

**Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
Merthyr Tudful (2016-2031)  
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan  
(2016-2031)**



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

**PAPURAU CEFNDIR | BACKGROUND PAPER**  
**Landscape Sensitivity Study for Solar Energy Search Areas**

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**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031**

**BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape Sensitivity Study (LSS) is a 'high-level' assessment of the Local Search Areas for solar energy development identified in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016 – 2031 Deposit Plan.
- 1.2 The Merthyr Tydfil Renewable Energy Assessment (REA), produced by RegenSW in June 2017, identified potential areas of solar energy resource based on a number of mapping constraints as indicated in the Welsh Government (WG) Planning for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy - A Toolkit for Planners (September 2015).
- 1.3 The REA recommended further refinement of the areas of technical resource identified in order to inform the designation of Local Search Areas (LSA) in the Local Development Plan (LDP) in accordance with guidance contained in the WG Toolkit. In particular the REA advised:  
  
*"Landscape impacts have not been considered in this resource assessment; however they are an important consideration in the delivery of solar farm development. Consequently, in considering what might be the deliverable capacity from ground-mounted solar for the Local Development Plan, the Council should consider landscape impacts in a refinement exercise of the identified theoretical capacity. This should inform the identification of Local Search Areas and targets as set out in Welsh Government guidance<sup>1</sup>".*
- 1.4 The Council prepared an REA Addendum (June 2018) that set out the cumulative impact and refinement steps undertaken in accordance with the WG Toolkit, Sheet K (Assessing Solar Photovoltaic Farm Resource), Step 4 (Addressing cumulative impact).
- 1.5 There is no set methodology prescribed in the WG Toolkit regarding the assessment of cumulative impacts however it is suggested that each local authority considers the potential cumulative impacts of the solar resource in their area and apply appropriate restrictions to further refine the resource.
- 1.6 Following this refinement step, five solar resource sites remained: Ffos-y-fran, North East of Trelewis, North of Bedlinog in part, Merthyr Road, and South West of Merthyr Vale in part.

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<sup>1</sup> RegenSW REA, Section 10.3 (Page 62)

- 1.7 In accordance with national planning policy there is a presumption in favour of solar energy development within LSA designations. However, the acceptability of detailed solar energy development proposals would be subject to further consideration at planning application stage to determine their acceptability in line with local and national policies. This would include, for example, the consideration of detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) for specific development proposals. Proposals may also require refinement within the search areas in order to take account of other constraints that fall outside the scope of the REA.
- 1.8 Whilst key landscape designations and mapped constraints were considered, representations from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) raised concerns regarding the lack of landscape and visual assessment to inform the designation of the proposed LSAs. This LSS therefore provides a 'high-level' assessment and strategic overview of the landscape sensitivity to solar energy development in order to support the evidence base for the Local Search Areas. The study also helps to ensure that the LSAs recommended are realistic and can provide sufficient certainty to landowners and developers. As the study identifies the main landscape and visual issues that are likely arise within the LSA these assessments could also be used as a basis to inform more detailed LVIAs for detailed proposals.
- 1.9 This LSS reviews the landscape sensitivities of the five solar resource sites remaining following the toolkit refinement exercises. Namely: Site 1 (Ffos-y-fran), Site 2 (North East of Trelewis), Site 4 (North of Bedlinog in part), Site 5 (Merthyr Road), and Site 12 (South West of Merthyr Vale in part). Following the assessment of site 5 at Merthyr Road which identified high landscape sensitivity, two further sites within the 3.5km buffer were reviewed to consider their suitability as alternative Local Search Area. This included Site 8 (North of Cefn Coed) and Site 10 (West of Heolgerrig).

## **2. Usage and Limitations**

- 2.1 It is intended that this LSS is used as part of the evidence base to support the LSAs identified in the Replacement LDP. It may also assist the Council with future EIA Screening and Scoping processes and inform the preparation of detailed landscape and visual impact assessments for detailed development proposals within the LSAs.
- 2.2 The LSS has considered the operational development to be the solar farm itself. It has not considered the effects of any grid connections, any new roads required to access the development or any other peripheral or

temporary works as these more specific impacts will need to be considered when detailed development proposals are known.

- 2.3 Certain locations, either localised or covering a broader area, may be considered to be less suitable for solar development for a wide spectrum of reasons other than simply landscape considerations. For example, some areas are remote and relatively inaccessible, considerations of access for construction purposes may be an issue. Such considerations do not form part of this LSS. Land ownership and the willingness of an owner to promote or to see solar development come forward on their land has also not been a consideration.
- 2.4 The physical nature of solar development requires the solar panels and electronic infrastructure to be fenced off which clearly has the capability to prevent open access to land. Reference is made to Open Access Land, where appropriate. The basis of Open Access Land is defined in The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 20008 or CROW Act. In Wales Open Access Land can be either additionally defined as Open Country or Common Land and often these coincide.
- 2.5 Open Access Land generally conveys a number of rights on members of the public such as the ability to walk, sightsee, bird-watch, climb and run on the land. The CROW Act also has a list of 'general restrictions' that limit what people using their open access rights may do, unless the landowner gives them permission to do something on the list, or the right to do something already exists. Evidently such rights bestow an amenity value for the public across this land. However, these rights are capable of being changed or extinguished by application to Natural Resources Wales and whilst Open Access Land is a planning consideration and, potentially, a significant one where such a public amenity might be harmed or lost altogether, it is not necessarily a 'block' to all planning proposals.
- 2.6 In addition to the issue of amenity, Open Access Land in the County Borough is generally open moorland located on the hills, ridges and plateaus and, in the round, usually has specific landscape characteristics which may be more susceptible to harm from solar development than other more settled landscapes. Consequently Open Access Land can include areas of higher landscape sensitivity.

### 3. Characteristics of Solar Energy Development

- 3.1 The typical planning implications of renewable energy development is summarised in the Welsh Government's Practice Guidance: Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development (February 2011) available to view at: <https://beta.gov.wales/planning-implications-renewable-and-low-carbon-energy-development-practice-guidance>
- 3.2 The main component of solar farm development is panels of photovoltaic cells, encased in aluminium frames and supported on aluminium or steel stands. An individual panel is in the order of 1m x 2m in size, set tilted to the south at a fixed angle of 20-40° and these are laid out in generally parallel rows in an east-west direction, typically 5-8m wide depending on the gradients within the site. In most cases the panels are fixed, although there are panels which allow manual or automatic changes in angle to track the sun. The panels are set at around 0.6-1m above ground level and the remaining land is laid to grass often for grazing by sheep. The overall height of the panels above ground level is, therefore, typically around 2-3m.
- 3.3 Other components of operational solar farms can include:
- Inverters to convert the electricity from DC to AC, housed within new or existing buildings and served by permanent access tracks;
  - A transformer and power cables, generally undergrounded within the solar farm itself;
  - An on-site power house (usually only a small flat roofed building on a concrete base);
  - Security fencing, around the boundary of the solar farm, up to 2.5m in height; and
  - There can be CCTV (onsite security cameras mounted up to around 4.5m high).
- 3.4 Generally the technically favourable topography for solar farm sites is flat or gently sloping landforms with a southerly aspect which are required to maximise efficiency. Steeply sloping sites are not favoured because of practicality issues for construction and maintenance.
- 3.5 The landscape in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough has considerable topographical variety (a summary overview can be found below under 'Landscape Value – Overview). Consequently, the most likely favoured sites will be relatively flat plateau tops, flat valley bottoms or gently sloping valley sides. The REA included slope analysis to identify the potential solar resource and this resulted in a range of topographically suitable LSAs.

#### **4. General Effects on Landscape Character**

- 4.1 Depending on the landscape character of the site the direct effect and loss of existing landscape features should be relatively minimal. Earthworks should generally not be required, at least not extensively, and the loss of trees, hedges and other field boundary features should only be required to facilitate access, whilst mature trees within fields can be retained with suitable set-backs for the protection of the trees themselves and to allow for shading effects.
- 4.2 There may be a longer term change to the surface of the site depending on its nature. Semi-improved pasture, rough grazing and moorland will have a more complex range of species and probably a higher botanical interest which would need to be assessed and the effects of losing it altogether (through re-sowing) or through long term shading effects, which may change its botanical interest, considered as part of the planning application and the effects taken into account in the planning balance by decision-makers.
- 4.3 In landscape and visual terms solar farm development is perceived as a change in land use which remains for the term of the development. As for wind farms, planning permission for solar farm development is generally given for a 25 year period and is, in this sense, wholly reversible and temporary. There is a considerable body of planning appeal decisions, mainly for wind farms, in respect of the weight to be given to this temporary nature in the planning decision and to what this means for those viewing such developments. In many cases Planning Inspectors have considered that a 25 year period effectively is perceived as permanent in the context of the duration of people's lives.
- 4.4 Beyond the physical changes to existing landscape features solar farm development can affect the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character. The most significant aesthetic attributes of a solar farm development are its consistency of texture, form, line and colour and the rigidity of the geometric pattern created by massed arrays of panels. These can constitute a strong contrast with more natural textures and forms of the surrounding landscape. These elements can, depending on the scale of development, have a significant impact on existing landscape character.
- 4.5 Perceptual aspects of landscape character, such as a sense of remoteness and tranquillity, typically reflect an absence or relative scarcity of man-made features and/or a clear and significant sense of distance from them. Evidently solar farm development can have an adverse effect on these perceptual

qualities as well as other less clearly defined perceptual senses such as degrees of rurality.

## **5. Landscape Value – Overview**

- 5.1 Merthyr Tydfil is an upland glaciated landscape with a grandeur and simple topography characteristic of the South Wales Valleys. The northern 20% of the county borough comprises the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park – a bleak moorland landscape flanked by the scenic valleys of the Taf Fechan and Taf Fawr to the east and west respectively, with wooded sides and extensive reservoirs. These rivers run south to form a confluence in the industrialised Merthyr Basin. To the south the Taf runs in a steadily narrowing deep U shaped valley to Quakers Yard. Here it is joined by the smaller Bargoed Taf which has run parallel from the north. The upland ridges in between, form part of the extensive Coalfield Plateaux, allowing superb and extensive views.
- 5.2 As an upland landscape the agricultural quality of the land is generally poor. The better land on the valley bottoms and sides is Grade 4 and this has been utilised for pasture. The common and other uplands are Grade 5. Sheep grazing on these areas has left the prehistoric remains widely untouched. Forestry is in extensive blocks on the valley sides.
- 5.3 Merthyr is best known for its industrial past and present. It has a claim to be the first iron town and was the most productive iron making area in the world for half a century. It is known internationally for its historical and archaeological importance. The landscape bears witness to exploitation on a massive scale. The settlement pattern in Merthyr and to the south has been almost entirely dictated by the needs of extractive and primary industries. In the past, housing has been located in the spaces beside or between mines, quarries, tips, works and related tramways, roads, canals and other communication routes. There is still some evidence of industrial archaeology including some fine structures and extensive relic earthworks, but much has been removed by development which was at the time perceived as serving the needs of progress.
- 5.4 Now, a substantial proportion of the land used by the iron and coal industries is no longer in use. These landscapes are still very much in evidence in the Merthyr basin between housing and reaching far up the slopes, in the Taf and Bargoed Taf valleys and on the tops around Merthyr Common. They are in varying condition. Some have re-vegetated naturally in complex habitat mosaics and still retain their striking original form. Some are used for trail biking and other marginal uses which easily remove the surface vegetation to



reveal the substrate beneath. Other areas have been reclaimed to form 'green tips' with engineered sides and flat terraces for industry and recreation. Substantial time and investment in recent years has meant that others still have been reclaimed with sensitive land form, water bodies, substantial planting and access routes. Planting and vegetation is, over time, integrating and softening these formally harsh landscapes. All, however, currently still bear the unmistakable hallmark of reclaimed or disturbed landscapes. As such they suffer from abuse because of their perceived low value such as dumping and litter – problems prevalent in urban fringe areas.

- 5.5 Often, the older overgrown tips form part of a mosaic landscape between remnant rhos pasture and more widespread ffridd landscapes. These are particularly evident to the west and south of Merthyr. These landscapes are some of the most interesting in ecological and visual terms because of their diversity of species. In a South Wales that has understandably eradicated a large proportion of its post-industrial landscapes in the wake of the Aberfan disaster these areas are becoming rarer and more distinctive.

## **6. LANDMAP**

- 6.1 LANDMAP is a GIS (Geographical Information System) based resource prepared by Natural Resources Wales in which landscape characteristics; qualities and influences on the landscape are evaluated and recorded into a dataset for the whole of Wales. It is made up of five spatial datasets known as Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape and GIS map shows each aspect area for which there is a survey and assessment record which contains the descriptive landscape information for each area.
- 6.2 The Landscape Character Assessment for Merthyr was carried out in 2002 yet despite the need to revisit it is evident that essentially very little has changed the assessment was based on the initial LANDMAP assessment with many of the selected boundaries of the areas and on the assessment of key characteristics, special qualities and values of the various character areas remaining well defined. LANDMAP remains the primary tool for landscape character assessment, and the definitions of susceptibility remain heavily reliant upon LANDMAP for the assessment of landscape value.

## **7. Designated Landscapes**

- 7.1 Excluding Brecon Beacons National Park for planning purposes, within Merthyr Tydfil there are no landscapes designated purely for their landscape value. Landscape value within Merthyr Tydfil is determined by LANDMAP, in particular through the 'unioning' of the various aspect layers as defined by Guidance Note 1. Solar farm development, particularly on a large or very large scale, could have such an adverse effect on landscape character that it could reduce the value of landscapes as determined by LANDMAP.

