Candwr Solar Farm

Pre Application Consultation

Environmental Statement

Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual

2 July 2026

TotalEnergies

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5. Landscape and Visual

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. This draft Chapter for Statutory Consultation has been prepared by Pegasus Group, who are competent and experienced in producing Landscape and Visual Impact Chapters for inclusion within Environmental Statements. This Chapter assesses the likely significant environmental effects associated with the existing physical landscape and potential changes to its character and the visual amenity of people in relation to the Proposed Development (as shown at **Appendix 4.1**).

5.1.2. The main objectives of the assessment are as follows:

- Identify, evaluate and describe the current landscape character of the Application Site and its surroundings;
- Determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed;
- Identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development) and representative viewpoints and evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed;
- Identify and describe any likely effects of the development on identified landscape and visual receptors and evaluate their significance;
- Identify and integrate any mitigation measures that may help in offsetting or reducing adverse effects; and
- Assess the residual effects upon the identified landscape and visual receptors.

5.1.3. This Chapter is supported by the following figures and technical appendices:

- **Figure 5.1: SZTV and Viewpoint Location Plan**
- **Figure 5.2: LIDAR ZTV and Viewpoint Location Plan**
- **Figure 5.3: PRoW and Viewpoint Location Plan**
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5.2. Assessment Approach

Legislative and Policy Framework

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy for Wales Edition 12 (July 2024)

5.2.1. National Policy is set out within the Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12 (PPW12). 'Development in the Countryside' is addressed at paragraph 3.60 of the PPW12 which states:

"Development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access, habitat and landscape conservation."[1]

5.2.2. The Proposed Development has been located close to the settlement edge.

5.2.3. PPW12 establishes the purposes of Green Wedges which essentially have the same purpose as Green Belts. They are used to provide a buffer between the settlement edge and statutory designations and safeguard important views into and out of the area. No part of the Application Site is designated as Green Belt or Green Wedge. Torfaen Local Development Plan designates a small area of land adjacent to the far southeastern corner of the Site as a Green Wedge, in the area surrounding the sewage treatment works. This is identified as Green Wedge C1/2 – Ponthir and Caerleon in the LDP (shown at **Figure 3.1**).

5.2.4. Landscape is addressed within Chapter 6 'Distinctive and Natural Places' of PPW12 which covers environmental and cultural components of placemaking.

5.2.5. PPW12 identifies the following factors as influences of change in the landscape:

[1] Planning Policy Wales – Edition 12, Welsh Government (2024)

"SoNaRR reports national landscape change to 2015 has been small overall, but some changes have been substantial locally. The key contributors to landscape change which can be influenced by the planning system include the expansion of settlements, commercial, industrial, energy and quarrying developments, road improvements and large recreational related developments, including any associated mitigation measures."[1]

5.2.6. PPW12 Paragraph 6.3.3 states:

"all the landscape of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places."[1]

5.2.7. PPW12 Paragraph 6.3.12 states:

"Planning authorities should provide for the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of local landscapes… LANDMAP and any associated landscape character assessments (including the register of historic landscapes in Wales) should be used to inform local landscape policies and SPG and help to help identify or revise SLAs."[1]

5.2.8. PPW12 Paragraph 6.3.20 states:

"LANDMAP is an important information resource, methodology, and monitoring baseline for the landscapes of Wales, which can help inform planning for the sustainable management of natural resources in an area. LANDMAP describes and evaluates the physical, ecological, visual, cultural and historic aspects of Wales, and provides the basis of consistent, quality assured approach to landscape assessment."
[1]

5.2.9. This Chapter of the ES provides a review and assessment of LANDMAP aspect areas relevant to the Site in Section 5.3.

5.2.10. PPW12 Paragraph 5.9.14 – Locational Policies for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development outlines:

"Planning authorities should support and guide renewable and low carbon energy development to ensure their area's potential is maximised… There should be a presumption in favour of development in identified areas, including an acceptance of landscape change, with clear criteria based policies setting out detailed locational issues to be considered at the planning application stage"[1]

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

5.2.11. PPW12 Paragraph 5.7.4 outlines how "*Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 sets out the national development plan context for energy and provides specific policies for heat network and renewable energy development*" [2]

5.2.12. Policy 17 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure – establishes guidelines and principles for renewable energy generation in Wales. It states:

"The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs.

In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency." [2]

5.2.13. Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance provides that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects qualifying as DNS will be permitted subject to Policy 17 and the following criteria:

1. Outside of the Pre Assessed Areas for wind developments and everywhere for all other technologies, the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);

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

3. There are no adverse effects on the integrity of Internationally designated sites (including National Site Network sites and Ramsar sites) and the features for which they have been designated (unless there are no alternative solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and appropriate compensatory measures have been secured;

4. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation (and the features for which they have been designated), protected habitats and species;

5. The proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity;

6. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets;

[2] Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, Welsh Government (2021)

7. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of shadow flicker, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance;

8. There are no unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and radar) or the Mid Wales Low Flying Tactical Training Area (TTA 7T);

9. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the transport network through the transportation of components or source fuels during its construction and/or ongoing operation;

10. The proposal includes consideration of the materials needed or generated by the development to ensure the sustainable use and management of resources;

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

The cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes should also be considered." [2]

5.2.14. Any energy development with a generating capacity between 10 and 350 megawatts is a Development of National Significance (DNS) under Welsh law.

5.2.15. The Site is not close to or within a National Landscape (formerly AONB) or National Park designation, or other nationally or internationally recognised statutory designation.

Local Planning Policy

Local Development Plans

5.2.16. The Site sits on the boundary of three administrative areas: Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The Local Development Plans (LDP) of each of these areas must therefore be considered in relation to the Proposed Development. Most of the Site lies in the administrative area of Monmouthshire.

Monmouthshire Local Development Plan 2011-2021

5.2.17. The Monmouthshire Local Development Plan was adopted in February 2014. A replacement Local Development Plan is currently under consultation, and the former LDP will stand until the replacement is adopted.

5.2.18. On Landscape Character, Paragraph 5.94 states:

"Monmouthshire benefits from major landscape resources and areas of visual quality and is home to internationally and nationally designated landscapes. The County's key landscape attributes range from exposed upland moor lands in the northwest, to well-wooded central lowlands interspersed with good quality agricultural land, dissected by three rivers, and the historically and ecologically unique coastal

landscape to the south. These provide significant environmental, economic and social benefits and help to create a sense of place."[3]

5.2.19. The Site is not within an internationally or nationally designated landscape. The Site is crossed by several PRoW which provide a recreational resource. These are retained as part of the Proposed Development.

5.2.20. With regard to landscape character, the Site within MCCs administrative boundary is not covered by a Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation.

5.2.21. Paragraph 5.99 states that *"Development which would be detrimental to landscape character will not be permitted."*

5.2.22. This Chapter of the ES evaluates and assess the local landscape charter at Section 5.3.

5.2.23. Policy S13 – Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment outlines landscape considerations in development proposals:

5.2.24. Development proposals must:

"1. Maintain the character and quality of the landscape by:

(i) identifying, protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the distinctive landscape and historical, cultural, ecological and geological heritage, including natural and man-made elements associated with existing landscape character;

(ii) protecting areas subject to international and national landscape designations;

(iii) preserving local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting;

(iv) respecting and conserving specific landscape features, such as hedges, trees and ponds;

(v) protecting existing key landscape views and vistas,

2. Maintain, protect and enhance the integrity and connectivity of Monmouthshire's green infrastructure network.

3. Protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geological interests, including designated and non-designated sites, and habitats and species of importance and the ecological connectivity between them.

4. Seek to integrate landscape elements, green infrastructure, biodiversity features and ecological connectivity features, to create multifunctional, interconnected spaces that offer opportunities for recreation and healthy activities such as walking and cycling". [3]

[3] Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan 2011-2021 (2014)

5.2.25. Policy LC5 – Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character states:

"Development proposals that would impact upon landscape character, as defined by LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment, must demonstrate through a landscape assessment how landscape character has influenced their design, scale, nature and site selection.

Development will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the special character or quality of Monmouthshire's landscape in terms of its visual, historic, geological, ecological or cultural aspects by:

- *Causing significant visual intrusion;*
- *Causing significant adverse change in the character of the built or natural landscape;*
- *Being insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape;*
- *Introducing or intensifying a use which is incompatible with its location;*
- *Failing to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape; and /or*
- *Losing or failing to incorporate important traditional features, patterns, structures and layout of settlements and landscapes of both the built and natural environment.*

Particular emphasis will be given to those landscapes identified through the LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment as being of high and outstanding quality because of a certain landscape quality or combination of qualities."[3]

5.2.26. Policy SD1 – Renewable Energy provides that renewable energy schemes will be permitted where:

"(1) There are no unacceptable adverse impacts upon the landscape, townscape and historic features and there is compliance with Policy LC5, with regard to protection and enhancement of landscape character;

(2) There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on biodiversity;

(3) There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenities of nearby residents by way of noise, dust, odour or increases in traffic;

(4) The wider environmental, economic, social and community benefits directly related to the scheme outweigh any potentially adverse impacts; and

(5) The distinct identity of Monmouthshire will not be compromised. For all types of renewable energy, cumulative impacts will be an important consideration where there are other renewable energy schemes currently operating in the area. When the technology is no longer operational there is a requirement to decommission, remove the facility and complete a restoration of the site to its original condition".[3]

Newport Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (adopted January 2015)

5.2.27. Part of Parcels 8 and 12 in the far southeastern corner of the Site lie within the administrative area of Newport.

5.2.28. The relevant policies contained in the Newport Local Development Plan (NLDP) are set out below.

5.2.29. Objective 6 – Conservation of the Natural Environment – *"To protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment, including landscape, protected habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity in Wales (regardless of greenfield or brownfield status) and the protection of controlled waters"*[4]

5.2.30. SP5 – Countryside

"Development in the countryside (that is, that area of land lying beyond the settlement boundaries shown on the proposal and inset maps) will only be permitted where the use is appropriate in the countryside, respects the landscape character and biodiversity of the immediate surrounding area and is appropriate in scale and design. Housing development, rural diversification and rural enterprise uses, beyond settlement boundaries, will only be appropriate where they comply with national planning policy"[4]

5.2.31. GP5 – General Development Principles – Natural Environment

"v) There would be no unacceptable impact on landscape quality

vi) The proposal includes an appropriate landscape scheme, which enhances the site and the wider context, including green infrastructure and biodiversity networks

vii) The proposal includes appropriate tree planting or retention where appropriate and does not result in the unacceptable loss or harm to trees, woodland or hedgerows that have wildlife or amenity value".[4]

5.2.32. CE10 – Renewable Energy

"Renewable energy schemes will be considered favourably, subject to there being no over-riding environmental and amenity considerations… Large scale proposals may be more appropriately located outside of the defined settlement boundary if no appropriate brownfield sites exist. The cumulative impacts of renewable energy schemes will be an important consideration."[4]

5.2.33. Paragraph 4.56 states:

"The positive contribution renewable energy schemes can make to sustainability and climate change must be balanced with the need to protect the environment and

[4] Newport Local Development Plan 2011-2026

amenity. The cumulative impact of proposals, in both greenfield and brownfield locations, will therefore be a careful consideration in the acceptability of a scheme. Developers will need to consider the number of other similar developments in the locality and the impact they would have collectively."[4]

Torfaen County Borough Local Development Plan 2013-2021 (Adopted 2013)

5.2.34. Parcels 6, 7, 9 and 13 in the west and 12 in the southeast of the Site lie within the administrative area of Newport.

5.2.35. Torfaen County Borough Local Development Plan was adopted in 2013. A replacement development plan is currently under consultation, and the existing LDP will stand until the replacement is adopted.

5.2.36. There are a number of policies relevant to landscape and renewable energy contained in the Torfaen County Borough LDP, which are outlined below.

