.33 11 VSAA were identified within 15–20km of the Site at their closest point. **Table EDP 1.27.**

Table EDP 1.27: Key Characteristics of VSAA within 15–20km.

VSAA WITHIN 15-20KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SCALE (Q8)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
44	BRCKNVS369	Sugar Loaf Mountain	Upland Moorland	Vast	Attractive. Exposed. Remote. Wild	Unassessed
45	CRDFFVS030	Wentlooge Levels south west	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Medium	Threatening. Remote	Poor
46	MNMTHVS012	Ysgryd Fawr	Mosaic Upland and Plateaux	Vast	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Spiritual	Fair
47	MNMTHVS027	Devauden scarp slope	Wooded Hillside and Scarp Slopes	Large	Attractive. Exposed. Settled	Fair
48	MNMTHVS031	King coed scarp slope	Wooded Hillside and Scarp Slopes	Medium	Exposed	Fair
49	MNMTHVS034	Llangoven Foothills	Open Lowland Valleys	Medium	Tranquil. Sheltered. Settled	Fair
50	MNMTHVS035	Trothy valley	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	Small	Tranquil. Settled	Good
51	MNMTHVS069	Raglan	Village	Intimate	Settled	Fair

VSAA WITHIN 15-20KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SCALE (Q8)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
52	NWPRTVS005	Nash Wetlands	Lowland Wetland	Medium	Attractive. Tranquil	Good
53	NWPRTVS030	Kemeys Graig	Wooded Hillside and Scarp Slopes	Large	Attractive. Noisy	Fair
54	NWPRTVS037	Caldicot Level	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Medium	Attractive. Tranquil	Fair

- 1.34 Given the juxtaposition of these VSAA and the Proposed Development the most relevant category along with value in considering susceptibility and sensitivity to the Proposed Development is scenic quality as it is the visual environment of these VSAA that would be potentially most affected by the Proposed Development. Of the 11 VSAA within 15–20km of the Site, 2 are ascribed moderate value, 7 high and 2 outstanding value respectively. Character is rated similarly with three moderate, five high and three outstanding. The two identified as outstanding in value (**BRCKNVS369** - Sugar Loaf Mountain; and **MNMTHVS012** - Ysgryd Fawr) are also considered outstanding in their scenic quality, and overall although their condition is classed as fair or unassessed. For the remaining VSAA, seven are rated as high scenic quality with one moderate (**MNMTHVS069** – Raglan) and one low (**CRDFFVS030** - Wentlooge Levels south-west).
- 1.35 There are no VSAA located between 15–20km north-west of the Site at their closest point. Four VSAA are located within 15–20km north-east of the Site including the **BRCKNVS369** (Sugar Loaf Mountain) and **MNMTHVS012** (Ysgryd Fawr) described above and **MNMTHVS031** (King coed scarp slope) identified as high in value, scenic quality and overall, and **MNMTHVS069** (Raglan) identified as moderate in value, scenic quality, and overall. None of these VSAA are rated above fair in condition. VSAA **BRCKNVS369** (Sugar Loaf Mountain) is located within the BBNP and as such, is considered very high (national) value.
- 1.36 It is described as a “... *distinctive upland peak rising above the Usk Valley and Vale of Grwyney*” and is characterised as “*exposed with panoramic long views*”. **MNMTHVS012** (Ysgryd Fawr) is also evaluated as outstanding but is not within a national designation. It is described as an “*upland outlier with long panoramic views towards the Sugar Loaf in the west, the Bloreng and Abergavenny to the south west and forming a focal point within the surrounding lower lying landscape*”.
- 1.37 The Site is present within south-westerly views from this area beyond the Bloreng, which is the primary feature in this part of the view. The Proposed Development would recede into the background of such views as a very distant feature where perceptible. VSAA **MNMTHVS031** (King coed scarp slope) is described as “*an outward facing scarp slope with long views across Raglan and the rolling hills to the north*” away from the Site, whilst **MNMTHVS069** (Raglan) is a nucleated settlement located on the valley floor whose castle and gardens are the key focal

point. It is considered that the Proposed Development may produce potential indirect effects on visual characteristics of two of these VSAA, however, it is likely to be perceived as a minor component in distant views affected a very small part of wider panoramic views where visible. Overall, it is considered that VSAA north-east of the Site are of very high value at most. Sensitivity would range from very high to medium overall.