## **8. Relevant Background Material**

- 8.1 The relevant background documents and baseline information for this assessment are considered to be as follows:

- LANDMAP;
- Renewable Energy Assessment for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough (RegenSW, June 2017);
- Addendum to the Renewable Energy Assessment (June 2018);
- Welsh Government Planning for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy - A Toolkit for Planners (September 2015); and
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8: Renewable Energy (2005).

- 8.2 The Welsh Government Toolkit indicates that the starting point for the development of a suitable methodology could be TAN 8, Annex D (E4.3, Task 3 – Identify Areas for Strategic stand-alone Renewable Energy Development, page 94). However, there are some obvious limitations, given that its primary purpose is for refining the boundaries of what are inevitably large Strategic Search Areas for wind (SSAs). TAN8 itself is silent on the considerations for solar farms as it envisages only domestic and very small-scale commercial uses. Notwithstanding this, for landscape and visual sensitivity assessments Annex D (at paragraph 6.5) proposes the following particularly relevant landscape criteria:

- Landform character;
- Scale and height;
- Skyline character;
- Pattern and grain of land cover;
- Openness/enclosure;
- Character of vertical elements;
- Manmade features;
- Settlement/circulation patterns;
- Time depth; and condition.

- 8.3 The following section sets out how landscape and visual impact considerations and LANDMAP data have been used in the methodology for assessing the land landscape sensitivity of the identified solar resource areas.

## **9. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Methodology**

- 9.1 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)<sup>13</sup> addresses methodologies for landscape sensitivity assessments and has been used as the basis for the structure and key stages of the LSS.
- 9.2 Landscape sensitivity can be considered to be either inherent sensitivity, i.e. a landscape's intrinsic sensitivity to any change, or sensitivity to a specific form of change. Landscape sensitivity will depend on the susceptibility of the characteristics of that landscape to change as a result of the development in question in combination with consideration of the value attached to the landscape. Defining landscape susceptibility is a judgement based on an assessment against various criteria. The assessment of value has also been a judgement, although one made by an assessor independent of this LSS process in developing LANDMAP. Landscape sensitivity is the outcome of these two separate analyses combined together and from these assessments a final judgement is made in the form of a recommendation regarding an appropriate 'capacity' for each LSA.

## **10. Landscape Value**

- 10.1 For this sensitivity study, landscape value has been determined using LANDMAP. LANDMAP is an all-Wales GIS (Geographical Information System) based landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. In Wales, LANDMAP is the formally adopted methodology for landscape assessment and is advocated by Planning Policy Wales. For a more detailed explanation see LANDMAP Guidance Note 1: LANDMAP and Special Landscape Areas 2017.
- 10.2 LANDMAP has been used as the key determinant of landscape value through the methodology of 'unioning' as defined in Guidance Note 1. Each of the five aspects of LANDMAP (i.e. Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape) includes various criteria.
- 10.3 Of these twelve criteria 4 have been identified in Guidance Note 1, Table 2 as being "particularly informative" and the "most relevant criteria" to consider in

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assessments of this nature (in bold). These 4 criteria are key drivers when assessing each aspect area.

**Table 2: LANDMAP Evaluation Criteria**

Geological Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Visual & Sensory	Historic Landscape	Cultural Landscape*
Research Value Educational value Historical Value <b>Rarity/unique ness</b> <b>Classic Example</b>	<b>Priority habitats</b> <b>Significance</b> Opportunity Expansion rates Sensitivity connectivity/ cohesion habitat evaluation Importance for key species	<b>Scenic quality</b> <b>Integrity</b> <b>Character</b> <b>Rarity</b>	<b>Integrity</b> <b>Survival</b> <b>Condition</b> <b>Rarity</b> Potential	Each Aspect Area has a single overall evaluation score only. Survey questions may still be used to define SLAs, for example: Recognition /transparency, Rarity, Group value and Survival

- 10.4 Table 1 from Guidance Note 1 sets out the evaluation criteria of each category. Using a methodology similar to how this Authority identified Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) only evaluation scores of Outstanding or High were used in this sensitivity assessment.

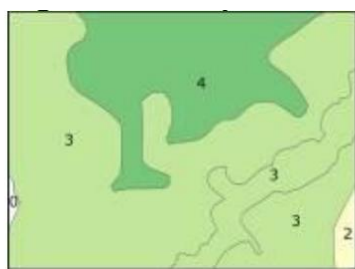
**Table 1: LANDMAP Overall Evaluated Score**

Overall evaluation score	Definition of importance to the LANDMAP layer
Outstanding	International or national
High	Regional or county
Moderate	Local
Low	Little or no importance

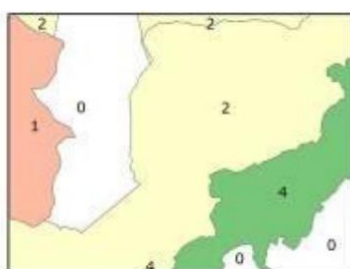
- 10.5 Because 12 criteria will be assessed in each particular area, it is helpful to use GIS to interrogate the evaluations through 'unioning'. The unioning process is a geometric intersection, or overlay of two or more spatial datasets, that retains the features from all of the original, source GIS files and creates a new polygon dataset. The example below shows how Unionising adds together the value of each criteria in an aspect category together with another criteria in another aspect category to calculate an overall score.

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Criteria 1 Values

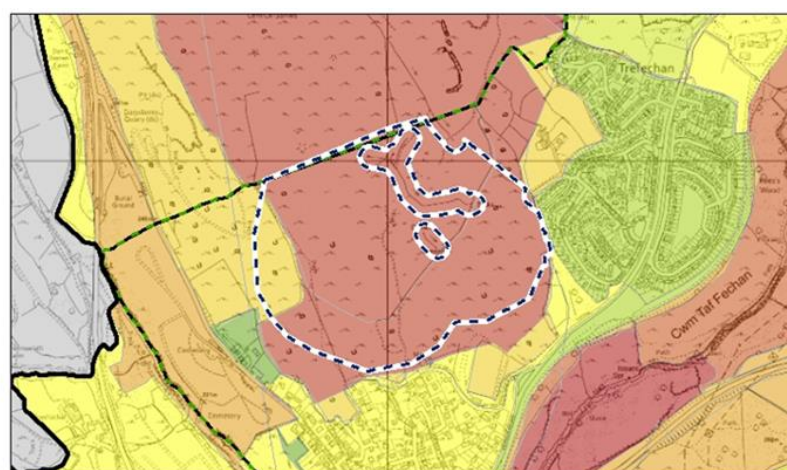


Criteria 2 Values



Criteria 1 and 2 Values combined

10.6 Through unionising the 12 criteria layers it was possible to count the number of instances an aspect area was assessed as Outstanding or High. This gave a score from 0-12 for each aspect area.



Count of LANDMAP Evaluation Criteria - Total Outstanding or High.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Potential Solar Farm

Brecon Beacons National Park

Unitary Authority Boundary

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- 10.7 By using the statistics generated by Unionising it was possible to further refine the assessment of Landscape Value through giving additional weighting to the Key Drivers identified in Guidance Note 1 using the assessment matrix of which below is an example.

	HIGH	OUTSTANDING
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness		
Geological Landscape Classic Example		
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats	X	
Landscape Habitats Significance	X	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality		
Visual and Sensory Integrity		
Visual and Sensory *Character		
Visual and Sensory Rarity		
Historic Landscape *Integrity	X	X
Historic Landscape Survival	X	X
Historic Landscape Condition		
Historic Landscape *Rarity	X	

**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: HIGH**

- 10.8 The rationale for assessing the Relative Landscape Value each aspect area is below:

Landscape Value	Equivalent to	Assessment Guidance
Very High	A landscape of National value	Typically identifiable by the dominant presence of 2+ Outstanding Main Drivers, likely accompanied by a range of other particularly informative criteria.
High	A landscape of Regional or County value	Typically identifiable by the dominant presence of 1 Outstanding NRW Main Driver and/or 2 to 4 High Main Drivers and by some or a few particularly informative criteria.
Medium	A landscape of Local value	Typically identifiable by the dominant presence of 1 to 3 High Main Drivers and possibly by a few other particularly informative criteria.
Low	A landscape of some but limited value	Typically identifiable by the presence of 1 or no High Main Drivers.

## **11. Landscape Susceptibility**

- 11.1 GLVIA3 defines susceptibility as “*The ability of a defined landscape.....to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue consequences*”. In order to determine this, a consistent landscape component needs to be defined, its key characteristics also defined and a criteria based assessment applied as to the extent to which those characteristics could potentially be affected and by what degree. The Visual & Sensory aspect layer (the Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas or VSAAAs) of LANDMAP defines areas of consistent character and relevant key characteristics. The character information provided by the VSAAAs has been supplemented at the fieldwork stage which has been to specifically address the susceptibility issue
- 11.2 The susceptibility of key characteristics to solar farm developments is based on the categories below:
- 1) Nature, scale and complexity of the landform.
  - 2) Nature, scale and complexity of the land use.
  - 3) Visual enclosure or exposure.
  - 4) Development, activity, remoteness and tranquillity.
- 11.3 Specific susceptibility criteria have been developed for each criterion as set out in the four tables.

Judgements have been made as to the susceptibility of an LSA against each of the four criteria and these have been accumulated into a final judgement as to the overall susceptibility supported by the field notes. Each LSA has been ranked into one of five relative categories of susceptibility (Very High – High – Medium – Low – Very Low). No specific criteria have been provided to define these as these outcomes have been carried forward into the ultimate assessment of landscape sensitivity.

### **Landform**

**Lower Susceptibility** ←  **Higher Susceptibility**

<b>V Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>V High</b>
A landscape that comprises a relatively flat but valley floor	A basin shaped landscape with prominent flanks	A landscape of valley sides that rise both gently and abruptly	A landscape of long narrow exposed upland ridgelines with elevated shoulders with steep slopes and crags	A vast open exposed upland visibly prominent with or without summits



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**Sense of openness / enclosure**

**Lower Susceptibility** ← **Higher Susceptibility**

<b>V Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>V High</b>
A very well enclosed landscape Steep sided valleys, small scale derelict sites, urban development and coniferous woodland	A landscape enclosure formed/create d by small scale field patterns, copses, stone walls and hedge banks	A landscape with open or enclosed areas (fridd), comprising industrial or relic field pattern mosaic, shifting between exposed and intimate	An open landscape with little sense of enclosure - predominantly open in character	An open and empty landscape with no settlement - exposed and bleak upland moorland

**Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use**

**Lower Susceptibility** ← **Higher Susceptibility**

<b>V Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>V High</b>
A landscape intensively managed including geometric, medium to large scale fields	A landscape of modified pasture, extensively grazed with hedges or walls, degraded boundaries comprising medium sized fields	A pastoral landscape comprising a variety of field boundary types and shapes, unmanaged or semi-improved land cover	A landscape with irregular and/or small-scale fields, strong field boundaries of clawdd, hedge, or drystone and open semi-natural land	A landscape of little or no semi-improved fields semi-natural landscape

**Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity**

**Lower Susceptibility** ← **Higher Susceptibility**

<b>V Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>V High</b>
A landscape with much human activity comprising either industrial, residential or retail development	A semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as urban fringe	A rural landscape with some modern development and human activity, such as intensive grazing, forestry or stables	A more naturalistic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development	A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development



## 12. Landscape Sensitivity

- 12.1 The assessment of landscape sensitivity is a combination of the output of the LANDMAP unioning, i.e. landscape value, and the output of the landscape susceptibility work.
- 12.2 The interaction of the four categories of landscape value and four categories of landscape susceptibility generate a sixteen box matrix illustrated in the 'Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity' table below, from which, six categories of overall landscape sensitivity have been identified. These categories can be identified by the colour assigned to each box in the matrix.

**ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY**  
**Landscape Susceptibility**

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Very High				
High				
Medium				
Low				

- 12.3 Each category of overall sensitivity has been defined as set out below.