5.2.37. LDP Objective 12 is "*To protect and enhance the valued landscape character of Torfaen, including important open space and sense of rurality between settlements.*"[5]

5.2.38. Strategy Policy SD7 – Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment states:

"Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment Development proposals should seek to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the Natural, Built & Historic Environment of Torfaen, in particular:

a) Biodiversity resources;

b) Geodiversity resources;

c) Water environment;

d) Landscape setting;

e) Character of the built environment; and

f) Historic assets."[5]

5.2.39. Land Parcels 6, 7, 9 and 13 are within a SLA (shown on **Figure 3.1: Environmental Designations Plan**).

5.2.40. Paragraph 5.7.7 states:

"Areas of the County Borough designated as Special Landscape Areas (SLA's) for their high landscape value, will be afforded protection to ensure that their character

[5] Torfaen County Borough Local Development Plan 2013-2021 (2013)

and setting is not harmed by inappropriate development proposals. Development proposals within a SLA will be assessed against Policy C2."[5]

5.2.41. Policy C2 – Special Landscape Areas provides guidance on proposals in SLAs to ensure their continued protection:

"Development proposals that could impact on these designations will be expected to conform to high standards of design and environmental protection which is appropriate to the LANDMAP character of the area."[5]

Guidance

Monmouthshire County Council Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment (2020)

5.2.42. In line with UK and Welsh Government policy objectives on renewable energy, MCC published a renewable energy assessment to ensure current and future energy demands are met, and to enable local planning authorities to engage with wider stakeholders to *'ensure that renewable and low carbon energy generation within their authorities is maximised'*.

5.2.43. This assessment was produced to inform the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033, which has not yet been adopted. The guidance contained in this document is therefore considered to have less weighting.

5.2.44. The Assessment considered all types of renewable energy generation, including ground mounted solar PV.

5.2.45. The Assessment considered factors of landscape, local planning policy and existing development to determine where ground mounted solar development is either 'constrained' or 'less constrained'.

5.2.46. Figure 2 of the 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment 2020 – Non-technical Summary' identifies the less constrained areas recommended to be considered for inclusion in the broad areas identified for Local Search Area designation in the Replacement Local Development Plan. Local Search Areas are identified in the Non-technical Summary (NTS) as *"preferred, broad, geographical areas for development of solar PV and potentially onshore wind*" which take into account *the "renewable energy resource available, land use and landscape value, in order to sign-post developments to the areas considered most appropriate."*[6]

5.2.47. The mapping provided is unclear however the Site broadly falls within or around Area 10 on Figure 2 of the Non-technical summary.

[6] Monmouthshire County Council Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment 2020 – Monmouthshire County Council/Carbon Trust

Torfaen County Borough Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for Renewable Energy Development (October 2021)

5.2.48. Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) and Blaneau Gwent County Borough Council commissioned TACP Landscape Consultants to undertake an assessment of their administrative areas to understand potential capacity and sensitivities to renewable energy developments.

5.2.49. The 'Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for Renewable Energy Development' was published in 2021, and forms part of the evidence base for the emerging replacement local plan, which is still under development. It should be noted that, because this Plan is still emerging and has yet to be adopted, this evidence has less weighting than adopted policy.

5.2.50. The aim of the study is to help guide in the determination of planning applications, and considers solar and wind development of a range of scales. It assesses sensitivity against established LANDMAP evaluation scores.

5.2.51. The mapping provided is unclear however the Site broadly falls within or around Landscape Unit 59, Countryside East of Cwmbran as defined by the study.

5.2.52. LAU 59 is assessed as being 'high' sensitivity with 'low tolerance to change of this type without adverse impacts on landscape character'. There is an inconsistency in the presentation of the data in the report, which may indicate LAU 59 to be of 'very high' sensitivity to change of this type, rather than 'high' as written in the text.

5.2.53. In relation to Solar PV, the report offers the following explanation as it relates to capacity for LAU 59 to accommodate solar development:

"There is no existing solar development in this landscape unit. The landscape sensitivity is very high. There may be potential to site several small-scale solar developments in this area, given its large size and sometimes substantial boundary vegetation. Great care should be taken to avoid cumulative effects, for example when travelling along the A4042, and siting should follow the guidance above".[7]

5.2.54. The report offers the following advice for siting Solar PV in LAU 59:

- *Consider using existing woodland and local topography to screen solar development from wider views*
- *Consider opportunities to site solar development within existing field boundaries, or where these can be enhanced as part of the development*
- *Respect the setting of listed buildings.*

[7] Sensitivity and Capacity Study for Renewable Energy Development, TACP (2021)

5.2.55. It is clear from the text of the report that a high sensitivity does not necessarily mean that solar development within the LAU is unacceptable in principle but instead should conform to several best-practice guidelines which could limit the landscape and visual effects of the development.

5.2.56. The Proposed Development conforms to the advice given in the report with respect to solar PV development in the LAU in that it:

- Uses existing topography to limit the extent to which the proposals would be seen as one large solar farm. The dispersed nature of the parcels mean it would be seen as individual blocks.
- Sites development within existing field boundaries, inset where necessary, and takes opportunities to enhance and strengthen the existing boundaries where they have been diminished.
- Avoids siting close to listed buildings, and where applicable, seeks to create necessary margins so as to avoid harming their setting.

Methodology

5.2.57. The methodology for this assessment is outlined at **Appendix 5.1**. This Chapter has been written regarding current best practice; Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013), Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA 3).

Assessment – General Comments

5.2.58. Solar schemes tend to give rise to effects within the landscape by virtue of several attributes specific to both their individual form and to the location and grouping of solar arrays. These attributes include:

- Strong linear and repetitive form;
- Contrast with sinuous landscape pattern;
- Location (often within elevated landscape or south facing landform); and
- Relationship to the scale and nature of the existing landscape.

5.2.59. These attributes may affect different components of the landscape in different ways or may combine to result in an effect. This assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape does not consider the balance of public attitudes towards solar farms. The assessment concentrates instead on the change that the Proposed Development will bring to the different attributes of the landscape based on the magnitude of that change and the sensitivity of the receptor, as assessed by qualified professionals.

Assessment of Effects

5.2.60. Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposals. The landscape and visuals effects have been assessed in the following sections:

- Effects on landscape elements;
- Effects on landscape character; and
- Effects on visual amenity.

5.2.61. Various factors in relation to the value and susceptibility of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors or representative viewpoints are considered below and are cross referenced to determine the overall sensitivity

Criteria for Receptor Sensitivity

5.2.62. Sensitivity is defined in GLVIA 3 as:

"...a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of susceptibility of the receptor to a specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor."[8]

5.2.63. Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a receptor (be it a landscape element, landscape character receptor or a view) and the susceptibility of that receptor to changes brought about by the Proposed Development. Both value and susceptibility are assessed on a scale of high, medium and low. The criteria for assessing the value and susceptibility of landscape elements, landscape character receptors and visual receptors are set out later in this section.

5.2.64. Various factors in relation to the value and susceptibility of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors or representative viewpoints are described in the detailed methodology as provided as a separate document (see **Appendix 5.1**). and are cross referenced to determine the overall sensitivity. The criteria for assessing sensitivity of receptors are outlined below in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Criteria for Receptor Sensitivity

Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
High	Receptor defined as being of high value combined with a high or medium susceptibility to change. Receptor defined as being of medium value combined with a high susceptibility to change.

[8] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA 3), Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).

Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
Medium	Receptor defined as being of high value combined with a low susceptibility to change. Receptor defined as being of medium value combined with a medium or low susceptibility to change. Receptor defined as being of low value combined with a high or medium susceptibility to change.
Low	Receptor defined as being of low value combined with a low susceptibility to change.

Criteria for Magnitude of Change

5.2.65. Magnitude of change is defined in GLVIA 3 as:

"a term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration."

5.2.66. Various factors contribute to the magnitude of change on landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints as set out in the described methodology (see **Appendix 5.1**). The magnitude of change is assessed on a scale of high, medium or low.

Table 5.2: Criteria for Magnitude of Change

Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
High	Introduction of major new elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape. Major change in the view that has a substantial influence on the overall view.
Medium	Introduction of some notable new elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape. Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view.
Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape. Some change in the view that is appreciable with few visual receptors affected.
Negligible	No notable or appreciable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, landcover or pattern of the landscape.

Significance Criteria	Description of Criteria
	No notable change in the view.

Assessment of Significance

5.2.67. The purpose of a landscape and visual assessment when produced in the context of EIA is to identify any significant effects on landscape and visual amenity arising from a Proposed Development.

5.2.68. The likely significance of effects is dependent on all the factors considered in the sensitivity and the magnitude of change upon the relevant landscape and visual receptors. These factors are assimilated to assess whether a Proposed Development will have a likely significant or not significant effect. The variables considered in the evaluation of the sensitivity and the magnitude of change is reviewed holistically to inform the professional judgement of significance.

5.2.69. The sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude of change arising from the Proposed Development are combined to determine the overall degree and significance of landscape and visual effects (see **Table 5.3** below for details).

5.2.70. Within **Table 5.3** below, the 'Major' effects highlighted within the table are considered to be significant in terms of the EIA Regulations. It should be noted that whilst an individual effect may be significant, it does not necessarily follow that the Proposed Development would be unacceptable in the planning balance.

Table 5.3: Significance Matrix

Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity of Receptor				
		High	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**
	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Nature of Effects

5.2.71. GLVIA3 states "*effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity"*. It does not, however, state how negative or positive effects should be assessed, and this therefore becomes a matter of subjective judgement rather than reasoned criteria. Due to inconsistencies with the assessment of negative or positive effects, this LVIA takes a precautionary approach that most receptors are likely to view development of the type proposed in a negative light, and so all effects are taken as adverse or negative unless otherwise stated.

Cumulative Effects Assessment Methodology

5.2.72. As with the assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development, the significance of cumulative effects is determined through a combination of the sensitivity of the

landscape receptor or view and the magnitude of change upon it. The sensitivity of the landscape receptors and views is the same in both the cumulative assessment and in the assessment of the Site itself. However, the definition of a significant cumulative effect is different from a significant effect in the assessment of the Site itself, and this means that the magnitude of change is also assessed in a different way as described in the methodology (see **Appendix 5.1**).

5.2.73. The cumulative study area extends up to 10km from the Site. Cumulative Sites considered within the Assessment can be found at **Table 5.7.** and are illustrated on **Figure 2.1**.

Study Area

5.2.74. The extent of the study area considered in this Chapter has been informed by initial desktop searches, a Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) (as shown at **Figure 5.1**), and Site visits. Based on the height of the proposed solar panels, being the main element of the Proposed Development, the 3km study area is considered proportionate and appropriate for the purpose of this assessment.

5.2.75. The study area is not intended to provide a boundary beyond which the Proposed Development would not be seen, but rather to define the area within which to assess its potential significant landscape and visual effects. Significant landscape and visual effects are more likely to include effects on proximity views, the change in the character of the Application Site and the area in proximity to it, because of a change in the landscape pattern or the perception of the solar farm.

5.2.76. Physical effects are restricted to the Application Site itself. They consist of direct effects on the fabric of the Application Site, such as the removal of existing landscape elements, such as trees or ground cover.

Desk Study

5.2.77. Desk study was conducted to understand the relevant landscape character assessments as they apply to the Site, and to understand the planning policy context applicable to the Site and Proposed Development. Desk study is important in the LVIA process but can only be conducted effectively when augmented with Site surveys, as outlined below.

Surveys

5.2.78. Site surveys were conducted in the form of fieldwork in February 2025, October 2025, and May 2026 in order to observe the site in terms of its landscape character and features, and to understand its relationship with the surrounding area.

5.2.79. These visits included the recording of Site photography. The initial visit in February 2025 was undertaken in order to record viewpoint photographs as informed by the production of a Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV, as outlined below). Upon consultation with the relevant local planning authorities, and in response to the

evolution of the design and layout of the Proposed Development, additional viewpoints were selected and photography recorded in October 2025 and May 2026.

5.2.80. Site visits were conducted in autumn or winter months in order to benefit from the lack of leaf cover, which increases visibility of the Site and allows for the understanding and demonstration of a 'worst case' in terms of visual amenity.

Modelling

5.2.81. Modelling was used in the production of a Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV). SZTV modelling utilises the planned layout of the Proposed Development and assigns a height for all built form (e.g. solar panels are typically modelled at 3m). Accounting for both topography and physical intervening features, such as trees and buildings, a map is produced indicating where in the surrounding area the Proposed Development may be visible.