- 1.38 Four VSAA (**MNMTHVS027** - Devauden scarp slope; **NWPRTVS005** - Nash Wetlands; **NWPRTVS030** - Kemeys Graig; **NWPRTVS037** - Caldicot Level) are located 15–20km south-east of the Site, each of which are identified as high value, scenic quality, and overall in LANDMAP. They are attributed as in ‘fair’ condition with the exception of Nash Wetlands, which is considered good. **MNMTHVS027** and **NWPRTVS030** comprise steep scarp slopes and LANDMAP notes “long panoramic views towards the floodplain of the Usk” and “superb views are possible to the south across to the Severn estuary. Pleasant views are also possible up the valley of the Usk” for each VSAA respectively. These views are orientated away from the Site from these locations and as such, development at the Site would not affect these identified views.
- 1.39 The Nash Wetlands and Caldicot Level VSAA are identified as lowland wetland and arable farmland, and open in character. The local landscape character of a ‘series of saline lagoons’ or large arable fields are the dominant feature in these areas, and the Proposed Development through discernible in views is likely to be a very minor element outside of the immediate context of the visual amenity at these locations. Due to the orientation of views identified at these locations and/or dominance of foreground elements, such as lagoons in the perceptual quality of these areas the susceptibility of these VSAA overall to the Proposed Development is considered to be medium, at most.
- 1.40 One VSAA (**CRDFFVS030** - Wentlooge Levels south-west) is located south-west of the Site and is identified as moderate value, and moderate overall. Given the distance to the Site, together with its low scenic quality and poor condition as identified in LANDMAP, it is considered to be of medium susceptibility to the Proposed Development at most.

Table EDP 1.28: VSAA within 15–20km Assessment of Effects.

VSAA within 15–20km Summary of Effects		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
Very High- High	Very High- Medium	Very High - Medium
Justification:		
Often open and exposed, with high scenic quality and generally strong sense of place the Proposed Development represents potential for indirect effects only on the character of these areas. Due to the generally poor or fair condition of these landscapes together with distance from the Site, and the Proposed Development likely to be a minor factor in some views, the susceptibility of these VSAA to the Proposed Development is considered variable and overall sensitivity would range from very high - medium.		
Magnitude of Change:		
Given the distance from the Site and presence of intervening VSAA there would be no effect on their inherent integrity or landscape fabric. Any effects of the Proposed Development would be restricted to potential indirect changes to the perceptual and other sensory qualities associated with these VSAA and as such, mostly relate to visual qualities from elevated, scenic areas.		

Overall, for these VSAA between 15–20km of the Site at their closest point, just over 55% of each VSAA cross within the ZTV of the Proposed Development on average.

It is judged that the magnitude of change overall would not exceed **very low** for VSAA between 15–20km of the Site resulting from 'barely discernible alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape. For example, wide panoramic views where available would remain and, whilst it may be recognisable in the view, the Proposed Development would comprise a minor element and a very small component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.

Overall Effect:

Moderate/Minor – Minor/Negligible and Not Significant. The nature of the effect would be long-term (but reversible), indirect and adverse.

Assessment of Effects: VSAA within 20–26km

- 1.41 19 VSAA were identified within 20–26km of the Site at their closest point. **Table EDP 1.29** summarises key characteristics identified by LANDMAP for each VSAA.

Table EDP 1.29: Key Characteristics of VSAA within 20–26km.

VSAA WITHIN 20–26KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
55	CRDFFVS003	Garth- west	Hill and Lower Plateau Grazing	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed	Fair
56	CRDFFVS004	Garth Hill	Hill and Lower Plateau Moorland	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Spiritual	Fair
57	CRDFFVS031	Rumney Great Wharf	Other Costal Wild Land	Open	Exposed. Threatening. Wild	Fair
58	CRDFFVS032	Severn Estuary	Intertidal	Exposed	Attractive. Exposed. Threatening. Wild. Spiritual	Unassessed
59	CRDFFVS039	Cardiff Flats	Intertidal	Exposed	Exposed. Wild	Fair
60	CRDFFVS040	Cardiff Castle	Amenity Land	Enclosed	Attractive. Sheltered. Settled	Good
61	CRDFFVS041	Bute Park	Amenity Land	Enclosed	Attractive. Sheltered. Settled	Good
62	MNMTHVS006	Olchon Valley Ridge	Upland Grazing	Exposed	Exposed. Attractive. Wild. Spiritual	Fair
63	MNMTHVS014	Graig Syfyrddin	Mosaic Upland and Plateaux	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed	Fair
64	MNMTHVS023	Trellech plateau	Hill and Lower Plateau Grazing	Open	Attractive. Tranquil. Settled	Fair
65	MNMTHVS030	Kings Wood scarp slope	Wooded Hillside and Scarp Slopes	Exposed	Attractive. Exposed	Fair
66	MNMTHVS047	River Trothy valley floor	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Enclosed	Noisy	Fair



VSAA WITHIN 20-26KM	VSAA ID	VSAA NAME	CL_3	SENSE OF ENCLOSURE (Q9)	PERCEPTUAL AND OTHER SENSORY CHARACTERISTICS (Q24)	CONDITION (Q27)
67	MNMTHVS053	Western coastal grasslands	Flat Open Lowland Farmland	Open	Attractive	Fair
68	MNMTHVS057	Western saltmarsh & mudbanks	Other Costal Wild Land	Open	Exposed. Threatening. Wild	Fair
69	MNMTHVS093	Chepstow Park Wood	Wooded Hillside & Scarp Slopes	Confined	Tranquil. Sheltered	Good
70	NWPRTVS006	Estuary Saltmarsh	Intertidal	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Threatening. Remote. Wild. Spiritual. Smell	Fair
71	NWPRTVS007	Estuary Mudflats	Intertidal	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Threatening. Remote. Wild. Spiritual. Smell	Fair
72	NWPRTVS008	Severn Estuary	Intertidal	Exposed	Attractive. Tranquil. Exposed. Threatening. Remote. Wild. Spiritual. Smell	Fair
73	NWPRTVS035	Wilcrick Hill	Mosaic Lowland Valleys	Open	Attractive. Noisy	Good