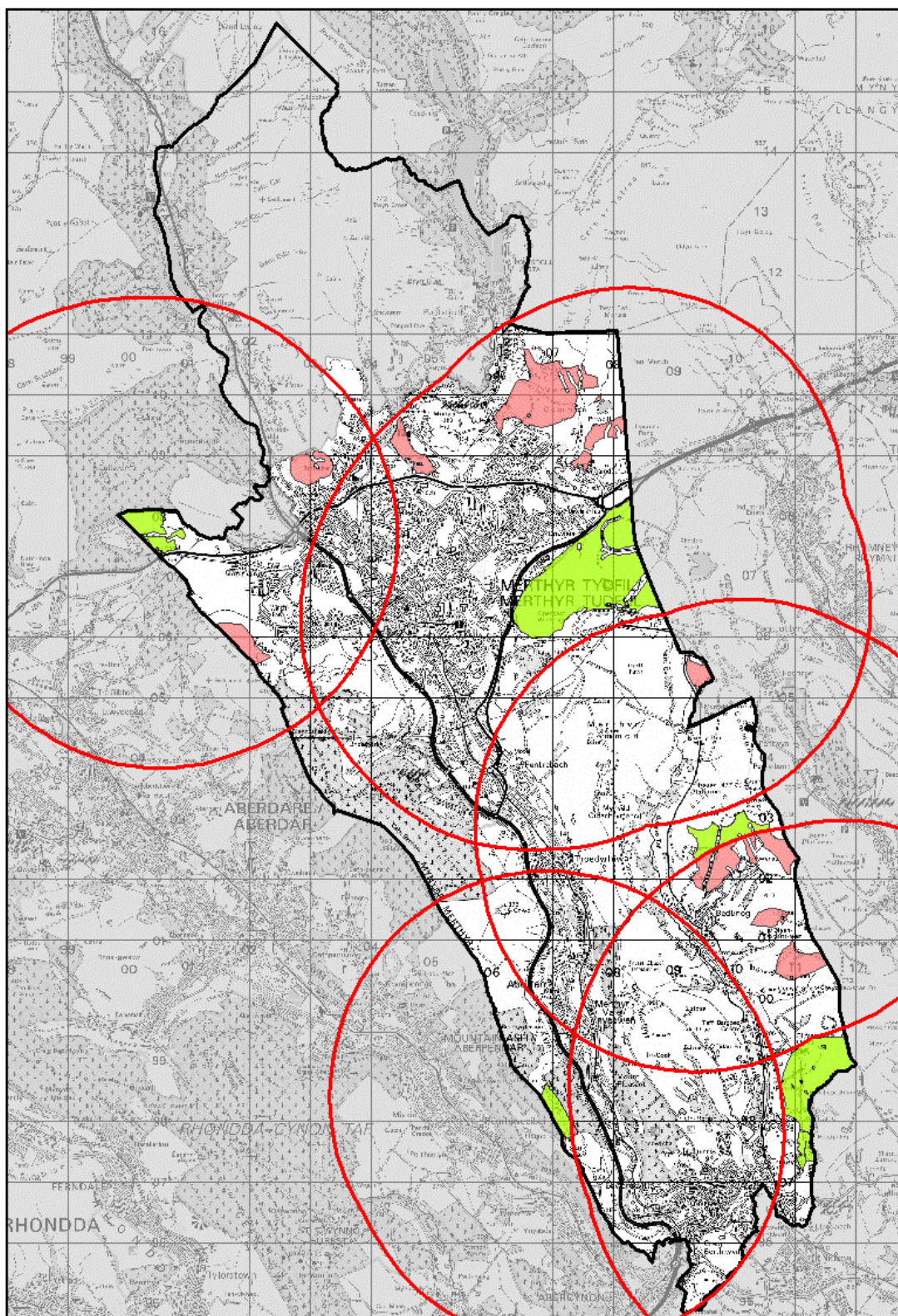
Landscape Sensitivity Categories					
Low	Medium - Low	Medium	Medium - High	High	V. High
None of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from the development type.	Key characteristics of the landscape are less likely to be adversely affected by change or Change can potentially be more easily accommodated without significantly altering character	Some of the key characteristics of the landscape may be vulnerable to the type of change being assessed	Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb change, some alteration in character may result	Key characteristics of the landscape are vulnerable to the type of change being assessed.	Landscape highly vulnerable to change from the development type. No potential for locating the development type.

- 12.4 The landscape sensitivity assessment is supported by a narrative discussion as to the key issues that have determined the sensitivity outcome and define the judgements regarding where within each LSA there may be potential solar farm development capacity and the level of that potential capacity, according to the three development typologies.
- 12.5 The capacity assessment is very broad in its approach and is not definitive. It is based on an assessment of a potential area, for example part of a particular valley floor, and a calculation of the area of solar farm development within this area that could be undertaken without unacceptable landscape and visual effects.
- 12.6 Evidently this high-level assessment is to be tested at the planning application stage; both in terms of where and how much development is potentially acceptable, but the LSS outcome provides guidance, or a steer, as to location and quantum.

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

13. Location Map of Deposit Plan Solar Energy Resource Areas (showing 3.5km cumulative impact buffer)

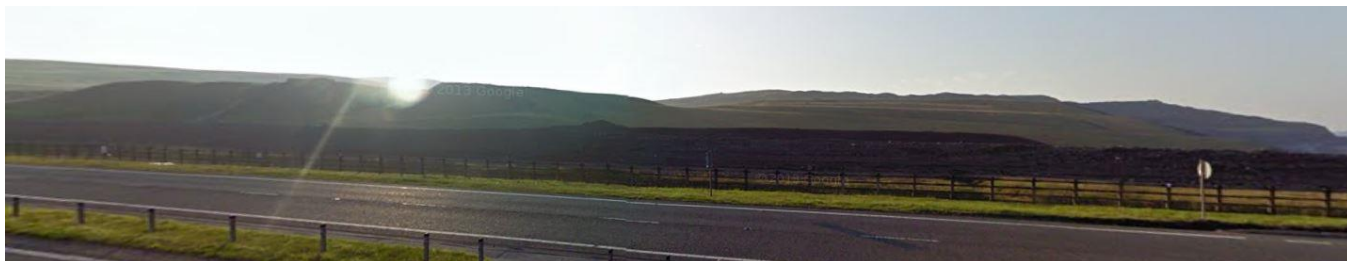




**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT**

**SITE 1 FFOS –Y-FRAN**

**SO 07284 06930**



View of the site looking east from the A4060



View of the site looking north from the Bogey Road

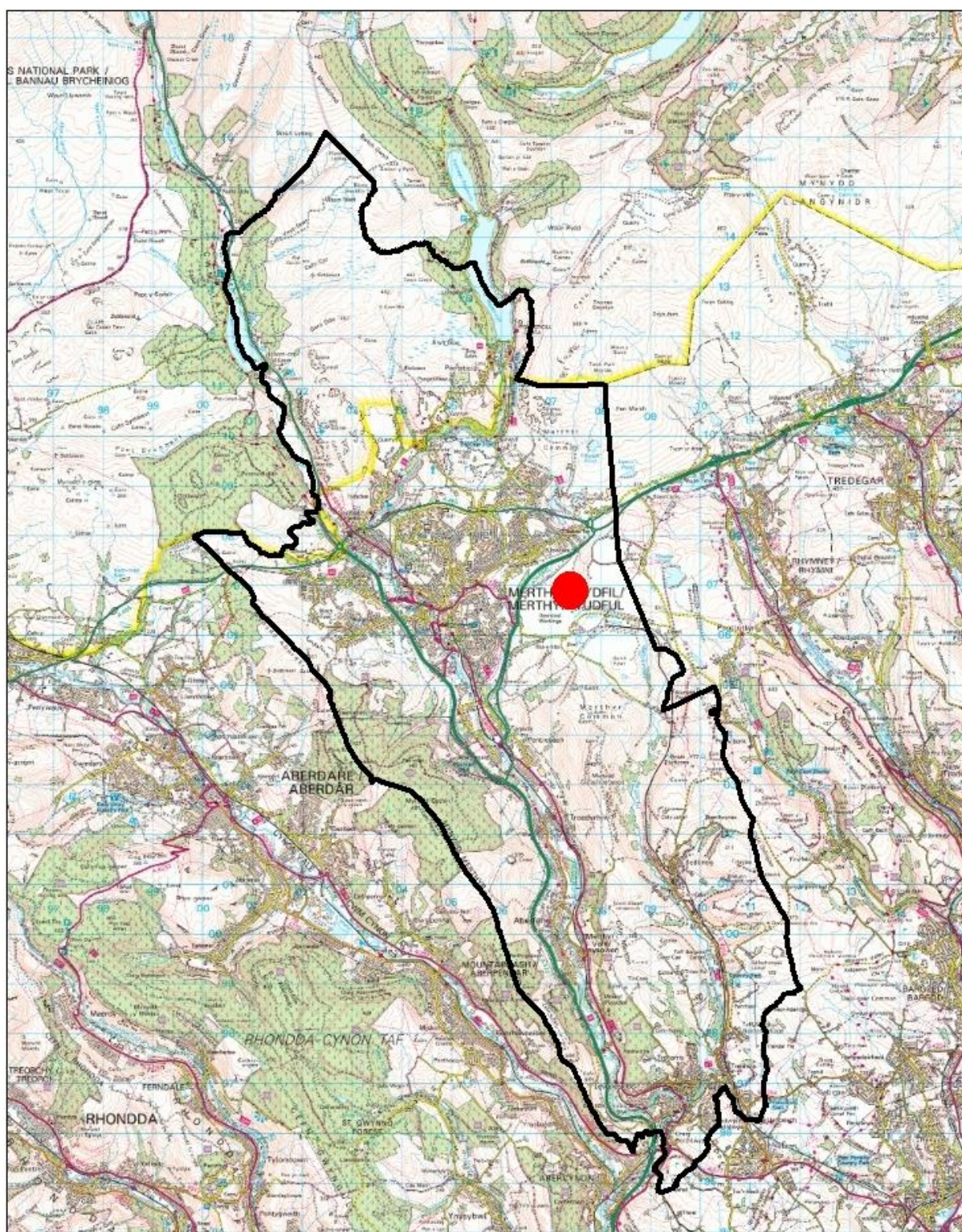




View of the site looking west from Fochriw Road to the east



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

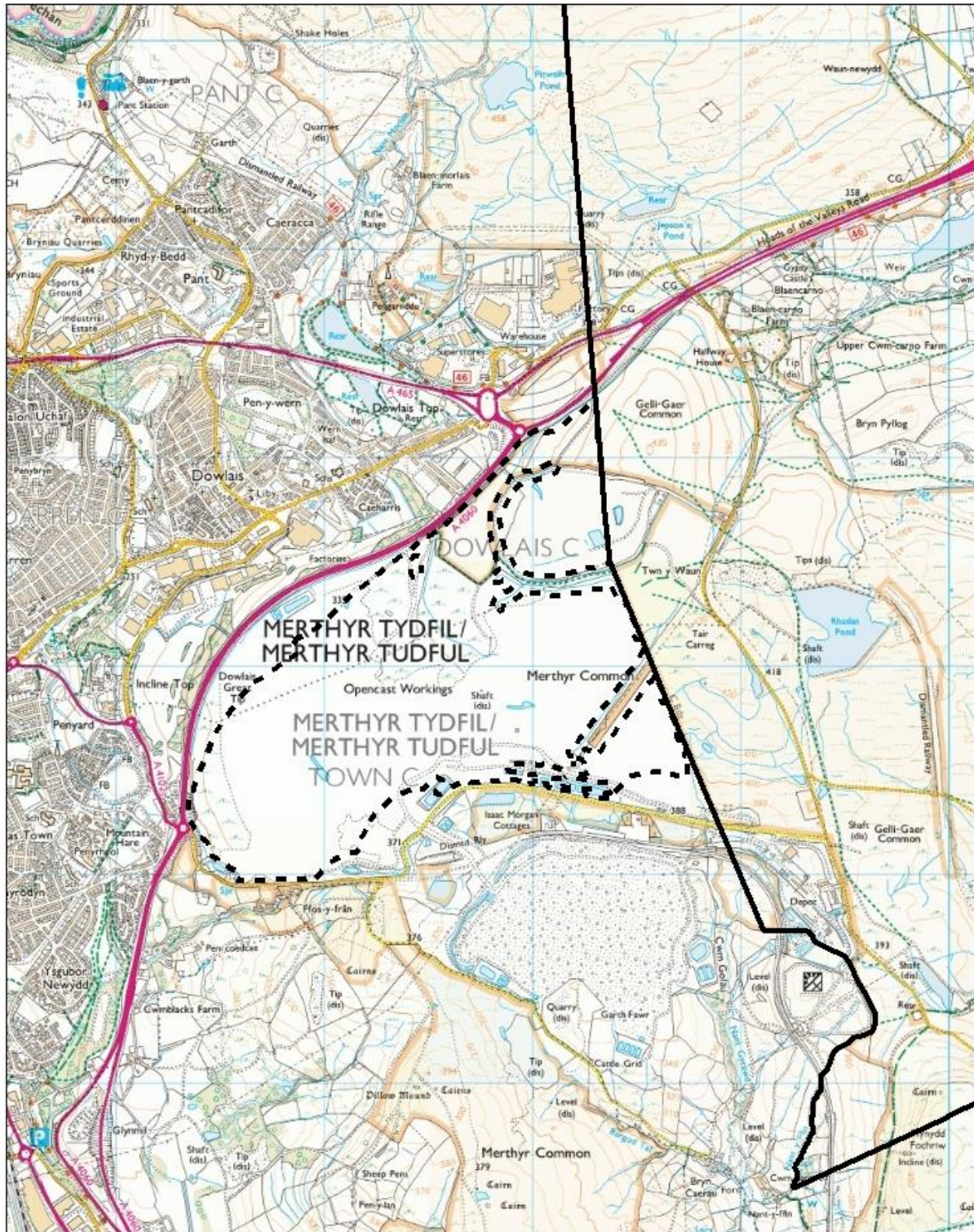




	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:100,000	© Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2018	
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 15/10/2018	Arolwg Ordnans 100025302	
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE	"Ni chaniateir i ddiw gopio, tan-dwydded u, dosbarthu neu werthu y data yma i unrhyw drydydd bart mewn unrhyw flurf"	
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB	© Crown copyright and database rights 2018	
TEITL / TITLE:	SITE 1 FFOS-Y-FRAN	Ordnance Survey 100025302 "You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form."	Cymgwrdd Ddwestra Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:24,000	
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 15/10/2018	
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE	
	ARLUNIWDYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB	
TEITL / TITLE: SITE 1 FFOS-Y-FRAN		

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**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031**

**BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS**

**ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE**

	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness		
Geological Landscape Classic Example		
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats	<b>X</b>	
Landscape Habitats Significance	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality		
Visual and Sensory Integrity		
Visual and Sensory *Character		
Visual and Sensory Rarity		
Historic Landscape *Integrity		
Historic Landscape Survival		<b>X</b>
Historic Landscape Condition		
Historic Landscape *Rarity		