5.2.82. An additional ZTV plan, utilising LIDAR data to better inform the screening effect of landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, buildings and other intervening features, was produced to further inform viewpoint selection and provide a more refined prediction of possible visibility of the Site. The LIDAR ZTV is shown at **Figure 5.2**.

5.2.83. The SZTV Plan (**Figure 5.1**) has been used to inform viewpoint locations and better understand the receptors which may be affected by the Proposed Development. It should be noted that, due to assumptions in the modelling process, a SZTV is indicative, and viewpoint locations are additionally informed by fieldwork and are typically subject to 'micro-siting' in the field to account for features not picked up by the SZTV.

Consultation

5.2.84. The three administrative councils covering the Site were contacted regarding viewpoints. See responses below in **Table 5.4.**

5.2.85. A SZTV (based on the layout at the time) showing 19 potential viewpoint locations based on the February 2025 Site visit were included with the **EIA Scoping Report** (**Appendix 2.1**).

Table 5.4: Summary of Correspondence with Statutory Consultees

Consultee	Summary of Comments	Applicant's Response
Newport City Council – Principal Planning Officer 30/07/2025	Views expected from: PRoW 389/24/1 Gatlas to Pentwyn Farm; 51.62944125435417, -2.9565485079544422	A view within a few metres of the suggested location had been recorded during the February 2025 Site visit and is represented at Viewpoint 19. This view was investigated during the October 2025 Site visit. A Viewpoint

	PRoW 389/12/1 lane to Park Farm; 51.62309293168613, -2.973506992763196 PRoW 389/17/1 field north of Caerleon; 51.621890982034266, -2.968431820328479 Catash Road over the Usk valley towards the site; probably along the stretch between 51.60238357558712, -2.93981242647558 and the overbridge on the A449.	has not been included as there was no view of the Site due to intervening topography and vegetation. There would be no significant effects. A view north of Caerleon had already been recorded in February 2025 and is included as Viewpoint 12. This view is a few metres from the suggested grid reference and is from the highest point along the PRoW therefore the point from which the Site would be most likely visible. Views from Cat's Ash Road were investigated on the second Site visit (October 2025). Views form the road were limited by roadside vegetation, however there were views towards the Site available from PRoW within the Celtic Manor Golf Course. Viewpoint 20 represents this view. Views from PRoW near Cat's Ash was investigated during third site visit (May 2026)
Torfaen County Borough Council	No additional views suggested.	
Monmouth County Council	No additional views suggested.	
PEDW- EIA Scoping Direction	• Residential visual amenity assessment required. • Various additional viewpoint locations as proposed by local councillors (included at Appendix 5.7: Context Views). • The need for photomontages at selected viewpoints to demonstrate the effects of the Proposed Development on views, and the effects of mitigation planting measures on these – as requested by Torfaen County Borough Council.	A residential visual amenity assessment has been conducted and is at Appendix 5.9. Additional views as requested have been either incorporated into the viewpoint assessment or included at Appendix 5.7: Context Views. Photomontages showing baseline, Year 1 and Year 15 for select viewpoints are included at Appendix 5.8.

Scoping Criteria

5.2.86. Scoping was undertaken in consultation with the three local planning authorities in which the Site lies, with an overarching Scoping Direction from PEDW issued on 11.02.2026 (**Appendix 2.2**).

5.2.87. The response from Newport Council's Principal Planning Officer stated that they anticipated "significant landscape and visual impacts" and agreed with the consultation response provided by PEDW in their screening opinion dated 16.05.2025. They requested that cumulative effects with other energy generating schemes in the vicinity be considered.

5.2.88. Torfaen County Borough Council requested that a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) be scoped into the ES. This has been undertaken as a separate exercise by Pegasus Group and can be found at **Appendix 5.9**.

5.2.89. The Scoping Opinion at ID.16 referred to CSOG's response which included an independent ZTV using LIDAR information. For completeness Pegasus have run their own LIDAR ZTV (**Figure 5.2**). The LIDAR version shows less coverage than the initial ZTV submitted as part of the submitted Scoping Report.

5.2.90. The Scoping Direction, provided by PEDW, highlighted a number of issues for consideration as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, which are outlined above in Table 5.4.

Technical Scope

5.2.91. The scope of this Chapter 5: LVIA includes an assessment of possible effects on general visual amenity, landscape character and landscape elements.

5.2.92. Effects on general visual amenity are assessed through a series of representative viewpoints, with their locations informed by the Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (**Figure 5.1**), LIDAR ZTV (**Figure 5.2**), consultation with the relevant planning authorities, and on-site ground truthing of this information in the form of Site visits.

5.2.93. The assessment of effects on landscape elements considers the various landscape elements that currently make up the Site, and the possible effects that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.2.94. Effects on landscape character are assessed through the LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment, which is the means through which landscape character in Wales is assessed.

5.2.95. The assessment considers the Proposed Development as a shole including solar arrays, fencing, substations, access tracks. Where a specific element has an effect, it is referenced within the detailed assessments at **Appendix 5.4: Landscape Effects Summary Table** and **5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

Receptors

5.2.96. There are a range of receptors assessed within the scope of this Chapter. In terms of landscape character and landscape elements 'receptors' are taken as the receiving landscape and the various features/elements that it comprises. This includes the relevant LANDMAP Aspect Areas for each of the five assessed 'layers' within LANDMAP; and landscape elements including but not limited to trees, hedgerows, topography, etc.

5.2.97. Visual receptors scoped into this Chapter are users of the Public Right of Way network within and around the Site, road users, and residents. It should be noted that this Chapter 5 is accompanied by a standalone Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), which specifically considers the effects on Residential Visual Amenity that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development (**Appendix 5.9**).

Temporal Scope

5.2.98. This Chapter considers the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors during the construction phase, at Years 1 and 15 during operation, and during the decommissioning phase.

5.2.99. Effects assessed at construction account for the short-term and temporary effects of construction activities across the Site. This includes the movement of construction vehicles and materials, and the landscape and visual effects this entails.

5.2.100. Effects assessed at Year 1 assume completion of the Proposed Development, including the implementation of all mitigation planting and landscaping. Effects assessed at Year 15 allow time for planting to mature, with the consequent increase in visual screening effect this provides.

5.2.101. Given the temporary nature of the permission sought, effects are also assessed at decommissioning, to account for any changes to the original landscape baseline that may be brought about by the Proposed Development at this stage; alongside any temporary and short-term effects brought about by the decommissioning process itself.

Limitations to the Assessment

5.2.102. In undertaking the landscape and visual assessment in relation to the Proposed Development, there are limitations and constraints affecting the outputs from this work. These include:

- The baseline assessment is based on information readily available at the time of undertaking the assessment, and may therefore not be exhaustive, or inclusive of information published subsequent to the production of this report.

- The Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) (**Figure 5.1**) has been used to understand the extent of potential visibility to identity visual receptors. The SZTV does not demonstrate absolute visibility and is therefore refined through fieldwork with the assessed potential visibility of the Proposed Development.

- Viewpoints (**Appendix 5.6: Viewpoints** and **Appendix 5.7: Context Views**) are intended to be representative of the views experienced by a range of visual receptors, from a range of locations relative to the Application Site within the study area proportionate in number to the scale of the Proposed Development. The assessment considers only publicly accessible views, such as those from Public Rights of Way and roads. They are not intended to represent every possible view, but rather to be representative of the view most likely to be

experienced by the broadest range of receptors. As a result of scoping comments additional views which were requested but were from locations like those already represented by an assessed viewpoint have been included and can be found at **Appendix 5.7: Context Views.**

- During Site visits, weather conditions, the time of day and seasonal factors have influenced the visual assessment and photographic record of the Application Site and its surroundings. Every effort has been made to ensure that photographs and their locations are representative of the variety of receptors and views from a range of distances and directions.

- Winter views (deciduous trees devoid of leaf) illustrating a worst-case scenario have been obtained for the baseline views; recorded in February 2025, with additional photography recorded in October 2025 which demonstrates an autumn view with some leaf cover. With additional views recorded in May 2026 where trees are in leaf.

- Access to assess the predicted visual effects from private individual properties outside the Application Site has not been obtained. As a result, where appropriate, the assessment of likely effects has been made from vantage points with representative views taken from the nearest available public viewpoint. GLVIA 3 (Paragraph 6.17) suggests that effects of development on private property are dealt with separately from the LVIA as a 'Residential Amenity Assessment'. A Residential and Visual Amenity Assessment has carried out to address private views and can be found at **Appendix 5.9**.

- The assessed Proposed Development is based on drawings that accompany the planning application; primarily the layout as shown at **Figure 4.1.** The assessment has been carried out on the assumption that the Proposed Development is delivered in line with this drawing.

- Over the 40-year operational lifespan of the proposed solar farm, climate change and an associated rise in temperatures may have an effect on the growth rates of vegetation. It is envisioned that, despite this, proposed mitigation and enhancement planting would still be capable of providing sufficient screening.

5.2.103. The focus of this Chapter is on landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development. For effects on ecology and built heritage, please refer to Chapters 6 and 10 respectively.

5.3. Baseline Conditions

Site Description and Context

5.3.1. A full and detailed description of the Site and sixteen Land Parcels are given within **Chapter 3 -The Application Site** of this ES, and shown on **Figure 3.2: Land Parcel Reference Plan**.

5.3.2. The Site comprises a large number of agricultural fields east of Ponthir, Monmouthshire, which come together to form sixteen Land Parcels. The total Site area is approximately 131.62 hectares (ha). The fields are generally of medium scale and of an irregular/non-geometric pattern. Land Parcels in the western Site extents are generally smaller than those in the north and east. Internally, the field boundaries mostly comprise mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees. In places, sections of hedgerow have been removed to increase field sizes for agricultural purposes. In terms of existing land use, the fields are split between arable and pastoral use.

5.3.3. The Application Site lies approximately 5.2km northeast of Newport, 1km east of Ponthir and 2.4km north of Caerleon. All distances are taken at the closest point.

5.3.4. The Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water Court Farm Treatment Works sits adjacent to the Site's boundary, near Land Parcels 1 and 8.

5.3.5. The Site is bound on all sides by existing agricultural fields. The southern and western parcels are lower down in the valley, closer to the settlements of Ponthir and Llanfrechfa, whilst those to the north and east of the Site occupy positions which relate more to the open countryside agricultural land beyond.

Public Rights of Way

5.3.6. There are several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the vicinity of the Site, both adjacent to and within some of the field parcels, alongside some closer to the settlements of Ponthir and Llanfrechfa. The PRoW within the study area are shown in **Figure 5.3**.

- Multiple sections of footpath combining to create a path from Llanfrechfa to the east/northeast, roughly splitting the Site in two and intersecting with the reservoir. Identified as 367 50/1, 367 29/1, 367 30/1, 367 31/1
- Two sections of footpath surrounding Creigydd Farm, identified as 367 46/1 and 367 47/1.
- One section of footpath crossing field Parcel 1 from the southwest to northeast, identified as 367 40/1.
- A section of footpath running in a northeasterly direction from the reservoir, north of Parcels 1, 2 and 11, identified as 367 31/1.
- A section of footpath crossing Parcel 5, identified as 367 47/1

5.3.7. The PRoW within the Site are to be retained on their existing alignments and their routes enhanced with proposed planting. The visual effects of the Proposed Development on the PRoW are assessed in the visual amenity section of this Chapter.

5.3.8. As part of the Proposed Development, improvements to the local PRoW network within and adjacent to the Site are proposed, increasing connectivity and recreational opportunities. These improvements are discussed further in Section 5.6.

Settlement

5.3.9. The Site occupies a position on rolling ground adjacent to Ponthir and the nearby hamlet, Llanfrechfa. In the area immediately surrounding the Site, there are numerous dispersed farmsteads and individual residential dwellings. The settlement pattern and character are reflective of the wider surroundings – mostly rural although reflective of its proximity to the larger urban areas of Newport and Cwmbran nearby. In places, the Site directly abuts residential curtilages, whilst in others it is more remote in character.

5.3.10. More broadly, Ponthir lies north of Newport and its wider urban area, and east of Cwmbran. These two urban areas are separated from more rural character of Ponthir and surrounds by the M4 motorway approximately 3km to the south of the Site; and A402 main road approximately 1.3km west of the Site, respectively.