- 1.42 All the VSAA within 20–26km of the Site are ascribed high (10 no.) or outstanding (9 no.) value in LANDMAP due primarily to their presence within or in close proximity to either the Wye Valley AONB designation located c.22km east of the Site, BBNP, or coastal landscapes (seascapes) designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It is clear that these landscapes are of very high value. Nevertheless, for coastal aspect areas towards the south the primary focus of views is away from the Site over the estuary, and the Proposed Development would not affect this primary element of its scenic quality. From VSAA to the east within and close to the AONB views west towards the Site may be present but due to the distance and intervening landforms it would comprise a very minor to negligible component of views where existing turbines are already present on hilltops.
- 1.43 Indirect effects upon the visual characteristics of these areas would be minimal.

Table EDP 1.30: VSAA within 20–26km Assessment of Effects.

VSAA within 20–26km Summary of Effects		
Value:	Susceptibility:	Overall Sensitivity:
Very High	Very High	Very High – High
Justification:		
Often open and exposed, with high scenic quality focussed away from the Site and generally strong sense of place, the Proposed Development represents potential for indirect effects only on the character of these areas., overall sensitivity would range from very high to high.		
Magnitude of Change:		
Given the distance from the Site and presence of intervening VSAA there would be no effect on their inherent integrity or landscape fabric. Any effects of the Proposed Development would be restricted to potential indirect effects on the perceptual and other sensory qualities associated with these VSAA and as such mostly relate to visual qualities from elevated, scenic areas. Overall, for these VSAA between 20-26km of the Site at their closest point, just under 50% of each VSAA is covered by the ZTV of the Proposed Development on average.		
It is judged that the magnitude of change overall would not exceed very low for VSAA between 20–26km of the Site resulting from ‘Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape in this direction’.		
Overall Effect:		
Moderate /Minor and Not Significant at worst. The nature of the effect would be long-term (but reversible), indirect and neutral.		

VSAA Summary of Effects

- 1.44 ‘Host’ VSAA and VSAA groups within the study area have been assessed herein and the summary findings are set out below. To keep the scale of the study manageable, and to enable the assessor to draw conclusions on the likely effects on VSAA within the suggested study area set out by NRW, VSAA beyond the Site and site boundary were reviewed by group i.e. in distance bands between 0–5km, 5–10km and so on. The approach taken by the assessor was to find comparisons and similarities within the LANDMAP summaries for VSAA within a given group, or indeed identify anomalies within a group to draw conclusions on the ranges of sensitivity and magnitude of change that could be considered worst case within a given band distance.

- 1.45 The study finds that of the groups appraised, likely significant effects were limited to Host areas, and VSAA within 10km from the nearest turbine.
- 1.46 Non-host VSAA, i.e. VSAA within a group that were considered to have elevated or significant effects have been described within the body of this appendix. In summary, all of the of VSAA within 10km distance (and within the ZTV to blade tip) are anticipated to experience significant effects as a result of the proposals with the exception of **BLNGWS985**, which is a principally wooded VSAA wherein no development is proposed, and its key characteristics would remain. From 10km beyond the Site (within the blade tip ZTV) the magnitude of change to receiving VSAA from the Proposed Development reduces quickly with effects limited to distant perceptual changes to these VSAA. The change in character of these VSAA would not exceed very low in the round resulting in Not significant effects, despite some areas with elevated value. Lastly, between 10–26km, it is considered very unlikely that there would be a perceived change to VSAA that would result in likely significant affects as a result of the Proposed Development, and none were found to experience significant effects.
- 1.47 **Table EDP 1.31** provides the summary of effects for Host VSAA and the range of effects per VSAA group assessed. The nature of all indirect effects identified would be long-term (reversible), and adverse or neutral. Where direct landscape effects were identified (Host VSAA only) the nature of the physical effects would be permanent and adverse.

Table EDP 1.31: VSAA Summary of Effects.

	HLLA ID	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect	Significance
‘Host’ VSAA (Table EDP 1.2)	BLNGWS226	High	Very high	Major	Significant
	BLNGWS688	High	High	Major/Moderate	Significant
	BLNGWS985	Medium	Medium	Moderate/Minor	Not Significant
	TRFNVS019	High	Very high	Major	Significant
	TRFNVS022	High	Very high	Major	Significant
	TRFNVS024	High	High	Major/Moderate	Significant
0-5km	As in Table EDP 1.3	High	High	Major/Moderate	Significant
5-10km	As in Table EDP 1.4	High	Medium	Moderate	Significant
10-15km	As in Table EDP 1.5	Very high - medium	Very low	Moderate Minor to Minor/- Negligible	Not Significant
15-20km	As in Table EDP 1.6	Very high - medium	Very low	Moderate/Minor to Minor/Negligible	Not Significant
20km+	As in Table EDP 1.7	Very high - high	Very low	Moderate/Minor to Minor	Not Significant