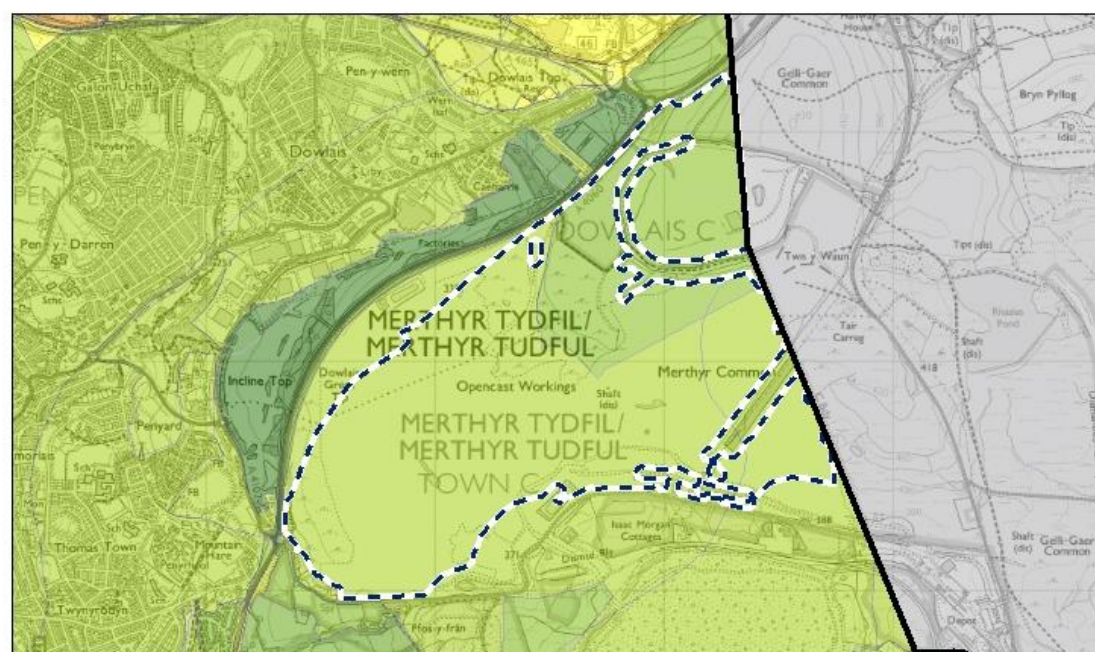
**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: LOW-MEDIUM**




**Notes:**

**Historic Landscape Survival:** **OUTSTANDING** across the entire site  
**Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats:** **HIGH** across the entire site  
**Landscape Habitats Significance:** **HIGH** across the entire site



## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

 Unitary Authority Boundary

	SCALE: 1:25,000 at A4		
	DATE: 09/11/2018		
	DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: GIS		
TITLE: POTENTIAL SOLAR SITE 1		© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.	



### **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY**

	V. High	High	Mod	Low	V. Low
<b>Susceptibility Criteria</b>					
Landform	X				
Sense of openness / enclosure	X				
Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use	X				
Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity					X

**Susceptibility Score: HIGH**

#### **Field Notes:**

An extensive area of upland which has been radically altered by open cast mining operations. The area consists of exposed mineral waste which has been partially re-shaped as a restoration scheme and stabilised with grass seeding which is on-going. The northern portion of the site is currently occupied by a landfill operation. Open exposed slopes of the finished reclamation scheme will lead to an upland land form, visible from many of the surrounding areas. The finished scheme will exist as treeless upland common with free grazing animals returning to Common. The variation of topography will be limited but will incorporate drainage channels and attenuation ponds. The long views out contrast with the enclosed nature of the adjacent valleys and the sensitivity of the open ridgelines to development is due to their visibility from surrounding areas and their historical significance. The ridgelines offer the potential for existing and future recreational benefits. The land will return to Open Access land on completion.

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

### Landscape Susceptibility

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Very High				
High				
Medium		X		
Low				

### Landscape Sensitivity:

**MEDIUM** Some of the key characteristics of the landscape may be vulnerable to the type of change being assessed

### Conclusion:

The development site lies outside Gelligaer and Graig Fargoed SLA although there is direct inter visibility particularly from Pengarn Bugail which is a significant viewpoint from within both the SLA and the South Wales Coalfield. Owing to a lack of refined data on finished levels and land form arrangements it is difficult to ascertain whether intervening screening or mitigation would change this although visibility of the site reclaimed would be open and unfettered. This site is due to return to common. There would be potential visual impacts as viewed from the Registered Gelligaer Common Landscape of Special Historic Interest. Views are also possible from the rear of Cyfarthfa Park (Registered Historic Park and Garden). Inter visibility exists with the southern edges of the Brecon Beacons National Park High visibility with the northern residential areas of Merthyr Tydfil, modification to intervening land forms as a form of mitigation would require a change in the land reclamation scheme from its current phased restoration. With a reconfiguration of the landform specifically to accommodate solar development satisfactory mitigation might be achieved.

**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT**

**SITE 2 NORTH EAST OF TRELEWIS**

**ST 10795 98397**



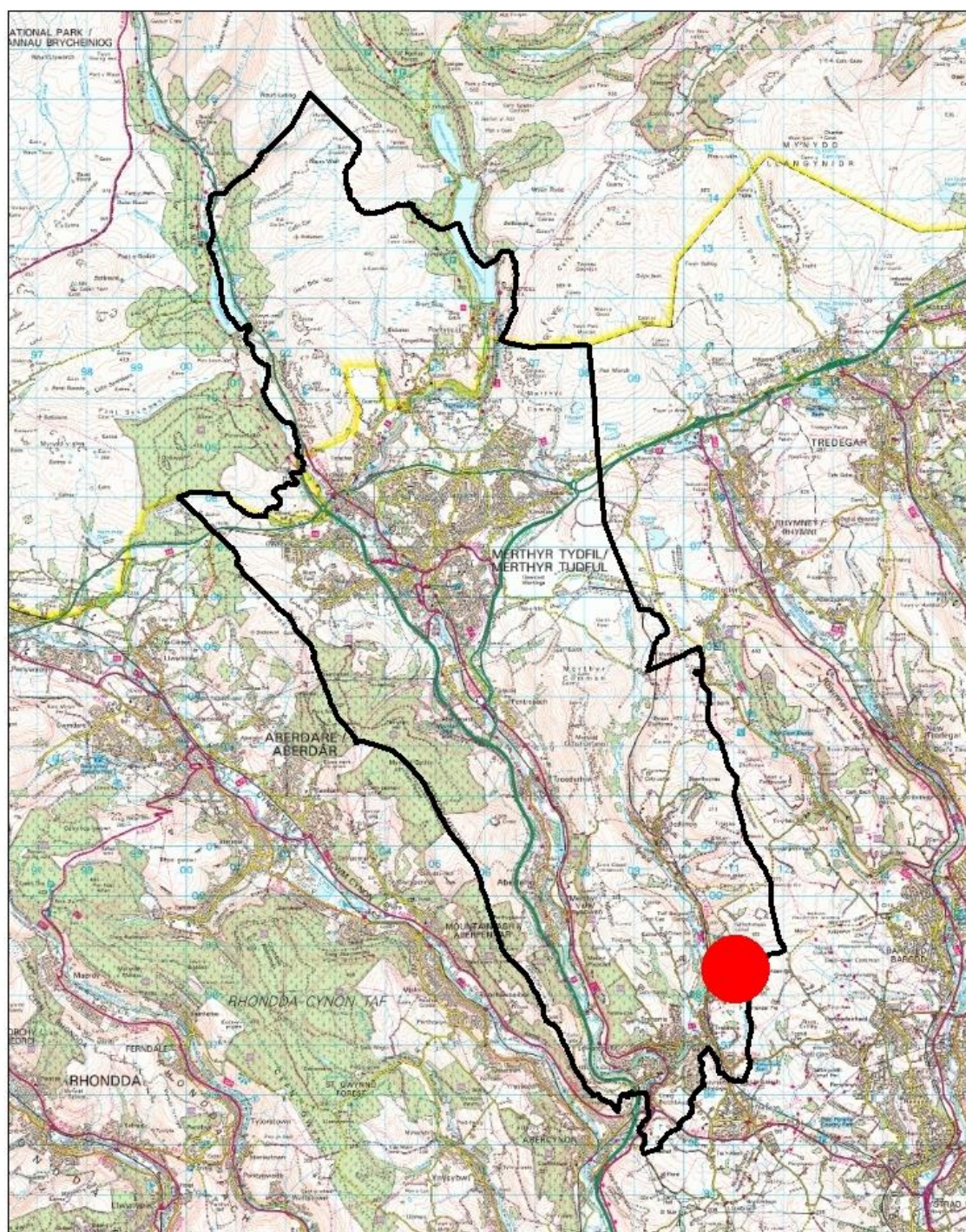
View looking towards the site from the Gelligaer Common Road to the north





# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

### BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

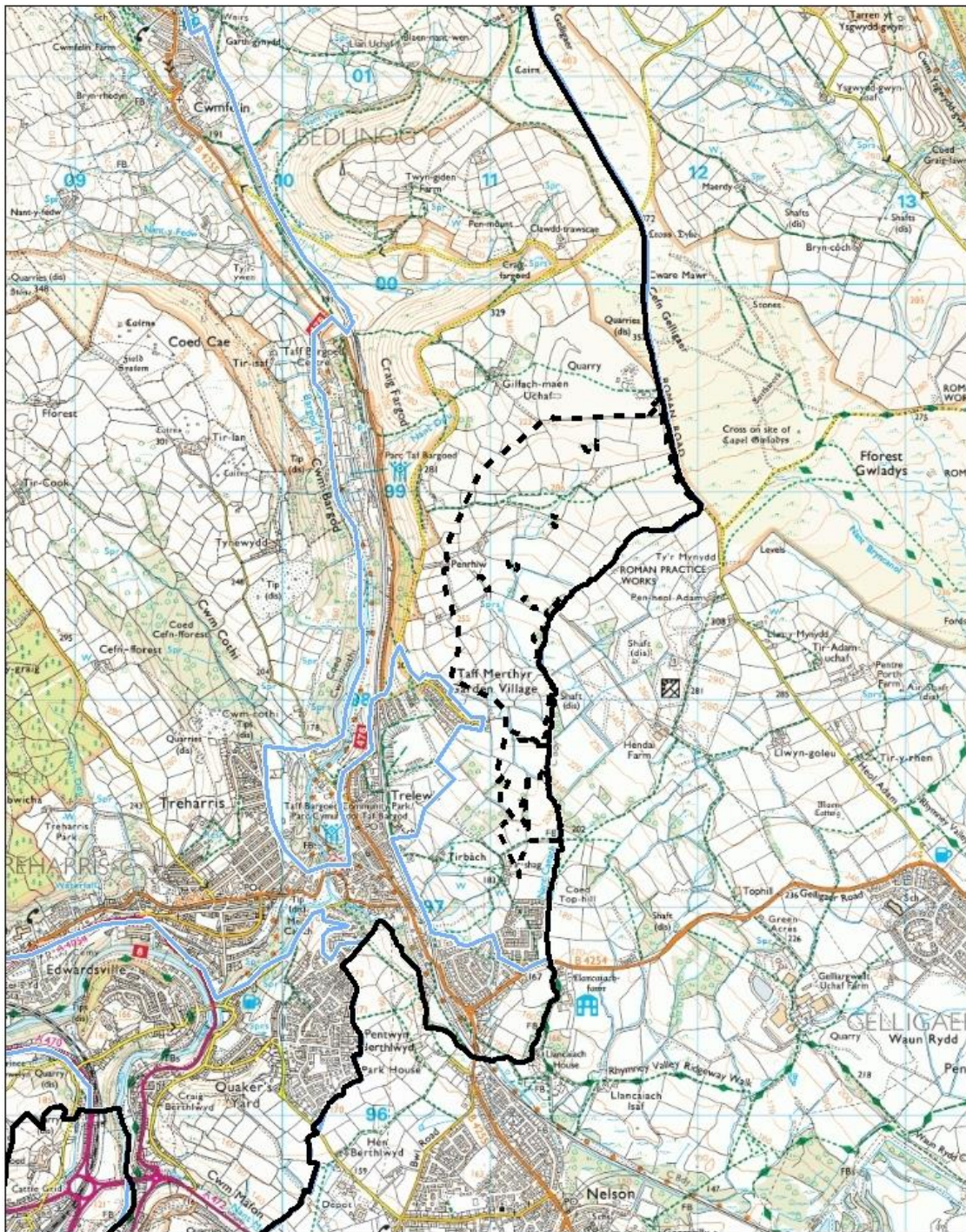




	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:100,000	<p>© Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2018 Arolwg Ordians 100025302 "Ni chaniaiteir i dwil gopio, tan-dwydded u, dosbarthu neu werthu y data yma i unrhyw drydydd barti mewn unrhyw ffurf"</p> <p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302 "You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form."</p>	 <p>Cyngor Gwrdestraf Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council</p>
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 05/12/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE: SITE 2 NE OF TRELEWIS			



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



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	DYDDIAD / DATE: 18/10/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE:	SITE 2 NE OF TRELEWIS		

**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031**

**BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS**

**ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE**

	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness		
Geological Landscape Classic Example		
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats	<b>X</b>	
Landscape Habitats Significance	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality		
Visual and Sensory Integrity		
Visual and Sensory *Character	<b>XX</b>	
Visual and Sensory Rarity		
Historic Landscape *Integrity	<b>XX</b>	
Historic Landscape Survival	<b>XX</b>	
Historic Landscape Condition	<b>XX</b>	
Historic Landscape *Rarity		