Detracting Features

5.3.11. Detracting features within the landscape include the sewage treatment works in the southeastern corner of the Site, and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water Court Farm Treatment Works and adjacent Court Farm reservoir, which occupies a central position relative to the field parcels, and abuts the southwestern edge of the northeastern parcel.

5.3.12. The urban areas of Cwmbran and Newport, although near the Site, do not represent detracting features, as a combination of landscape features (for example trees and hedgerows) give the Application Site and surrounding area a distinctly rural character.

5.3.13. Pylons supporting overhead powerlines cross the Site in a broadly central position on a southwest-northeast alignment. In places, small lanes intersect parcels.

5.3.14. Although there are some detracting features in the landscape, including major roads such as the A4042 to the west, the landscape has the character of a productive agricultural landscape.

Designations

5.3.15. There are no statutory or non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation within any of the Land Parcels.

5.3.16. Land Parcels 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14 are located within the Torfaen Special Landscape Area within Landscape Assessment Unit (LAU) 59 – Countryside East of Torfaen, as defined by the 2021 Sensitivity Capacity Study for Renewable Energy. Special Landscape Areas are non-statutory local landscape designations used to define areas of high landscape importance. Special Landscape Areas are either unique, exceptional or distinctive within the context of the administrative boundary in which they lie.

5.3.17. The remainder of the Site is not designated under any statutory or non-statutory landscape designation.

Ancient Woodland

5.3.18. There are several small blocks of ancient woodland adjacent to – and partially within – the Site boundary, as outlined below (see **Figure 3.1: Environmental Designations Plan**):

- Adjacent to the northeast of Parcel 6
- Adjacent to, and partially within, the southeast of Parcel 13
- Within the eastern portion of Parcel 8

5.3.19. All ancient woodland within and adjacent to the Site would be retained and protected as part of the Proposed Development. Suitable buffers between ancient woodland and proposed solar arrays have been incorporated into the design to avoid any potential harm to these assets.

Registered Parks and Gardens

5.3.20. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the Site area. Llantarnam Abbey, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, lies approximately 1km southwest of the Site. Glen Usk, a Grade II Registered Garden, lies approximately 2.5km east of the Site. Due to a combination of distance and the nature of intervening features between the Site and these assets, it is not anticipated that there would be affects significant or otherwise upon them.

Other Designations

5.3.21. There are several designated sites within the vicinity of the Site, as outlined below:

- River Usk Special Area of Conservation (European designation) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (national designation) located approximately 1.4km from Parcel 12.
- Brook Cottage SSSI approximately 2.5km north-east of Parcel 3.

5.3.22. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site boundary. Within the area surrounding the Site there are several Scheduled Monuments:

- Candwr Camp, immediately to the south of Land Parcel 10 (reference MM011)
- Penrhos Camp, approximately 500m south-east of Land Parcel 12 (reference MM023)
- Cae Camp, approximately 1.3km east of Land Parcel 2 (reference MM079)

5.3.23. There are several listed buildings in the settlements in the area surrounding the Application Site, with the following identified within a 1km radius of the Site boundary:

- Grade II Listed Barn at Pen-Twyn Farm (reference: 26129) adjacent to the southeastern boundary of Parcel 12;

- Grade II Listed Little Creiggydd (reference: 2674) c. 35m north-east of Parcel 3; and
- Grade II Listed Glansirhowy Farm (reference: 3141) c. 140m south of Parcel 7.

Landscape Scale

5.3.24. With generally medium and small sized fields and varying length views – including some long-distance views – due to topography and variations in vegetation, the local landscape is of a medium-small scale.

Landform and Enclosure

5.3.25. The landform of the Site is sloping, rising from its interface with Ponthir in the valley, upslope to the north away from the settlement, from a low point of approximately 10m AOD to a high point of approximately 86m AOD.

5.3.26. The Site is generally enclosed by existing mature hedgerows of varying heights and woodland, and aside from its southern boundary with Ponthir generally faces onto the surrounding agricultural landscape, comprised of fields, small lanes and individual farmsteads and dwellings.

Landscape Pattern and Complexity

5.3.27. The fields within the Site vary in size, shape and form, reflecting the grain of the surrounding area, which is overall of moderate complexity. The presence of built form in the villages of Ponthir and Llanfrechfa nearby, and the dispersed dwellings, lanes, reservoir and overhead power lines add to the complexity of the landscape.

Land Use and Land Cover

5.3.28. The fields within the Site are split between pastoral and arable land uses. The field boundaries consist of hedgerows, with hedgerow trees in places, along with some dispersed individual specimens. There are some small pockets of woodland, including some ancient woodland in the area immediately surrounding the Site, outside of the redline boundary.

Skylines

5.3.29. The skyline visible in views around the Site is formed by the landscape which is characteristic of the region. The landscape is one of rolling hills and valleys, and is generally agricultural, with settlement in middle- and long-distance views. In places, the horizon is constrained by a combination of vegetation and topography, whereas some views are much longer-distance and contain a tapestry of fields, hedgerows, trees and human settlement. The skyline visible of the Site from the surrounding area is much the same, with pylons and overhead cables punctuating the skyline in places, casting a human influence on the landscape.

Intervisibility

5.3.30. Intervisibility of the Site is highly varied depending on location, owing to the rolling topography of the landscape. Due to the Site's general position on rising ground, parts of the Site are visible from downslope. Additionally, the rolling nature of the Site means that visibility of parcels is available within the Site boundary, and between field parcels.

Tranquillity

5.3.31. The Site is generally tranquil in nature with some road noise from the surrounding road network in places. The varied topography creates some more isolated and tranquil spots, whilst from higher ground, human settlement, road noise and the sense of isolation is more evident.

Baseline Survey Information - Landscape Elements

Land Use/Ground Cover

5.3.32. The land that comprises the Application Site is currently agricultural and is split roughly evenly between arable and pastoral uses. Thus, in places, the ground cover is seasonally replaced with new planting, whilst in others it is managed as permanent grassland. Fields are generally irregular in shape and are of a combination of medium and small scale.

5.3.33. The land use and ground cover are considered generally ubiquitous in the area: although retaining some intrinsic value for their rural character, there are no other features which elevate the Site above the surrounding area from the perspective of land use, as demonstrated by the lack of landscape designation across most of the Site.

5.3.34. **Sensitivity:** The quality and condition of the land use is good and considered to be of medium value and susceptibility to the Proposed Development, resulting in an overall **medium** sensitivity.

Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

5.3.35. The field pattern is largely defined by a network of mature hedgerows and some hedgerow trees. In some places, the hedgerows are denser and taller than others, but in general the fields are well enclosed with boundaries well-defined.

5.3.36. As noted above, there are some small blocks of woodland including Ancient Woodland within and adjacent to parts of the Site – notably within Parcel 8; northeast of Parcel 6 and east of (and partially within) Parcel 13. Aside from hedgerows, vegetation across the Site is limited to the occasional isolated tree within a field parcel, for example within Land Parcel 9.

5.3.37. An **Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)** (**Appendix 5.10**) was undertaken by Barton Hyett Associates in June 2026, which recorded the composition of the tree and hedgerow resource across the site. It identified the following:

- 277 trees

- 242 tree groups
- 11 areas of woodland
- 256 hedgerows

5.3.38. The AIA outlines that most of the trees across the Site are comprised of common native species, including oak, ash, field maple, and willow. Hedgerows are generally comprised of hawthorn, holly, hazel, blackthorn and elder.

5.3.39. Some dispersed Scots pine, apple, birch and beech trees were also recorded across the Site.

5.3.40. Most of the trees on the Site were assessed as Category A or B (high or moderate quality, respectively), warranting retention and protection (total 597 features of 786). Only 11 individuals were assessed as Category U, being unsuitable for retention.

5.3.41. The AIA outlines how a total of three trees (1no. Category A and 2no. Category C) will require removal; alongside 1no. Category A tree group, sections of 3no. Category B tree groups and sections of 2no. Category C tree groups. In addition, sections of 18no. Category B hedgerows and sections of 9no. category C hedgerows will also require removal. In the context of the total number of arboricultural features present on site, this represents an overall small proportion (approximately 4.6%).

5.3.42. A total of 46 tree preservation orders (TPO) are recorded across the Site, alongside five Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands either on – or adjacent to – the Site.

5.3.43. The survey outlines that appropriate design – in line with British Standard BS 5837:2012 – should be adopted in order to protect trees from possible adverse effects relating to the implementation of the Proposed Development. This includes root protection areas and ancient woodland buffers.

5.3.44. The survey further outlines some tree opportunities in relation to the Site and Proposed Development, specifically through enhancing the overall tree resource through appropriate management, and new tree planting to improve the diversity of the overall age structure of the tree resource across the Site.

5.3.45. Whilst there is some evidence of degraded former hedgerows which now give way to more open fields in places, the vegetation across the Site is in good condition. The hedgerows across the Site have been subject to a management regime which has kept them broadly in uniform condition.

5.3.46. **Sensitivity:** The trees and hedgerows are therefore considered to be of high value and high susceptibility to the Proposed Development, resulting in an overall **high** sensitivity.

<u>Topography and Watercourses</u>

5.3.47. The Site is undulating and occupies a position on sloping ground which generally sits above Ponthir. The valley of which the Site is a part of generally rises from south to north,

away from Ponthir. A combination of open field structure and variations in vegetation and topography result in varied intervisibility both between the Land Parcels and between the Site and surrounding area.

5.3.48. The topography of the Site varies from a height of approximately 86m AOD at the eastern edge of Land Parcel 3, to a low point of approximately 10m AOD in the southeastern corner of Parcel 12. The valley landscape is undulating, meaning there are topographical differences across the whole Site, which is difficult to characterise in broad topographical terms. Owing to the undulating nature of the landscape, the visibility of the Site from the surrounding area is also varied. This is discussed in detail in the proceeding sections of this Chapter.

5.3.49. Owing to its position on sloping land, several small watercourses cross parts of the Site, generally flowing downslope towards Ponthir. The southeastern corner of the Site abuts the Afon Lwyd, a river which eventually drains into the River Usk, further south.

5.3.50. **Sensitivity:** The topography and watercourses which characterise the Site are generally reflective of the wider area and is therefore assessed to be of medium value and medium susceptibility to the Proposed Development, resulting in a **medium** sensitivity.

Baseline Survey Information - Landscape Character

National Landscape Character Area

5.3.51. National Landscape Character Areas (NLCA) form the broadest scale of landscape character assessment in Wales. Most of the Site lies within NLCA 31 – Central Monmouthshire. Key characteristics of NCLA 31 relevant to the Site and its setting include (all quotes from NCLA Assessment):

- *"An area of gently rolling hills, intervening valleys and the Usk flood plain.*
- *The Usk, the main watercourse, flows south from Abergavenny and eventually becomes tidal. Rivers Trothy and Monnow in the north feed into the Wye in the adjacent character area to the east. Their alignments are influenced by geological faults.*
- *Hedge-bound fields are mainly given to sheep grazing and dairying, with areas of arable farming on the fertile floodplain.*
- *Woodlands and mixed plantations cover many slopes and hill tops in parts of the area.*
- *Small nucleated hamlets and villages are scattered throughout the area, linked by a network of winding rural lanes. Medieval stone churches are characteristic of the villages.*
- *The sheltered landscape has a peaceful rural character, with any significant modern intrusion confined to the road corridors of the A40 and A 449"*

5.3.52. The Site sits on the boundary of NCLA 35: Cardiff, Barry and Newport. Key characteristics of NCLA 35 relevant to the Application Site and its surroundings include:

- *"Busy, heavily urbanised areas - containing Cardiff, and other large settlements including Penarth and Barry to the south to the west and the city of Newport and new town of Cwmbran to the east.*
- *Urban fringe / peri-urban areas – for example land between Penarth and Barry, which contains linear settlement linked by rural roads but has an urban fringe character in parts.*
- *Green belt with lush fieldscapes and woodlands - rural pastures and woodlands provide a contrasting peaceful, providing a green setting. Cardiff has the only green belt in Wales. Medium sized fields are mainly enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees.*
- *The M4 motorway - forms a noisy, busy corridor between and bypassing the two cities, together with the main railway.*
- *Lowland river corridors - Rivers Taff and Ely drain into Cardiff Bay and the tidal River Rhymney runs through east Cardiff; the tidal River Usk forms the focus of Newport with the River Ebbw meandering to the south east."*

5.3.53. The NLCA provides a broad characterisation of the entire character area which does not necessarily capture specific aspects of landscape character relevant to the Site. More local landscape character details are discussed below.

5.3.54. **Sensitivity:** The value of the NLCA covering broad areas of agricultural land is medium and of medium susceptibility, resulting in **medium** sensitivity overall.

LANDMAP

5.3.55. The LANDMAP character assessment approach is descriptive and seeks to identify and define distinct characteristics and qualities of landscapes that make up Wales. The landscape character is defined collectively by five layers/aspects of information; cultural, geological, historical, habitat, and visual and sensory. The relevant LANDMAP Aspect Areas for each category are shown on their own plans at **Figures 5.4a-5.4e**.

5.3.56. This GIS based landscape resource is organised into a hierarchical system that separates different aspects of landscape into geology, biodiversity, visual and sensory, history and archaeology and culture. The assessment describes the landscape at different levels of accuracy. All quotations in the following section are from the LANDMAP website.

*Geological Landscape (**Figure 5.4a**)*

5.3.57. The Site occupies several LANDMAP Geological Landscape areas but is predominantly in area MNMTHGL091– Common Cefn-llewn (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12). The overall evaluation is high. The recommendations for future management are to *'Ensure that no*

significant geological or geomorphological features are lost or damaged (e.g. due to development/forestry etc) and that RIGS/SINC are formally established to safeguard key geological/geomorphological features or sites.'

5.3.58. The eastern part of Parcel 7 of the Site lies within TRFNGL033 – Creigydd. The overall evaluation of this area is moderate. Existing management is considered appropriate, and guidance for future management is to conserve as existing.

5.3.59. The western Parcels (6, 7, 9, 13, 14), closest to Llanfrechfa, falls within TRFNGL010 – Llanfrechfa. The overall evaluation is moderate. The existing management is considered generally appropriate and the recommendations for future management are to conserve as existing.

5.3.60. Two small sections of the Site - parts of Parcels 8 and 12 - fall within TRFNGL009 – Afon Llwyd; and NWPRTGL026 – Lower Usk, respectively. Afon Lwyd is characterised by its nature as a floodplain. Its overall evaluation is low. Existing management is considered generally appropriate, with recommendations to conserve as existing. Lower Usk occupies a lower part of the Usk Valley and contains a number of smaller tributaries. Its overall evaluation is moderate, with no notable sites or landforms. Recommendations relevant to these areas are principally to 'ensure that no significant surviving geological or geomorphological features are lost or damaged'.

*Landscape Habitats (**Figure 5.4b**)*

5.3.61. Much of the Site (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14) falls within MNMTHLH070 – West Rural Monmouthshire. The area is large and covers all of the Site except for the parts closest to Ponthir and Llanfrechfa. It is characterised predominantly by improved grassland (80% cover). The overall evaluation is moderate, but the report describes:

'This Aspect Area could easily be evaluated as low as both improved grassland and arable land (particularly under more modern farming practices) are generally quite low ecological value habitat. The value has been increased to moderate, however, due to the presence of a number of smallish broad-leaved blocks, hedgerows and a number of key species being present.'

5.3.62. Longer term aims in this area are to '*preserve and enhance field boundaries'* and '*preserve pockets of broad-leaved woodland'*.

5.3.63. The western parcels (7, 6 ,9, 13, 14) lie within TFGNLH024 – Torfaen. Vegetation cover in this area is predominantly improved grassland (75%). The area is assessed as moderate with predominantly unimproved grassland, albeit interspersed with species rich hedgerows and small areas of woodland. The principal management recommendations are to protect and enhance semi natural habitats, preserve significant species and enhance man-made habitat types.

5.3.64. A small part of the southeastern corner of the Parcels 8 and 12 lies in NWPRTLH015 – Newport. This again is characterised by improved grassland. The overall evaluation is high. The principal management recommendations centre on the restoration and

gapping up of existing hedgerows and encourage the conversion of some fields to species rich grassland or marsh through active management.

*Historic Landscape (**Figure 5.4c**)*

5.3.65. The westernmost parcels (7, 6, 9, 12, 14) of the Site sit within TRFNHLO02 – Edlogan and Tregrug. This is chracterised by a rural and agricultural environment with a settlement of dispersed farmsteads. The area is evaluated as high, given 'the high levels of integrity, survival, condition, potential and rarity'.

5.3.66. Most of the Site (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13), lie within MNMTHHLO53 – Tregrug Llanhunog. This area has a similar historic landscape to Edlogan and Tregrug, with an "irregular fieldscape and small areas of woodland". Its overall evaluation is high for the same reasons as above.

5.3.67. A small corner of Parcel 12 lies within NWPRTHLO08 – Llanhennock Hills. This is described as *"a small rural landscape of irregular fields and dispersed isolated farmsteads"*. This area is evaluated as moderate, with well-preserved historic field boundaries and an area around Pernhos Farm which was an active settlement during the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

*Cultural Landscape Services (**Figure 5.4d**)*

5.3.68. The majority of the Site (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12) sits in MNMTHCLSO40 – Sor Brook Valley. The sense of place and local distinctiveness is weak. The visual and sensory landscape evaluation and scenic quality are high with moderate character.

5.3.69. Some of the southern Parcels (6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14) sit within TRFNCLSO06. The sense of place and local distinctiveness is moderate. The visual and sensory landscape evaluation is high, with moderate scenic quality and high character.

5.3.70. Very small sections of the southernmost part of the Site (small section of Parcels 12 and 13) parts of the Site, closest to Ponthir, sits in TRFNCLSO05. The sense of place and local distinctiveness is moderate. The visual and sensory landscape evaluation, scenic quality and character are all low.

5.3.71. Some of the southeasternmost parts of Parcel 12 lie within a small area of NWPRTCLSO39. The sense of place and local distinctiveness is moderate. Visual and sensory landscape evaluation, scenic quality and character are all moderate.

5.3.72. A very small part of the southeastern corner of Parcel 12 lies in NWPRTCLSO36. The sense of place and local distinctiveness is moderate. Visual and sensory landscape evaluation is high, with high scenic quality and high character.

*Visual and Sensory (**Figure 5.4e**)*

5.3.73. Parcels 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14 sit within TRFNVSO11 – Torfaen. This area is described as:

"A quiet secluded rolling landscape ranging from approximately 30m to 110mAOD, with generally west facing slope. It is sandwiched by the large urban area of Cwmbran

to the west, and to a lesser extent by Caerleon Road and Ponthir to the south. The rolling landscape is chararcterised by the mosaic pattern of hedges and broadleaf woodland, along/through which run a comprehensive network of footpaths. Views enclosed by opposite valley side. large scale landscape with strong visual unity."

5.3.74. Scenic quality is assessed as moderate, with high integrity and character and moderate rarity, with an overall evaluation of high. Guidance for management in the immediate term is to 'limit development and access', with key elements that should be conserved being hedges, woodlands and fields.

5.3.75. Most of the Site (Parcels 1, 2, 3 ,4, 5 ,8, 10, 11, 12) lies within MNMTHVSO36 – Sor Brook Valley. This is described as:

"A gently undulating "U" shaped valley drained by the Sor Brook and its associated tributaries. It is bound to the north by the steep wooded hills of Llangybi and to the west by the dense settlement of Cwmbran. Views are restricted in deep secluded valley bottoms, though on high ground there are long views of the rounded valley heads and distant scarp slopes of Mynydd Maen and Cwmbran in the west, with Llandegfedd reservoir to the north. This is a domesticated landscape of small to medium-scale, regular and irregular fields of mixed arable and pastoral farming, enclosed and bounded by a well defined network of low intensively managed hedgerows, mature hedgerow trees and treelines. These fields are interspersed with scattered small blocks of deciduous woodland and scrub with individual field trees often found in association with farmsteads. Where arable crops occur, hedges are intensively managed, often leading to their breakdown and replacement with post and wire fencing. Settlement is characterised by the medieval linear settlement of Llandegveth, presumed to have been administered in Welsh style and the post medieval squatter settlement established on newly cleared lands as at Common Cefn Llwyn. Numerous small farmsteads are set back from the road with scattered houses following the line of the road"

5.3.76. Scenic quality is assessed as high, with high integrity, moderate character and low rarity, with an overall evaluation of high. Management recommendations are principally to 'maintain the patchwork of field boundaries and small blocks of woodland', and to 'retain existing hedgerows, hedgerow trees and bankside vegetation. Ensure scattered rural developments to not erode character'.

5.3.77. The southeastern corner of parcel 12 sits in NWPRTVSO28 – Penrhos. Scenic quality, integrity, character and rarity are all assessed as moderate, with an overall evaluation of moderate.

5.3.78. Small parts of parcels 8 and 12 touch TRFNVSO09 - Torfaen, which is distinct in terms of its urbanised nature. Scenic quality, integrity, character, rarity, and overall evaluation are assessed as low, owing to new development of poor design. Guidelines include the revision of development guidelines to ensure better design, restrict urban sprawl and protect boundaries and trees in context.

5.3.79. **Appendix 5.3** lists all LANDMAP Layers, relevant Aspect Areas and their overall evaluation that cover the Site.

Special Landscape Areas

5.3.80. Special Landscape Areas are a non-statutory landscape designation in Wales, which are designated by local authorities to '*define areas of high landscape importance within their administrative boundary'*.

5.3.81. Paragraph 1.2 of the 2011 Torfaen County Borough 'Designation of Special Landscape Areas' report, states that *"The use of non-statutory designations such as SLAs to protect areas of landscape value has long been a policy tool within the UK planning system. They have been seen by local planning authorities as a means of protecting sensitive landscapes and in developing an understanding and awareness of those features and characteristics that give a locality its sense of place."*[9]

5.3.82. Parts of the Site (Parcels 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12) sit within Special Landscape Area (SLA) 5 - South Eastern Lowlands, as designated by Torfaen County Borough Council. The extent of SLA 5 relative to the Site is shown at **Figure 3.1**.

5.3.83. SLA's are defined based on three criteria; need, coherence and consensus. For SLA 5 key aspects of these criteria are as follows:

- *Need: extensive area of open, rolling lowland agricultural landscape which abiuts the eastern edge of Cwmbran area and Ponthir to the south. Close ot main road system in the area (A4042(T)), B4236, and Llantarnam Abbey grounds which is in the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. The form and quality of the landscape is somewhat undervalued being seen as typical, lowland rolling landscape and as such is open to continuing development pressures.*

- *Coherence: Effectively the rural south eastern part of Torfaen, running from A4042(T) across to the boundaries with Monmouthshire and Newport, although excluding the Llanfrechfa Hospital site*

- *Consensus: identified as a SLA in the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan and a potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP study. The area exhibits landscape qualities and values that warrant its designation as a SLA.*

5.3.84. The Primary Landscape Qualities and Features are:

- *"A rolling, lowland agricultural landscape*

- *Quiet, secluded area with scattered settlements, Llanfrechfa being the main village*

- *Strong visual unity eastwards into Monmouthshire*

[9] 'Designation of Special Landscape Areas', Torfaen County Borough Council (2011)

- *Presence of road and more urban influences associated with Llantarnam Business Park and Ponthir give a more discordant feel to the area*
- *Landscape typified by a patchwork of small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow tress and interspersed with a range of small and some larger woodland blocks."*

5.3.85. Key Policy and Management Issues are identified as the following:

- *"Ongoing pressure for development, particularly around Llantarnam and Llanfrechfa Hospital.*
- *Retention of lowland agricultural landscape pattern of hedge bounded fields with hedgerow trees, spinneys and woodlands.*
- *Loss of quality of settlement edges with inconsistent boundary treatment, fly tipping etc."*

5.3.86. Boundary Justification

- *"The A4042(T) forms the western boundary whilst the remainder of the boundaries are formed by the minor road from the Croescyeiliog roundabout in the north, and the local authority boundaries in the east and south. The Llanfrechfa Hospital complex and Ponthir are excluded from the SLA. Final boundary details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council."*

5.3.87. SLA's are validated against the criteria in relation to the aspect area topics of LANDMAP designations. The sub-criteria for each aspect topic layer are shown in **Table 5.5** below:

Table 5.5: LANDMAP Evaluation Summary

LANDMAP Category	Aspect Area Reference	Area Name	Overall Evaluation
Visual and Sensory	VS 011	-	High
	VS 009	-	Low
Landscape Habitats	LH 024	-	High
Historic Landscapes	HL 002	Edlogan and Tregrug	High
Geological	GL 033	Creigydd	Moderate

	GL 010	Llanfrechfa	Low
	GL 009	Afon Llwyd	Low
Cultural	-	-	-

5.3.88. Owing to its designation in local planning policy, the value and susceptibility of the landscape covered by the Special Landscape Area is assessed as medium, resulting in a **medium** sensitivity.