**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: MEDIUM**

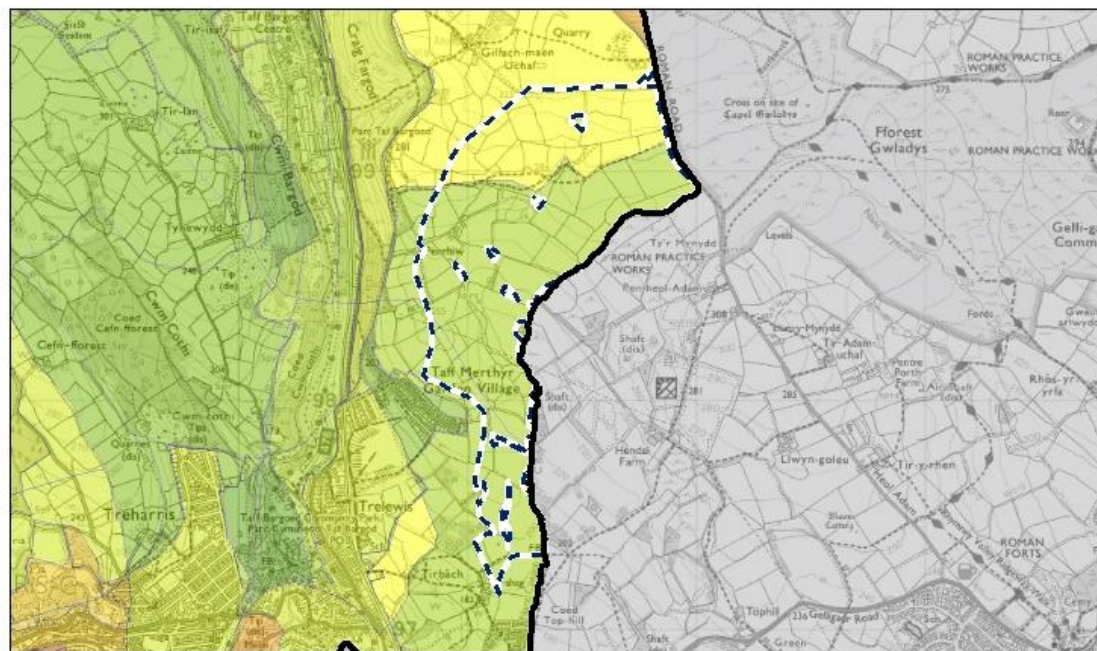
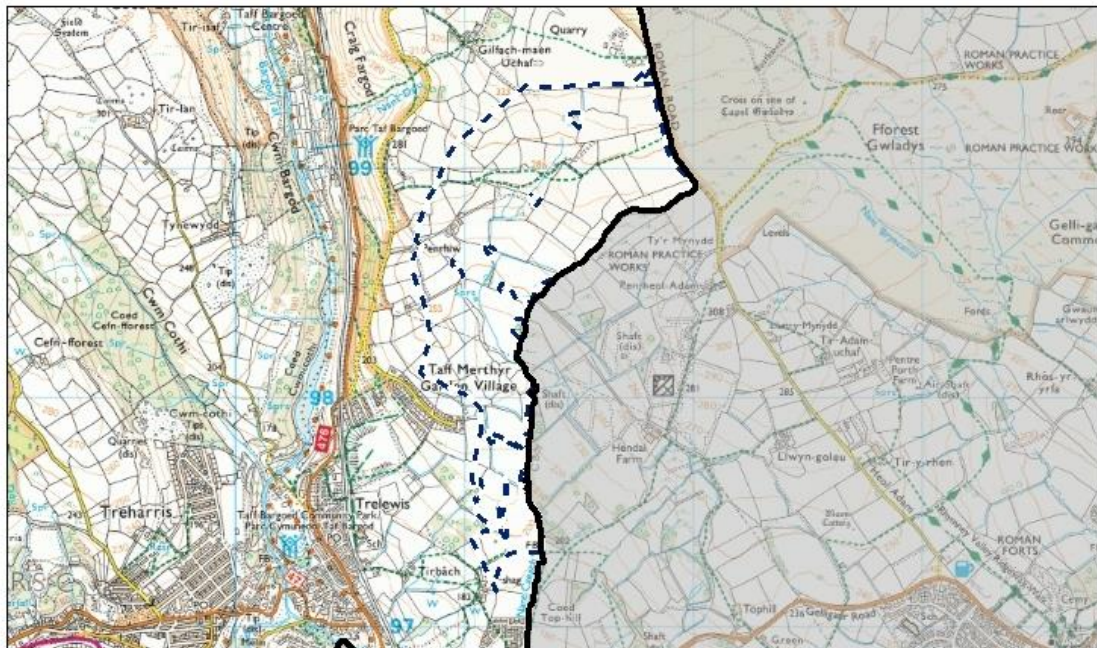
**Notes:**

**Historic Landscape \*Integrity: HIGH** across the entire site  
**Historic Landscape Survival: HIGH** across the entire site  
**Historic Landscape Condition: HIGH** across the entire site  
**Visual and Sensory \*Character HIGH** across the entire site



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



Count of LANDMAP Evaluation Criteria - Total Outstanding or High.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

--- Potential Solar Farm    Brecon Beacons National Park    Unitary Authority Boundary

	<b>SCALE:</b> 1:25,000 at A4 <b>DATE:</b> 09/11/2018 <b>DEPARTMENT:</b> PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE <b>ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY:</b> GIS		<p>Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council</p>
	<b>TITLE:</b> POTENTIAL SOLAR SITE 2		
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## **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY**

<b>Susceptibility Criteria</b>	V.High	High	Med	Low	V. Low
Landform			X		
Sense of openness / enclosure				X	
Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use		X			
Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity			X		

**Susceptibility Score: MEDIUM**

### **Field Notes:**

A predominantly east /south east facing valley side characterised by irregular fields and a few copses bounded by distinctive drystone walls in the north changing to hedgerows in the south. The site is less visible from the west at close quarters, but has increasing visibility from the west on higher ground. Good visibility of the proposed development site from Merthyr Common Road particularly to the north of the site. Protection of existing landscape depends upon maintenance of field patterns.



## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

**Landscape Susceptibility**

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Very High				
High				
Medium			X	
Low				

### Landscape Sensitivity:

**MEDIUM - LOW** Key characteristics of the landscape are less likely to be adversely affected by change or change can potentially be more easily accommodated without significantly altering character

### Conclusion:

The site sits within the Gelligaer and Craig Fargoed proposed SLA occupying a matrix of field boundaries that are uncommon within the County Borough and which extend south towards Llancaiach Fawr. The area is characterised by enclosed pastureland and small loosely dispersed agricultural settlements. The field boundaries are of the clawdd / hedge type in the south and larger dry-stone walling in the northern part of the area.

Visibility within the Gelligaer and Craig Fargoed SLA is the most significant concern although as details of both nature and extent combined with a landscape and visual impact assessment are unknown. An initial assessment suggests that the site is unfavourable as a single unit although there may be capacity in certain areas, providing the integrity of the field boundaries are retained. Particular attention will need to be paid to the visual impact development might have on Gelligaer Common Landscape of Special Historic Interest, the Gelligaer and Craig Fargoed proposed SLA and views from Treharris and the uplands of Cefn Fforest.

**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT**

**SITE 4 NORTH OF BEDLINOG**

**SO101028**

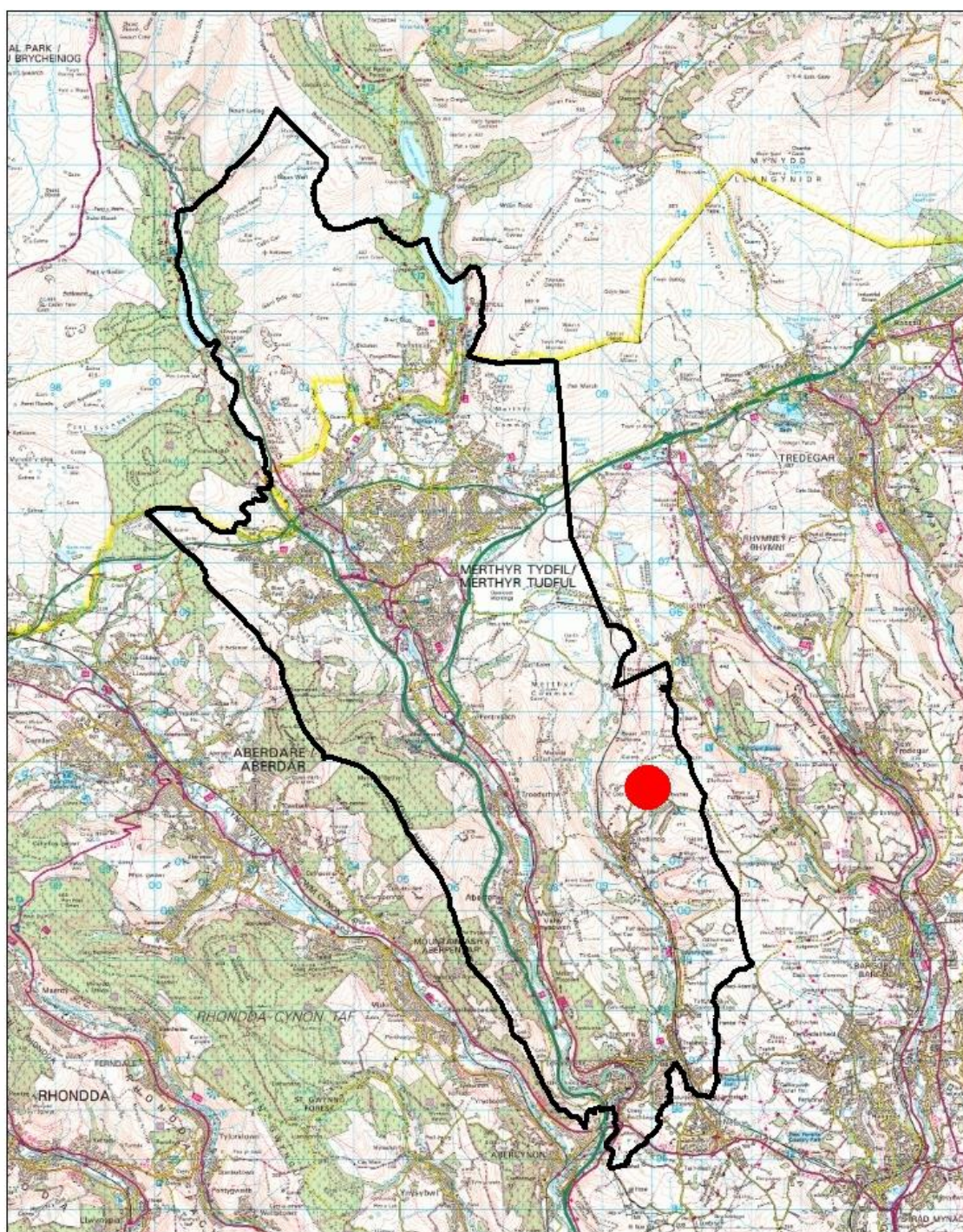




Views towards the site from the Common Road leading down into Bedlinog looking south



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

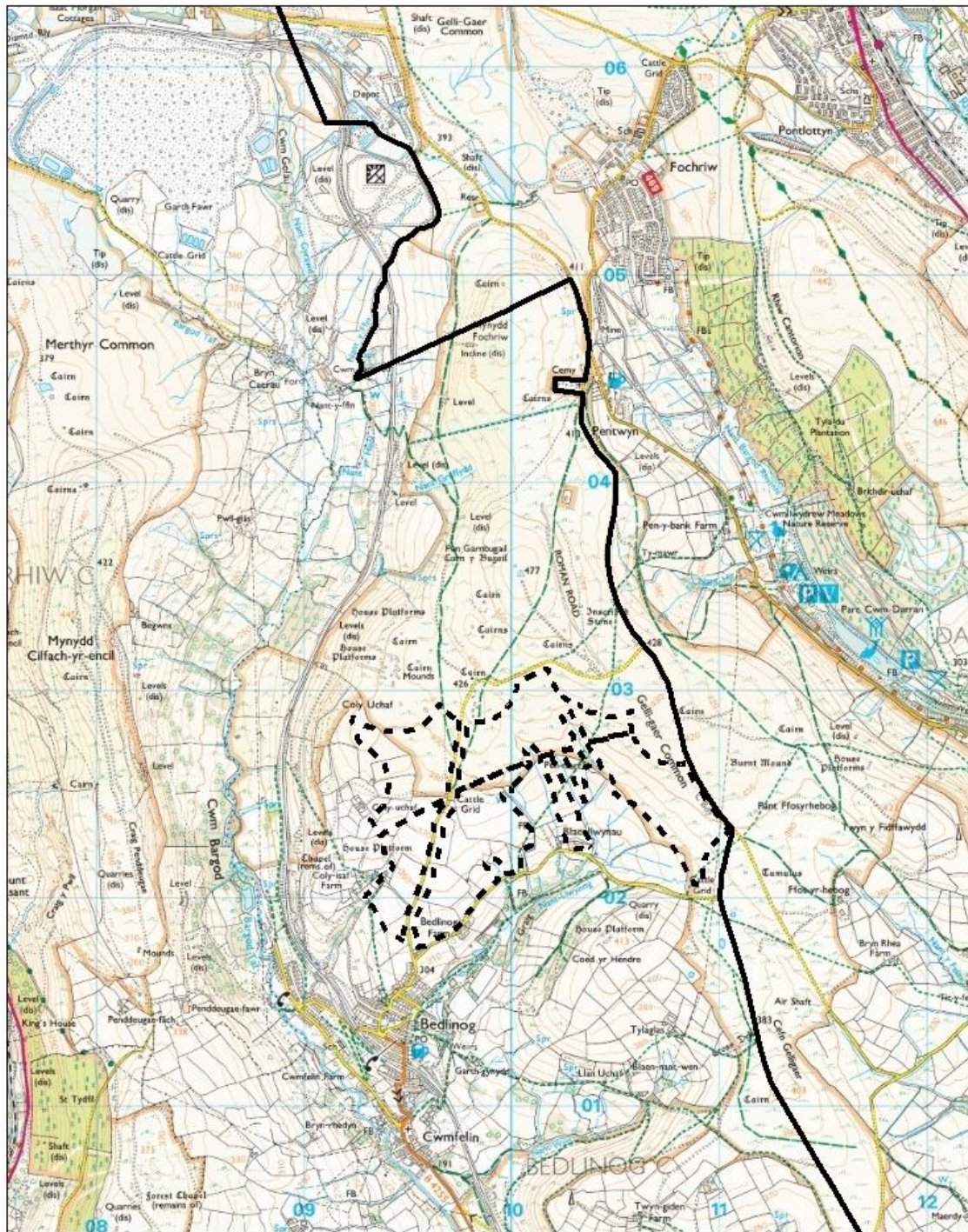




	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:100,000	<p>© Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2018 Arolwg Ordnans 100025302 "Ni chaniaid i chi gopio, tan-dwydded u, dosbarthu neu werthu y data yma i unrhyw drydydd barti mewn unrhyw ffurf"</p> <p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302 "You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form."</p>	 <p>Cyngor Bwrdestraf Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council</p>
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 22/10/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWDYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE:  SITE 4 NORTH OF BEDLINOG			



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



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	DYDDIAD / DATE: 22/10/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWDYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE:	SITE 4 NORTH OF BEDLINOG		

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE

	HIGH	OUTSTANDING
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness		
Geological Landscape Classic Example		
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats	X	
Landscape Habitats Significance	X	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality	X	
Visual and Sensory Integrity		
Visual and Sensory *Character	X	
Visual and Sensory Rarity		
Historic Landscape *Integrity	X	X
Historic Landscape Survival	X	X
Historic Landscape Condition	X	
Historic Landscape *Rarity	X	

**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: HIGH**

### Notes:

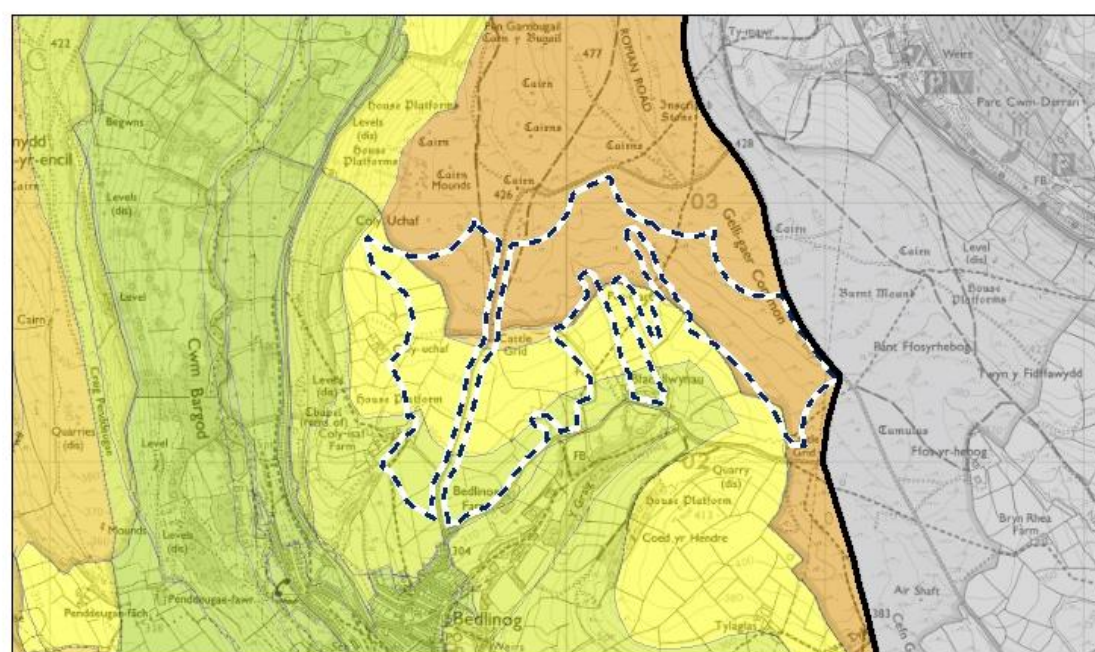
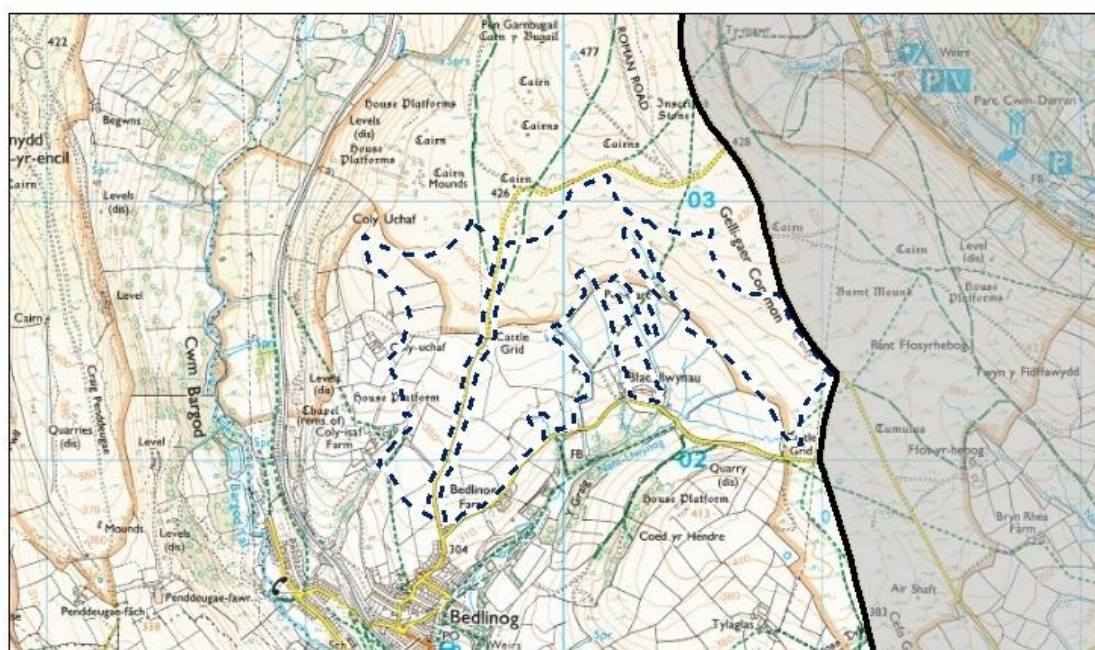
Historic Landscape Integrity / Survival\*: **HIGH/OUTSTANDING** across the entire site  
 Historic Landscape Condition throughout **HIGH**  
 Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats and Significance **HIGH** across the entire site  
 Visual and Sensory Character\*: **HIGH** across the majority of the site particularly the upper elevations



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031




### BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



Count of LANDMAP Evaluation Criteria - Total Outstanding or High.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Potential Solar Farm Brecon Beacons National Park Unitary Authority Boundary

<div><div>N</div><div></div></div>	SCALE: 1:22,121 at A4	<div><div>0220440660880</div><div></div><div>Metres</div></div>	<div></div> <div><div>Cyngr Gwdestraf Sirol</div><div>MERTHYR TYDFIL</div><div>County Borough Council</div></div>	
	DATE: 12/11/2018			
	DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE	<div><div>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018</div><div>Ordnance Survey 100025302.</div><div>You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.</div></div>		
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: GIS			
TITLE: POTENTIAL SOLAR SITE 4				

## **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY**

<b>Susceptibility Criteria</b>	<b>V.High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Mod</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>V. Low</b>
Landform	X				
Sense of openness / enclosure	X				
Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use	X				
Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity	X				

**Susceptibility Score: VERY HIGH**

### **Field Notes:**

The upland common is maintained by constant grazing enjoying long views of inter visibility with adjacent ridge lines and within the Gelligaer and Merthyr Common areas and inter visibility of cairns and other historic features, being remote and wild in nature. A few narrow roads and tracks cross the area and all have undefined and ragged edges. Long views out across the Coalfield plateau contrast with the enclosed nature of the adjacent valleys. The area has a bleak and open character very similar to Merthyr Common to the west. There is no settlement on the Common as farms are situated on the enclosed land below the ridges. The enclosures along the edge of the Common are generally dry stone walls with some post and wire fences. There is some recreational use including walking, riding, paragliding and picnics. The common is remote and exposed with a simple ground cover which contrasts with the more diverse vegetation in the valleys themselves. The norther half of the site is Open Access land.

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

**Landscape Susceptibility**

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
<b>Landscape Value</b>				
Very High				
High	X			
Medium				
Low				

### Landscape Sensitivity:

**HIGH** Key characteristics of the landscape are vulnerable to the type of change being assessed.

### Conclusion:

The areas is Contained wholly within the Gelligaer and Craig Fargoed SLA and the Gelligaer Common Landscape of Special Historic Interest. The installation of a solar development would add an entirely contrasting reflective surface to the Common as viewed from within and without. The very high susceptibility to this type of development renders this site unsuitable for a development of this type. The lack of main roads contributes towards the peaceful character of this area and has influenced its use for recreation and leisure.