Baseline Survey Information - Visual

5.3.89. The approximate visibility of the Site as existing has been determined through ZTV and topographical analysis, and the actual extent of visibility confirmed in the field to identify and take account of the localised screening effect of buildings, walls, fences, trees, hedgerows and banks. Representative viewpoints within the area surrounding the Site have been identified (**Figure 5.1**). The location and presentation format of these viewpoints has been agreed in consultation with all relevant local planning authorities, where consultation has been available. Additional viewpoints were selected at the request of Monmouth County Council, and viewpoint locations were further refined as the design of the Proposed Development evolved in response to consultation with local stakeholders. The selected representative viewpoints demonstrate the relative visibility of the Site with the surrounding landscape and settlement.

5.3.90. It should be reiterated that viewpoint locations are representative and are chosen to represent the broadest range of different receptors possible, at locations where the highest number of receptors are likely to be present to appreciate the view. It is neither possible, nor desirable, to capture every possible view of the Site from the surrounding area and viewpoint selections are made with this in mind. The selection of viewpoints is based on the following criteria:

- The requirement to provide an even spread of representative viewpoints within the visual envelope;
- The requirement to provide representative viewpoints that consider a human's normal field of vision (i.e. panoramic views);
- From locations which represent a range of near (local views), middle and long-distance views;
- Whilst private views are relevant, public viewpoints (i.e. from roads or Public Rights of Way and other areas with open public access) are selected as they tend to have a higher incidence of receptors potentially affected; and
- Views from sensitive receptors, such as from recreational facilities and Public Rights of Way, where the landscape and views of it form an integral part of the receptor's reason for being in that location.

5.3.91. The visibility of the Site is predominantly influenced by landform, the extent and type of vegetation cover and built elements within the surrounding landscape. In order to refine and establish the approximate extent from which the Site is visible, fieldwork was undertaken from publicly accessible viewpoints within the Site and surrounding landscape, such as roads and PRoW.

5.3.92. An initial Site visit was undertaken in February 2025, with further visits in October 2025 and May 2026 to record a range of potential views representing a range of receptor groups. Receptor groups represented by the 23 selected viewpoints are summarized below. A description of views experienced, and receptor sensitivity is discussed at **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table.**

5.3.93. Following comments from a number of local stakeholders, including local residents and councillors, a number of additional views were recorded from specific locations. Some of these views have been incorporated into the assessment, whilst others have been appended to this report as **Context Views** at **Appendix 5.7** with no additional assessment.

5.3.94. The viewpoints can be found at **Appendix 5.6**, and the locations of these viewpoints at **Figure 5.1**.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

5.3.95. The Site does not lie within a statutory protected landscape. Parts of the Site lie within a Special Landscape Area – a local designation. The landscape that characterises the Site and its environs are characteristic of the wider area – it is a pleasant rolling rural landscape, with far-reaching views in some places and more enclosed views within valleys. For all receptor groups, the value of the views in the area are therefore taken as medium.

5.3.96. Users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) experience the landscape for recreational purposes, and the views of the landscape are therefore an important part of their overall experience of it. They are therefore receptors with high susceptibility to changes associated with development of the type proposed. When combined with medium value, PRoW users are considered **high sensitivity**.

5.3.97. Road users (both local and major roads) are principally within the landscape to travel between locations, meaning views of it are less important to their overall experience. They are taken to be medium susceptibility, which when combined with medium value results in **medium sensitivity**.

5.3.98. Residents are considered high susceptibility receptors. The views of the landscape are an inherent characteristic of the place in which they live. When combined with medium value, this results in **high sensitivity**.

5.3.99. The full assessment of all 23 viewpoints considered as part of this LVIA is shown at **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

Future Baseline

5.3.100. This section considers the evolution of the landscape and visual baseline of the Site in the absence of the Proposed Development.

Landscape Character, Landscape Features and Elements

5.3.101. In the absence of the Proposed Development, there would be no change to the overall landscape character of either the Site itself, the relevant LANDMAP Aspect Areas, or the relevant National Landscape Character Area. The Site would remain as existing in a mixed arable/pastoral use.

5.3.102. In the absence of the Proposed Development, there would be no change to the existing landscape pattern (as indeed there would not be should the Proposed Development be implemented). The existing field pattern, boundary treatment and overall grain to the landscape would remain as it is seen today, although in theory could be subject to change over time owing to changing agricultural practices.

5.3.103. In the absence of the proposed solar panels, the overall pattern of the land itself within the Site boundary would be retained as existing: solar farms are generally characterised by panels arranged in linear rows, and so in their absence, the ground cover which would be sat underneath the proposed solar panels would instead be apparent.

5.3.104. In the absence of the Proposed Development, the Site would likely be retained for its present use as agricultural – as a combination of arable and pastoral land. With the Proposed Development in place, the land currently used for arable cropping would be turned over into semi-permanent grassland for the duration of the temporary permission sought, meaning that without the implementation of the Proposed Development the seasonal replacement of some of the land cover would continue.

5.3.105. In absence of the Proposed Development, the existing boundary vegetation would remain as existing, and no additional planting would take place. The current management regime would likely continue, meaning that the evolution of the vegetation resource across the Site would be limited. The lack of additional planting would also mean the existing age structure present in the vegetation resource would remain.

Visual Amenity

5.3.106. Without the Proposed Development, there would be no change to the visual amenity of any of the assessed viewpoints. Within the wider landscape, a degree of change would be expected over the proposed operational period of 40 years, which would likely be appreciable to the assessed visual receptors, but this would not be brought about by the Proposed Development itself. Changes to the Site over this time which would be visible would likely include: seasonal changes in relation to arable cropping; growth in trees and hedgerows; loss of some trees or hedgerows due to age, disease or storms and variations in vegetation management regimes leading to changes in the overall view and amount of the Site that is visible.

5.4. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

5.4.1. This section of this Chapter considered the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development during construction, operation and decommissioning. Effects during operation are assessed at Year 1 and Year 15, to take into account the implementation of the Proposed Development, including any landscaping proposals, and then to allow for consideration of those effects once any landscaping has had chance to mature and grow. The assessment of likely significant effects considers the Proposed Development with the landscape mitigation in place, as this is considered to be intrinsic to the proposals. Effects assessed are therefore the residual effects of the Proposed Development. A summary of residual effects is located at summary Table 5.10 at the end of this Chapter.

5.4.2. Landscape effects are assessed at **Appendix 5.4: Landscape Effects Summary Table** and visual effects at **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

Effects during Construction

5.4.3. The construction methodology is detailed in **Chapter 4 – Proposed Development and Alternatives** of this ES, and this has been used to inform the assessment of likely effects.

5.4.4. The construction works will result in temporary localised changes to the Site. Construction will likely comprise: minor cut and fill operations to facilitate Site offices, storage compounds, and foundations for substation structures; minor vegetation removal where necessary to facilitate access; pile driving; laying of cables and fit-out of all above-ground infrastructure. Construction work will also include associated vehicle movements to, from and around the Site, which will be controlled by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

Landscape Character, Landscape Elements and Features

5.4.5. Specific effects are detailed in **Appendix 5.4: Landscape Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.6. Effects on National Character Areas were assessed as negligible (not significant).

5.4.7. It is anticipated that, in the short term, localised construction activities would not cause significant effects on the identified LANDMAP Aspect Areas or the relevant National Landscape Character Area. There would be **Moderate adverse (not significant)** effects on Visual and Sensory TRFNVS011 – Torfaen. Effects on all other Areas would be **negligible** to **minor adverse (not significant).**

5.4.8. Potential effects associated with the Proposed Development on Special Landscape Area 5 were found to be **moderate adverse (not significant).**

Landscape Elements and Features

5.4.9. It is expected that the short term, localised construction activities would not cause significant effects on the character of the Site itself. Solar farms are characterised by their light touch on the landscape, utilising minimal foundations to support above-ground infrastructure, which sits above the existing land use and within the existing field

boundaries. Physical changes to the fabric of the landscape would be highly limited to areas designated for storage compounds, or to accommodate the substation. Direct effects associated with the loss of agricultural land, hedges, hedgerow trees and topography were found to be **negligible adverse** to **minor adverse (not significant).**

Visual Amenity

5.4.10. Specific effects are detailed in **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.11. It is expected that **major (significant)** effects brought about by the short-term construction activities would be limited to those visual receptors most proximal to the Site, represented by the following Viewpoints at **Appendix 5.6**:

- Viewpoint 3: From PRoW Footpath 367 47/1, looking south
- Viewpoint 4: From PRoW Footpath 367 29/1, looking west
- Viewpoint 6: From PRoW Footpath 424 34/1, looking east
- Viewpoint 9: From PRoW Footpath 424 26/1 looking north
- Viewpoint 13: From PRoW Footpath 424 50/1, looking northwest
- Viewpoint 16: From PRoW Footpath 367 3/1, looking northwest
- Viewpoint 17: From PRoW Footpath 367 31/1, looking southeast

5.4.12. All 16 other viewpoints are assessed to experience either **a negligible, minor or moderate** (**not significant**) overall effect during construction. At the construction stage, it is worth reiterating that effects are temporary and would last until the Proposed Development is commissioned and operational. It is not anticipated that effects on visual amenity at construction would be higher than those experienced upon completion. Whilst construction activities would introduce some features – for example Site offices and fencing – within the landscape that would not be present for the operational period of the solar farm, the visual effects associated with this would be short term. Construction compounds have been strategically located where they are most logistically suitable, and where their impacts from a landscape and visual perspective would be lowest. Construction activities would be managed through a CEMP.

Effects during Operation

5.4.13. As outlined in above, effects during operation are assessed both at Year 1 and Year 15. Effects at Year 1 are assessed to ensure the assessment accounts for the construction of the Proposed Development and the implementation of all mitigation measures, namely landscape planting, but prior to the proposed planting achieving maturity. Effects at Year 15 are assessed to account for the maturity of proposed planting, which may result in a change in the magnitude of change brought about by the Proposed Development.

5.4.14. Landscape effects are assessed at **Appendix 5.4: Landscape Effects Summary Table** and visual effects at **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.15. Effects during operation have been assessed based on site visits, reference to viewpoint photography at **Appendix 5.6** and **Photomontages** at **Appendix 5.8** which demonstrate years 1 and 15 for Viewpoints 6, 9 and 12).

Operation (Year 1)

Landscape Character, Landscape Elements, Landscape Features

5.4.16. Specific effects are detailed in **Appendix 5.4: Landscape Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.17. Effects on National Landscape Character Areas were found to be **negligible (not significant)**

5.4.18. Effects on Visual and Sensory TRFNVSO11 – Torfaen were assessed as **Moderate adverse (not significant)** other LANDMAP Areas were assessed as **negligible** to **Minor adverse (not significant)** at year 1.

5.4.19. Effects on the Special Landscape Area were found to be **moderate adverse** and **not significant**.

5.4.20. It is expected that the operational Proposed Development would not cause significant effects to the Site, or the features and elements which make it up. The Proposed Development, in large part, will sit on top of the existing ground cover, and within the existing boundary framework, meaning physical changes to the Site will be both highly limited – constrained to pile driving for foundations and minor cut and fill to support the substation – and reversible. The Proposed Development would see some of the existing land use change from arable to pastoral, but this is considered to have an overall minor positive effect on the Site, owing to the benefits this will confer to biodiversity over seasonal arable cropping. Direct effects on the Site as a result of the Proposed Development were found to be **negligible adverse to minor adverse (not significant).**

Visual Amenity

5.4.21. Specific effects are detailed in **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.22. It is expected that, for the majority of assessed viewpoints, significant effects on visual amenity would not occur. Solar farms are characterised by their low profile within the landscape, and due to the rolling nature of the Site, it would not be possible to view the entire of the Proposed Development from any single location. Visual effects generally decrease with distance from the Site, and intervening features such as trees, hedgerows and buildings would screen views of the Proposed Development from certain locations. On the contrary, at close proximity to the Site boundary – or at locations within it – significant visual effects would be expected due to the closeness at which the solar arrays would be visible. **Photomontages Appendix 5.8** (for Viewpoints 6, 9 and 12) show how, even when visible, the Proposed Development would

appear low-lying and form part of a tapestry of different land uses already present within the area.