**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT**  
**SITE 5 MERTHYR ROAD**  
**SO 00632 07507**

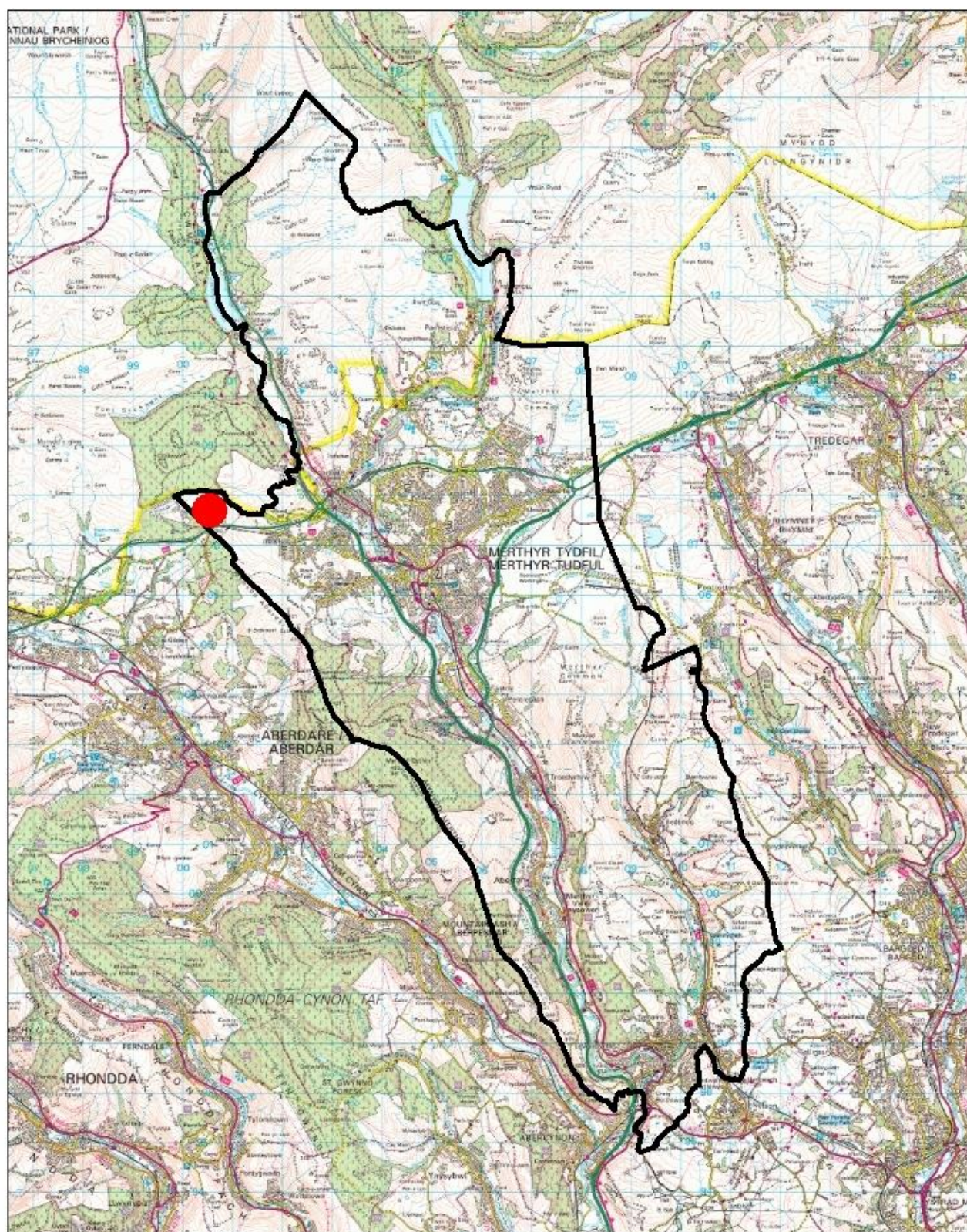




Views looking North West towards the site from the A465



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



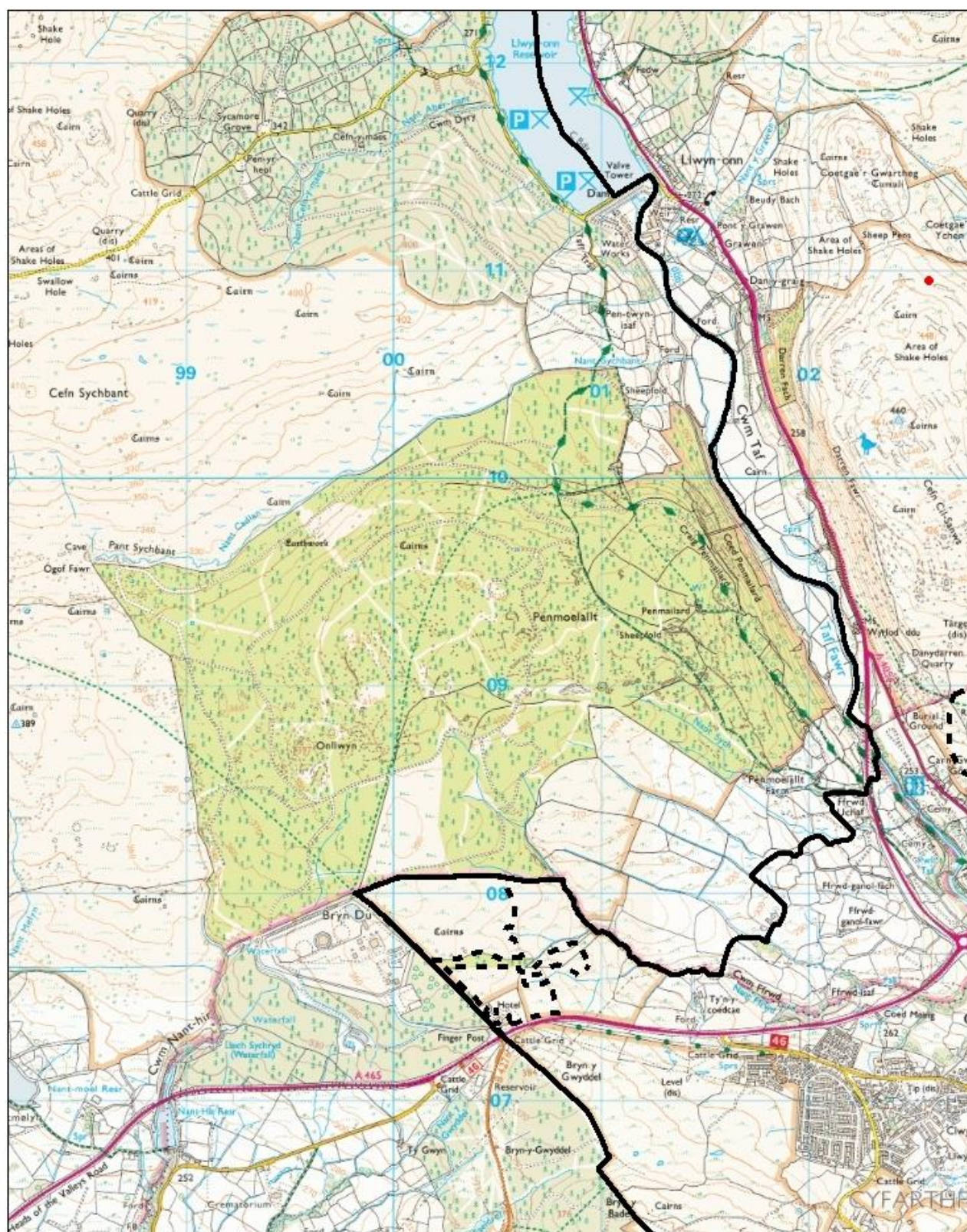
<div>N</div> <div></div>	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:100,000	<div>© Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2018 Arolwg Ordians 100025302 "Ni chania teir i ddiw gopio, tan-dwyddedd u, dosbarthu neu werthu y data yma i unrhyw drydydd bart mewn unrhyw ffurf"</div> <div>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302 "You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form."</div>	<div></div> <div>Cyngor Gwrdestraf Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council</div>
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 21/09/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE: SITE 5 MERTHYR ROAD			



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

### BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



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	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB			
TEITL / TITLE: SITE 5 MERTHYR ROAD				

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**REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031**

**BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS**

**ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE**

	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness		
Geological Landscape Classic Example		
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats	<b>X</b>	
Landscape Habitats Significance	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory Integrity	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory *Character	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory Rarity	<b>X</b>	
Historic Landscape *Integrity		
Historic Landscape Survival		
Historic Landscape Condition		
Historic Landscape *Rarity		

**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: HIGH**

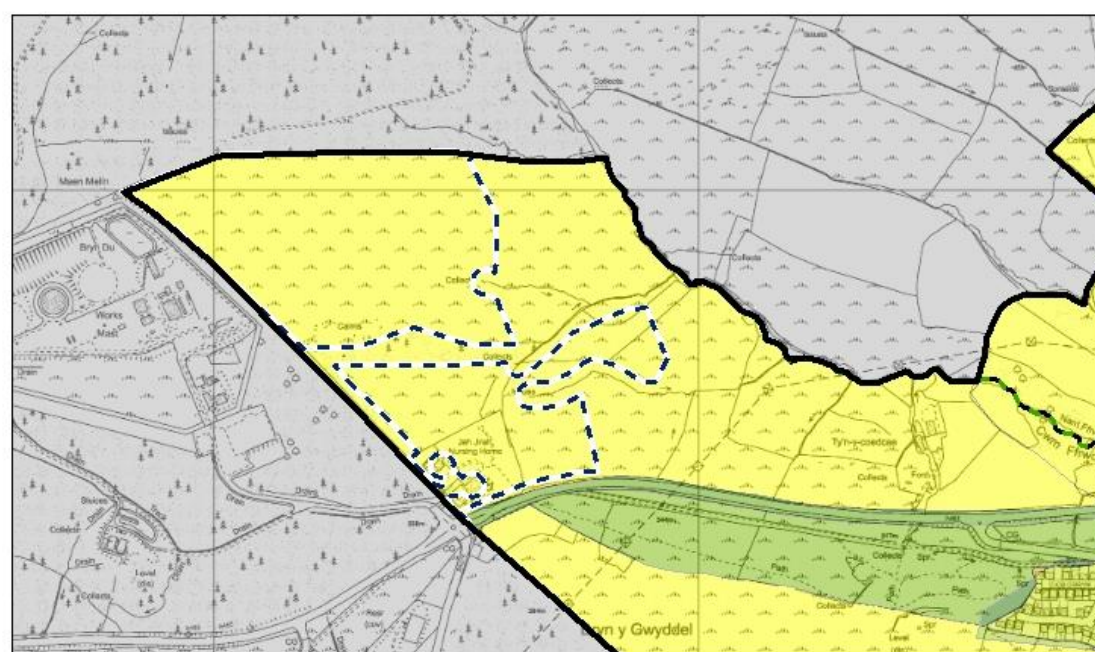
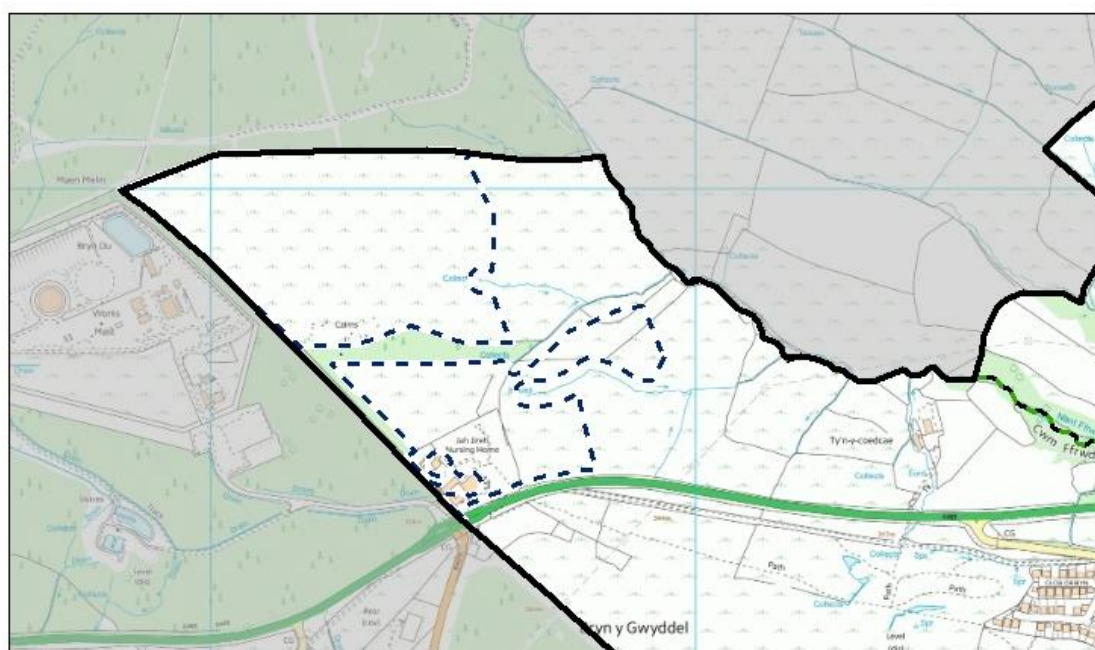
**Notes:**

**Visual and Sensory Scenic Quality\* and Character\*:** HIGH across the entire site  
**Visual and Sensory Integrity and Rarity:** HIGH across the entire site  
**Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats and Significance:** HIGH across the entire site



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031




## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



Count of LANDMAP Evaluation Criteria - Total Outstanding or High.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

--- Potential Solar Farm    Brecon Beacons National Park    Unitary Authority Boundary

<div>N</div> <div></div>	SCALE: 1:11,798 at A4	<div>0110220330440</div> <div></div> <div>Metres</div>	<div></div> <div>Cyngor Bwrdestraf Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council</div>
	DATE: 12/11/2018		
	DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE	<div>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.</div>	
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: GIS		
TITLE: POTENTIAL SOLAR SITE 5			

## **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY**

<b>Susceptibility Criteria</b>	V.High	High	Med	Low	V. Low
Landform	X				
Sense of openness / enclosure		X			
Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use	X				
Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity		X			

**Susceptibility Score: VERY HIGH**

### **Field Notes:**

An extensive area of open exposed upland consisting marshy grassland and wet heathland, with smaller areas of blanket bog, acid flush and acid grassland. The land slopes away eastwards, the small streams arising on the site flow into the Nant Ffrwd. The site contains Open Access Land and contains some visual enclosure by coniferous plantations to the north and south west, the A465 trunk road to the south and by built development to the south west. The land is almost entirely Open Access land

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

### Landscape Susceptibility

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Very High				
High	X			
Medium				
Low				

### Landscape Sensitivity:

**HIGH:** Key characteristics of the landscape are vulnerable to the type of change being assessed.

### Conclusion:

The site is within proposed Winchfawr SLA with potentially much of the SLA would experience inter visibility from the south.

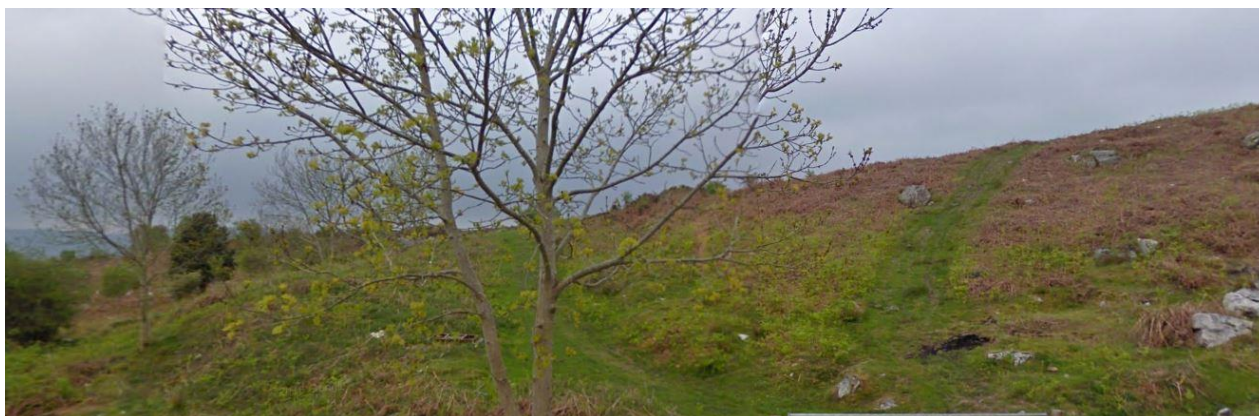
Cefn Cil Sanws which is situated within and without the BBNP may experience distant views of the site. From the Brecon Beacons National Park to north the site is screened by forestry plantings, views towards the Beacons from the south would be compromised by development here. The site is exposed to views from the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road.

Views from Cyfarthfa Park (Historic Park and Garden) are relatively well concealed by intervening vegetation within the park however climate and weather conditions could determine the visual impact, on clear winter days the development may be more visible.