5.4.23. At Year 1, proposed landscape mitigation measures, detailed in Section 5.5 below, would not have had chance to mature to notably reduce the magnitude of change for visual receptors. As a result, **major adverse** and **(significant)**effects are predicted at Year 1 for the following viewpoint locations/receptors:

- Users of PRoW Footpath 367 47/1 at Viewpoint 3
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 33/1 at Viewpoint 5
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 34/1 at Viewpoint 6 (photomontage view)
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 26/1 at Viewpoint 9 (photomontage view)
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 50/1 at Viewpoint 13
- Users of PRoW Footpath 367 34/1 at Viewpoint 16
- Users of PRoW Footpath 367 31/1 at Viewpoint 17

Operation (Year 15)

Landscape Character, Landscape Elements, Landscape Features

5.4.24. Specific effects are detailed in **Appendix 5.4: Landscape Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.25. Effects on National Landscape Character Areas would be **negligible (not significant)** at year 1.

5.4.26. Effects on LANDMAP Area Visual and Sensory TRFNVSO11 – Torfaen were assessed as **moderate adverse (not significant).** Effects on all other LANDMAP Aspect Areas were assessed as **negligible** to **minor beneficial (not significant).**

5.4.27. Effects on the Special Landscape Area were found to be **moderate adverse (not significant)**, falling in line with the maturity of the mitigation planting across the Site.

5.4.28. Over time, the Proposed Development would become a more integrated part of the wider landscape. Planting within the Site would begin to mature and would, by this stage, begin to have a meaningful impact on the overall vegetation resource of the Site and surrounding area. As with Year 1, the proposed solar panels themselves would have a limited direct physical effect on the fabric of the Site, and the presence of additional planting across the Site would mean the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape features and elements would range from **minor beneficial to negligible adverse (not significant).**

Visual Amenity

5.4.29. Specific effects are detailed in **Appendix 5.5: Visual Effects Summary Table**.

5.4.30. At Year 15, the proposed landscape mitigation measures would have reached maturity, with trees and hedgerows having a more meaningful effect on visual amenity. From certain locations, this would have the effect of reducing the magnitude of change experienced by visual receptors in the landscape by screening views of the proposed solar arrays. The rolling nature of the site means that, for views where a high magnitude of change is predicted to occur, the proposed landscape mitigation measures would have a limited effect upon the overall view (i.e. solar arrays would still be a notable and visible feature within the landscape). It is for this reason that for the majority of assessed viewpoints, the predicted magnitude of change remains the same at Year 15 as it does for Year 1. As a consequence, the following receptors/viewpoints are predicted to experience **major** adverse and (**significant**) residual visual effects:

- Users of PRoW Footpath 367 47/1 at Viewpoint 3
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 33/1 at Viewpoint 5
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 34/1 at Viewpoint 6 (photomontage view)
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 26/1 at Viewpoint 9 (photomontage view)
- Users of PRoW Footpath 424 50/1 at Viewpoint 13
- Users of PRoW Footpath 367 34/1 at Viewpoint 16
- Users of PRoW Footpath 367 31/1 at Viewpoint 17

5.4.31. The residual effects on visual amenity are therefore limited to a small number of receptors at close proximity to, or within, the Site boundary. In this respect, significant residual visual effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be localised to within the vicinity of the Site. It should be reiterated that this does not imply that other more distant visual receptors would not experience residual change, just that this change would not cross the significance threshold.

Effects during Decommissioning

5.4.32. Effects during decommissioning are assessed due to the temporary nature of the permission sought. After the expiry of the temporary 40-year permission, the Proposed Development would be decommissioned and – in large part – fully removed from the Site such that to most receptors it would not be possible to ascertain that the development had previously existed. The temporary nature of the Proposed Development is likely to be secured via planning condition.

5.4.33. The effects of the decommissioning stage of the Proposed Development are likely to be similar to those experienced during the construction phase: vehicle movements to, from and across the Site to facilitate the removal of the solar panels and the transportation of workers and equipment; minor cut and fill operations to make good areas previously occupied by storage compounds; and removal of all above-ground infrastructure and below-ground connections associated with the Proposed Development.

5.4.34. Exceptions to what may be removed during decommissioning include some below-ground cabling (dependent on depth) which may be capped-off and left to avoid major excavation works; and the substation, which would be retained (alongside its perimeter fencing, security lighting, CCTV and access) as it would form part of the essential National Grid distribution network.

5.4.35. It should also be noted that, upon decommissioning of the Proposed Development, the majority of landscape mitigation would be retained. This specifically relates to planting along boundaries and highways. It is possible that, in order to return the Site to productive agricultural use, some mitigation planting may be removed, but this would be the eventual decision of the landowner (subject to the constraints of the planning system). Nevertheless, mitigation and biodiversity planting would leave a lasting and permanent positive legacy on the Site, which would result in overall improvements to the diversity of age and species structure of the vegetation resource, effectively providing succession planting for the already substantial number of trees and hedgerows present on Site.

5.4.36. All effects during decommissioning, like with construction, would be temporary and time-limited until the operation had been completed.

5.4.37. Temporary effects on National Character Areas have been assessed as negligible (**not significant**).

5.4.38. Temporary effects on LANDMAP Aspect Area Visual and Sensory TRFNVSO11 – Torfaen were assessed as Moderate Adverse (not significant). Effects on all other Aspect Areas were assessed as negligible to minor (not significant).

5.4.39. Temporary effects on the Special Landscape Area were found to be **moderate adverse (not significant)**, falling in line with the maturity of the mitigation planting across the Site.

5.4.40. Direct effects on the Site are likely to be highly limited and are assessed as ranging from **minor beneficial** (i.e. the Site will be returned to its previous baseline) to **negligible adverse** (i.e. there will necessarily be some disturbance to the Site itself and the surrounding area to facilitate the decommissioning. These effects are **not significant**.

5.5. Mitigation, Enhancement and Residual Effects

Mitigation by Design

5.5.1. The Proposed Development has been designed and laid out to ensure that effects on landscape elements, landscape character and visual amenity are, insofar as possible, minimised. It is inevitable that some major and significant effects would occur, principally to visual receptors in close proximity of the Site boundary, due to the introduction of new elements within the landscape.

5.5.2. The design of the Proposed Development has sought to respond to the constraints and opportunities of the Site. For example, solar arrays are offset from residential curtilages and principal residential elevations to minimise visual impact for residents. Offsets from

more sloping ground have also been provided to minimise possible visual impact from views within the surrounding landscape and to help retain the agricultural character of the area.

5.5.3. The Site area totals 131.62 hectares (ha). Of this, fenced solar panel compounds comprise 46.16ha (approx. 35%), and substation elements 0.71ha (approx. 0.5%), meaning that approximately 65% of the Site area, excluding areas of access track outside of fenced panel compounds, will be retained as grassland/open agricultural land. The design process has therefore sought to locate proposed solar arrays where most suitable, considering both landscape and visual impact, and the need to locate arrays where their energy generating potential is maximised (considering, for example, overshadowing from trees and the effect of topography). The design process has sought to minimise effects on existing landscape elements within the Site. This includes offsets from trees and hedgerows to ensure their retention, maintenance and long term survival.

Additional Mitigation.

5.5.4. Additional mitigation is integral to the Proposed Development, and includes areas of tree, hedgerow, wildflower and grassland planting, as shown on **Figure 5.5 -Indicative Landscape Strategy**. In summary, a combination of the following planting measures are proposed to help assimilate the Proposed Development into the landscape:

- Native transplant woodland planting, comprising shrubs, light standard and standard trees to be maintained at a minimum mature height of 6m;
- Native hedgerow tree planting (51no. trees) within proposed and existing hedgerows;
- Orchard planting (62no. trees) of native species;
- 2403 linear metres of native hedgerow planting; and
- Wildflower, meadow and wetland meadow planting, with appropriate species/seed mixes responding to the specific ground conditions across the Site.

5.5.5. Limited vegetation removal is proposed in specific locations as indicated in **Appendix 5.10** which is substantially outweighed by the quantum of new planting proposed.

5.5.6. New planting would reflect the character of the area, and would, in places, help minimise possible adverse landscape and visual effects that could arise as a result of the Proposed Development. New planting would be managed in line with best practice through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

Table 5.6: Mitigation

		How measure would be secured

Ref	Measure to avoid, reduce or manage any adverse effects and/or to deliver beneficial effects	By Design	By S.106	By Condition
1	CEMP			X
2	CTMP			X
3	LEMP			X
4	Design Process/Layout	X		
5	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Planting	X		X
6	Improvements to the PRoW Network			X

Enhancements.

5.5.7. In places, proposed landscaping would represent an enhancement above the baseline landscape. Existing arable land would be planted with a suitable meadow/grassland mix – as outlined above – which would be managed appropriately to ensure its height does not interfere with proposed solar arrays. Offsets to enable this to be done mechanically have been integrated into the layout of the Proposed Development, but it is also possible for these areas to be grazed by sheep. Existing pasture would be retained as grassland in a similar manner.

5.5.8. Enhancements to the PRoW network within and around the Site are also proposed, as shown on the proposed **Indicative Landscape Strategy** at **Figure 5.5,** shown as permissive path routes. These enhancements will improve connectivity between existing PRoW network, providing additional recreational opportunities for people in the local area. New proposed sections of footpath include:

- Two sections within the southeastern corner of Parcel 12
- Lengths running along the south and west of Parcel 7, running northeast and south of Parcel 6A and connecting to existing footpath southwest of Parcel 5 and northeast of Parcel 6B
- Length to the south of Parcel 3, connecting to existing footpaths to the northwest and southeast of Parcel 3

5.6. Cumulative Effects

5.6.1. Cumulative effects are understood as the changes brought about by a Proposed Development when considered in conjunction with other developments of a similar type, or the combined effect of a set of developments when considered together.

5.6.2. The cumulative and in-combination effect of the Proposed Development have been considered alongside the following development sites, as shown below in **Table 5.9.**

5.6.3. This section describes the likely significant effects only and should be read in conjunction with **Appendices 5.3-5.5**, which detail the effects on all landscape and visual receptors.

Table 5.7: Cumulative Schemes

Application No.	Description	Status of Application	Relationship to Site
22/P/0446/OUT Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC)	Outline Application Proposed Mental Health Specialist Inpatient Services Unit and associated highway, drainage and landscape infrastructure. Grange University Hospital, Caerleon Road, Llanfrechfa	Permission Granted subject to S106 agreement in June 2023. Yet to be constructed	Approximately 800m northwest of Parcel 9.
DNS/3239190 Development of National Significance	DNS Application – Pentre Bach Solar Farm, Ground mounted photo voltaic solar farm and energy storage facility, together with associated equipment, infrastructure and ancillary works. Land at Pentre Bach, Torfaen; Tir ym Mhentre Bach, Torfaen.	Permission granted subject to conditions in January 2026 and is yet to be constructed.	Approximately 3.8km south-west of Parcel 13
DNS/3276725 Development of National Significance	DNS Application – Mynydd Maen Wind Farm Wind farm of up to 13 turbines along with an improved site entrance, new and improved access tracks, crane	Awaiting determination	Approximately 6.3km north-west of Parcel 7

	hardstandings, control building and substation compound, electricity transformers, underground cabling, and drainage works. Land at Mynydd Maen, between Newbridge and Cwmbran		

Cumulative Effects

5.6.4. The above listed cumulative sites range in distance from the Site and in typology. The most proximal cumulative site is 22/P/0446/OUT for a 'Mental Health Inpatient Specialist Services Unit'. This development, which has been permitted, is approximately 800m to the Site. It is, however, clearly a development of a different typology to the Proposed Development. Despite its proximity to the Site, it is located within different LANDMAP character areas than the Site itself. This facility is not located within the **SZTV** (**Figure 5.1**) for the Proposed Development and therefore is unlikely to be seen in combination with the Proposed Development. Even if it were possible to see both in the same view, they would not be read as the same type of development, with the other facility resembling the existing built form in its environs. Cumulative landscape and visual effects brought about by the Proposed Development as it relates to this application are assessed to be **negligible,** and **not significant**.

5.6.5. Application DNS/3239190 for Pentre Bach Solar Farm is located approximately 3.8km from the Site. It has not yet been determined. It is located within different LANDMAP character areas for all LANDMAP 'Aspects' compared to the location of the Site and Proposed Development. The proposed Pentre Bach Solar Farm is of the same typology as the Proposed Development, and therefore would be read the same within the landscape by visual receptors. The Pentre Bach Solar Farm is outside the scope of the SZTV for the Proposed Development, and it is therefore not possible to say conclusively that the two would not be seen within the same view. Cumulative effects can also be experienced by receptors travelling through the landscape, for example along roads, and experiencing views of similar developments sequentially. Owing to reasonable proximity, and the possibility of receptors travelling through the landscape and experiencing views of both proposed developments, the potential cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development as it relates to the proposed Pentre Bach Solar Farm is assessed as **minor adverse, and not significant.**

5.6.6. Application DNS/3276725 is located approximately 6.3km from the Site and is awaiting determination. The proposals are for a wind farm comprising up to 13 turbines. This development is outside the scope of the SZTV of the Proposed Development. Examination of the ZTVs provided as part of the wind farm application shows theoretical intervisibility between the Site and the location of the proposed wind farm. Although

the two proposals are not developments of exactly the same typology, both are renewable energy generating facilities, and as such may be considered as similar developments by visual receptors. Owing to the potential for both developments to be seen within the same view, there is a possibility of cumulative effects. Owing to distance between the two proposed developments, and differences in type, structure and appearance between the two proposed developments, cumulative landscape and visual effects arising from both developments are assessed as **moderate adverse, and not significant.**

In-Combination Effects

5.6.7. In-combination effects related to landscape and visual effects and the effects of other environmental disciplines for the Proposed Development are not expected to be greater than that provided for each individual environmental discipline considered in isolation. Where the highest and most direct effects from other topics are predicted, the overall magnitude of in-combination effects would not be expected to increase as a result of concurrent landscape and visual effects.

5.7. Summary

5.7.1. This **Chapter 5 – Landscape and Visual** of the Environmental Statement has sought to assess the landscape and visual impact of the introduction of the Proposed Development into the landscape.

5.7.2. The assessment is based on the proposed layout and **Indicative Landscape Strategy** at **Figure 5.5.**

5.7.3. The assessment has been conducted based on a combination of desk- and field-based studies of the Site and its environs. This includes a review of relevant landscape planning policies, published landscape character assessment and LANDMAP landscape character assessment. Three Site visits were undertaken to record photography and observe the baseline landscape character and visual amenity.

5.7.4. Representative viewpoints were selected in consultation with the relevant local planning authorities and based on a Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV), which indicates the area form which the Proposed Development may be visible. Viewpoint selection is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather cover a range of geographical locations, distances and receptor groups.

Baseline Conditions

5.7.5. The Site is characterised by its relatively rural location: it comprises rolling agricultural land (a combination of arable and pasture), with a high sense of remoteness in some places. Views from within and around the Site are highly dependent on topography and intervening features, with longer distance views available from higher ground, and a substantially more constrained visual envelope from lower ground within rolling valleys. Settlement in the immediate environs of the Site comprises the villages of Ponthir and Llanfrechfa, and dispersed dwellings and farmsteads.

5.7.6. The Site does not lie within, or adjacent to, any statutory protected landscape (e.g. National Landscape, formerly AONB), nor is it located within or adjacent to a National Park.

5.7.7. The Site lies partially within the Torfaen Special Landscape Area, as defined in the Torfaen County Borough Local Plan. Special Landscape Areas are designated for their scenic value and are designated to protect the landscape from 'inappropriate' development. It should be noted that this is a local rather than statutory protection, and that the Site occupies only a portion of the SLA.

5.7.8. Candwr Camp, a scheduled monument, lies to the south of Parcel 10. Effects on heritage assets are covered separately in Chapter 10 of this ES.

Mitigation, Enhancement, Residual Effects

5.7.9. The Proposed Development has been subject to an iterative design process which has responded to the constraints and opportunities of the Site and sought to respond to responses from the various consultees during the planning process. Integral to the proposed solar farm is a comprehensive package of landscape enhancements and mitigation. In summary, proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement includes the planting of 51no trees and 2403 linear metres of new hedgerow. This represents considerable overall net gain in both tree and hedgerow resource across the Site area. Proposed planting would reflect and reinforce the existing landscape character and deliver notable ecological benefits through the creation of new habitat.

5.7.10. Direct effects upon the Site itself would be limited. The majority of existing features within the Site would be retained. Solar farms are characterised by their low profile and light touch on the landscape, not requiring significant engineering works for their installation. A total of 3 trees, sections of 6 tree groups and sections of 27 hedgerows would be required to be removed from the Site in order to accommodate the various elements of the Proposed Development, including access, substation buildings, fencing and solar arrays. As outlined in Paragraph 5.5.4 above, this would be vastly outweighed by the quantum of new planting proposed.

5.7.11. Effects on other landscape elements including topography and ground cover were found to range from negligible to minor adverse, albeit in the context of a solar farm rather than open agricultural fields. Arable land would be replaced with grassland or wildflower meadow, a loss which would be partially offset by the associated biodiversity benefits.

5.7.12. Planting would have a limited effect on visual amenity, with most viewpoints and receptors experiencing the same magnitude of change and overall effect at Year 1 and Year 15, due to topography being the defining mechanism through which the visibility of the Proposed Development is influenced. Major adverse and significant residual visual effects were found for a total of seven of the twenty assessed viewpoints. These viewpoints are located either within the Site, or adjacent to it. Visual effects diminish with distance from the Site.

5.7.13. In summary, there would be significant residual effects on seven assessed viewpoints, with no significant residual effects found for landscape character or landscape elements. It should also be noted that, following the decommissioning stage of the Proposed Development, the proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement measures could be retained, such that a positive legacy could be left within the landscape.

5.8. The RVAA (**Appendix 5.9**) concluded that, whilst there would be a medium to high magnitude of change within some views experienced by high sensitivity residential receptors, resulting in major adverse and significant visual effects, these visual effects would not be overbearing.

Cumulative Effects

5.8.1. A total of three cumulative schemes have been assessed from a landscape and visual perspective. No significant cumulative effects are predicted to arise from any of these four schemes.

Conclusion

5.8.2. This Chapter 5 of the Environmental Statement has assessed the possible landscape and visual effects of the introduction of the Proposed Development into its host landscape.

5.8.3. This Chapter considers that there would be significant residual effects on select receptors at a small number of assessed viewpoints. These locations are either within the Site boundary or adjacent to it, where significant visual effects would be both expected – and to an extent – unavoidable.

5.8.4. There would be no significant residual effects on landscape character or landscape elements, with some beneficial, albeit not significant, effects on the tree and hedgerow resource across the Site.

5.8.5. It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development could be successfully accommodated by the Site and the host landscape.

5.8.6. **Table 5.8** provides a summary of effects, mitigation and residual effects.

Table 5.8: Summary of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects

Receptor / Receiving Environment	Description of Effect	Nature of Effect	Sensitivity Value	Magnitude of Effect	Geographical Importance	Significance of Effects ****	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects
Construction								
NLCA 31 & 35	Effect On Landscape Character	Temporary /Direct	Medium	Negligible	National	Negligible (Not Significant)	Landscape mitigation and enhancement	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Geological Aspect Areas	Effect on Geological Landscape	Temporary /Direct	Medium	Negligible	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Landscape Habitat Aspect Areas	Effect on Landscape Habitats	Temporary /Direct	Medium/High	Negligible-Low	Local	Negligible-Minor Adverse (Not Significant)	Landscape mitigation and enhancement	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas	Effect on Historic Landscape	Temporary /Direct	Medium/High	Negligible	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas	Effect on Landscape Character	Temporary /Direct	Medium	Negligible-Medium	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Negligible-Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**

Torfaen Special Landscape Area 5	Effect on Landscape Character	Temporary /Direct	High	Low	Local	Moderate Adverse (Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Moderate Adverse (not Significant)**
Viewpoints 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 16, 17 (PRoW Users)	Effect on Visual Amenity	Temporary/Direct	High	Medium-High	Local	Major Adverse (Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Major Adverse (Significant)**
Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20 (PRoW and Road Users)	Effect on Visual Amenity	Temporary/Direct	Medium-High	No change - Medium	Local	Negligible-Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**No change - Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**
Operation (Year 15)								
NLCA 31 & 35	Effect On Landscape Character	Temporary (duration of permission) /Direct	Medium	Negligible	National	Negligible (Not Significant)	Landscape mitigation and enhancement	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Geological Aspect Areas	Effect on Geological Landscape	Temporary (duration of permission) /Direct	Medium	Negligible	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Landscape Habitat Aspect Areas	Effect on Landscape Habitats	Permanent /Direct	Medium/High	Negligible-Low	Local	Negligible-Minor Beneficial (Not Significant)	Landscape mitigation and enhancement	**Negligible-Minor Beneficial (Not Significant)**

LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas	Effect on Historic Landscape	Temporary (duration of permission) /Direct	Medium/High	Negligible	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas	Effect on Landscape Character	Temporary (duration of permission) /Direct	Medium	Negligible-Medium	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Negligible-Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**
Torfaen Special Landscape Area 5	Effect on Landscape Character	Temporary (duration of permission) /Direct	High	Low	Local	Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**
Viewpoints 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 16, 17 (PRoW Users)	Effect on Visual Amenity	Temporary (duration of permission) /Direct	High	Medium-High	Local	Major Adverse (Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Major Adverse (Significant)**
Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20 (PRoW and Road Users)	Effect on Visual Amenity	Temporary (duration of permissions)/Direct	Medium-High	No change - Medium	Local	Negligible-Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**No change - Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**
Decommissioning								
NLCA 31 & 35	Effect On Landscape Character	Temporary /Direct	Medium	Negligible	National	Negligible (Not Significant)	Landscape mitigation and enhancement	**Negligible (Not Significant)**

LANDMAP Geological Aspect Areas	Effect on Geological Landscape	Temporary /Direct	Medium	Negligible	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Landscape Habitat Aspect Areas	Effect on Landscape Habitats	Temporary /Direct	Medium/High	Negligible-Low	Local	Negligible-Minor Adverse(Not Significant)	Landscape mitigation and enhancement	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas	Effect on Historic Landscape	Temporary /Direct	Medium/High	Negligible	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas	Effect on Landscape Character	Temporary /Direct	Medium	Negligible-Medium	Local	Negligible (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Negligible-Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**
Torfaen Special Landscape Area 5	Effect on Landscape Character	Temporary /Direct	High	Low	Local	Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**
Viewpoints 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 16, 17 (PRoW Users)	Effect on Visual Amenity	Temporary/Direct	High	Medium-High	Local	Major Adverse (Significant)	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**Major Adverse (Significant)**
Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15,	Effect on Visual Amenity	Temporary/Direct	Medium-High	No change - Medium	Local	Negligible-Moderate	Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement	**No change - Moderate Adverse**

18, 19, 20 (PRoW and Road Users)						Adverse (Not Significant)		**(Not Significant)**
Cumulative/In Combination Effects								
22/P/0446/OUT	Cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity	Temporary (duration of permission)/Indirect	n/a	Negligible	Regional	Negligible (not significant)	n/a	**Negligible (Not Significant)**
DNS/3239190	Cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity	Temporary (duration of permission)/Indirect	n/a	Low	Regional	Minor Adverse (Not Significant)	n/a	**Minor Adverse (Not Significant)**
DNS/3276725	Cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity	Temporary (duration of permission)/Indirect	n/a	Medium	Regional	Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)	n/a	**Moderate Adverse (Not Significant)**