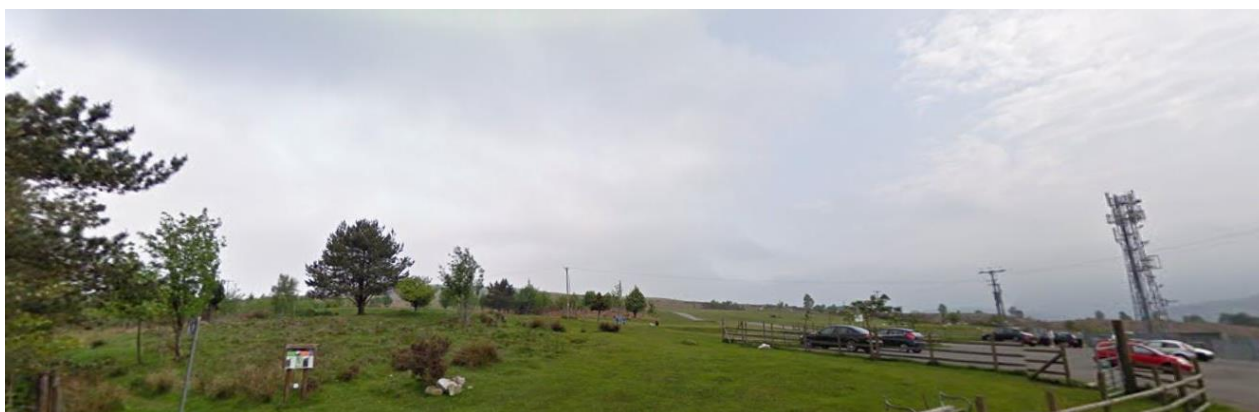
The key characteristics of land use define the qualities of the landscape and its ultimate sensitivity to change as a consequence of development of this nature. This is exposed and open buffer land to the Brecon Beacons National Park and development of this nature would result in a significant change in the valued character of this landscape. The site would have little solar development potential owing to changes to landscape character and the wider enjoyment of views from within the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP).



**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT**  
**SITE 8 NORTH OF CEFN COED**  
**SO 02935 08963**



View towards the site from Crabtree Walk Trefechan



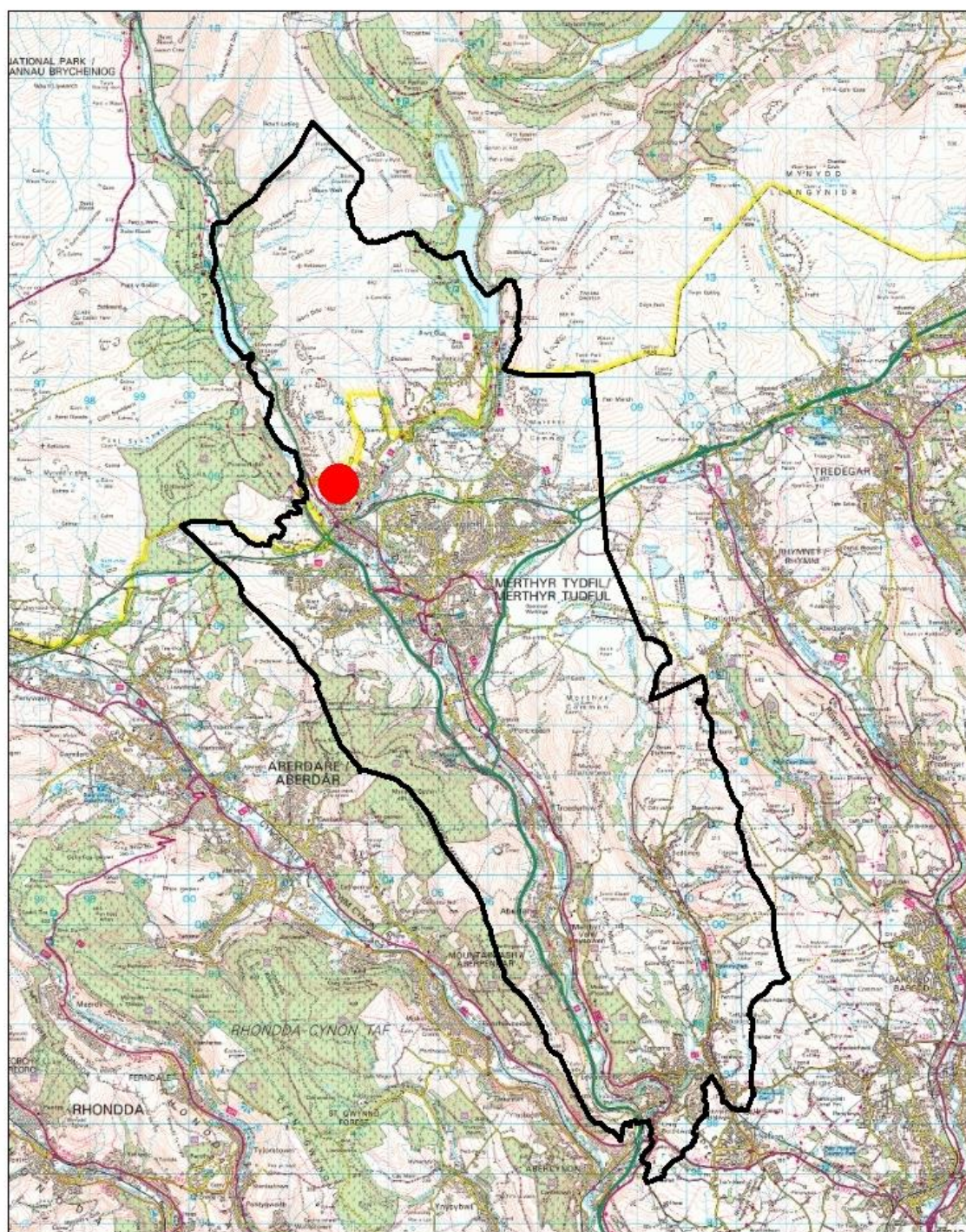
View towards the site from Lon Maes Du





# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

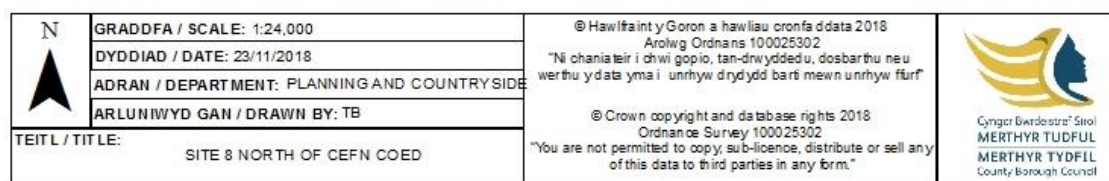
### BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



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	DYDDIAD / DATE: 23/11/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWDYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE: SITE 8 NORTH OF CEFN COED			



## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS





**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031**

**BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS**

**ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE**

	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness	<b>X</b>	
Geological Landscape Classic Example	<b>X</b>	
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats		
Landscape Habitats Significance	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory Integrity	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory *Character	<b>X</b>	
Visual and Sensory Rarity	<b>X</b>	
Historic Landscape *Integrity		<b>X</b>
Historic Landscape Survival		<b>X</b>
Historic Landscape Condition	<b>X</b>	
Historic Landscape *Rarity	<b>X</b>	

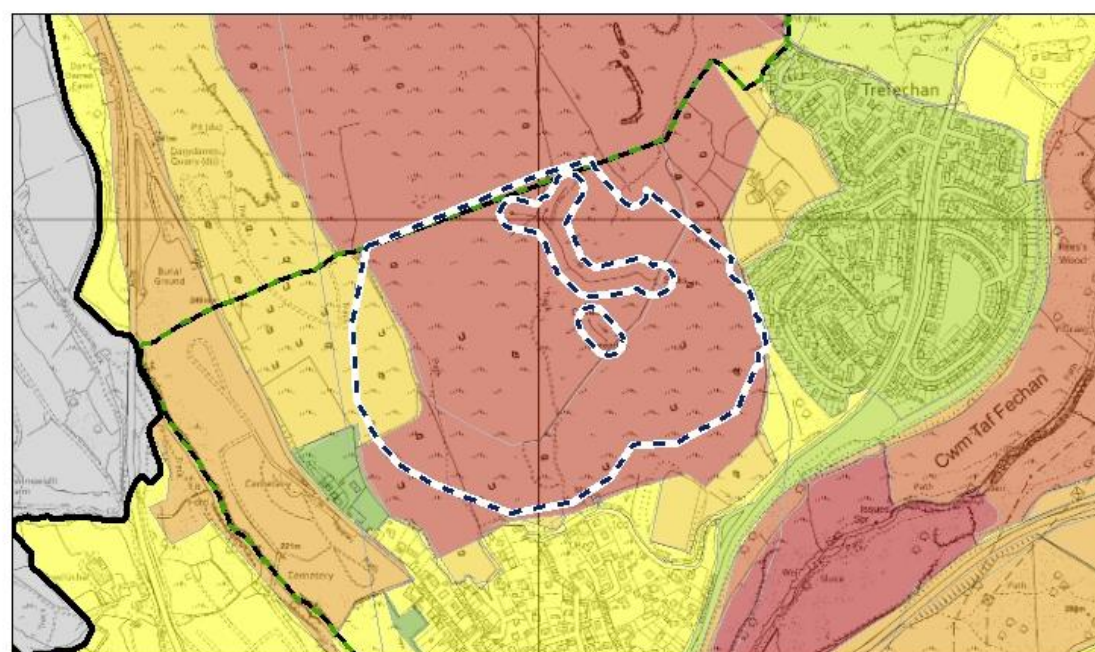
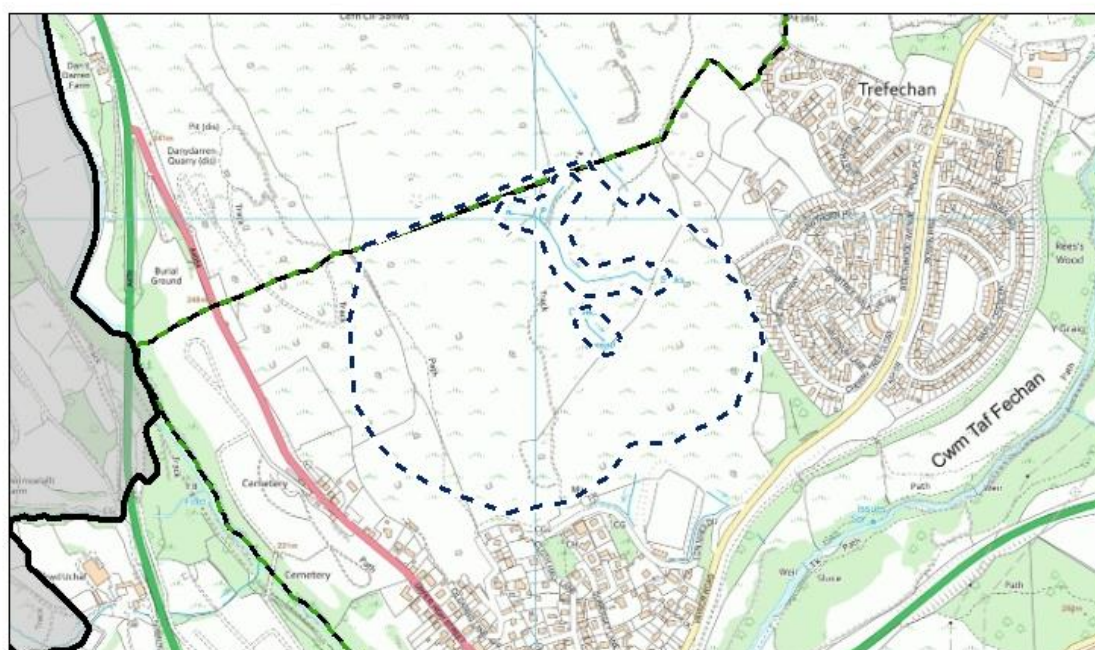
**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: VERY HIGH**

**Notes:**

**Visual and Sensory Scenic Quality: HIGH**  
**Visual and Sensory Character: HIGH**  
**Historic Landscape Integrity: OUTSTANDING**  
**Historic Landscape Rarity: HIGH**

# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



Count of LANDMAP Evaluation Criteria - Total Outstanding or High.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

--- Potential Solar Farm

--- Brecon Beacons National Park

--- Unitary Authority Boundary

	<b>SCALE:</b> 1:10,000 at A4 <b>DATE:</b> 23/11/2018 <b>DEPARTMENT:</b> PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE <b>ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY:</b> GIS		<p>Cyngor Gwerddre Siroi MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council</p>
	<b>TITLE:</b> POTENTIAL SOLAR SITE 8		
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## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY

	V.High	High	Med	Low	V. Low
Susceptibility Criteria					
Landform	X				
Sense of openness / enclosure	X				
Nature, Scale and Complexity of	X				
Development, Activity, Remote Tranquillity	X				

**Susceptibility Score: VERY HIGH**

### Field Notes:

Open unenclosed landscape rises to over 490m and forming a large block of upland between the Taf Fawr and Taf Fechan. The area is exposed, bleak and empty of settlement with almost no access - includes V-shaped stream valleys draining to east/west/south. The vegetation cover is predominantly upland grassland with large areas of poorly drained moorland. The area has high scenic quality with panoramic views. It has consistent and unspoilt character throughout and a strong sense of place through rock outcrops and moorland character. The area forms part of the Brecon Beacons upland area. The distinctive craggy outcrops on Cefn Cilsanws are a focal point with scrub vegetation and grey scree slopes below. This hillside forms a focal point on the main road north into the Brecon Beacons and is Open Access land.



## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

### Landscape Susceptibility

Landscape Value		Very High	High	Medium	Low
	Very High	X			
	High				
	Medium				
	Low				

### Landscape Sensitivity:

**VERY HIGH** Some of the key characteristics of the landscape may be vulnerable to the type of change being assessed

### Conclusion:

The landscape is highly vulnerable to change from the development type. No potential for locating the development type.

**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT**  
**SITE 10 WEST OF HEOLGERRIG**  
**SO 02200 05668**

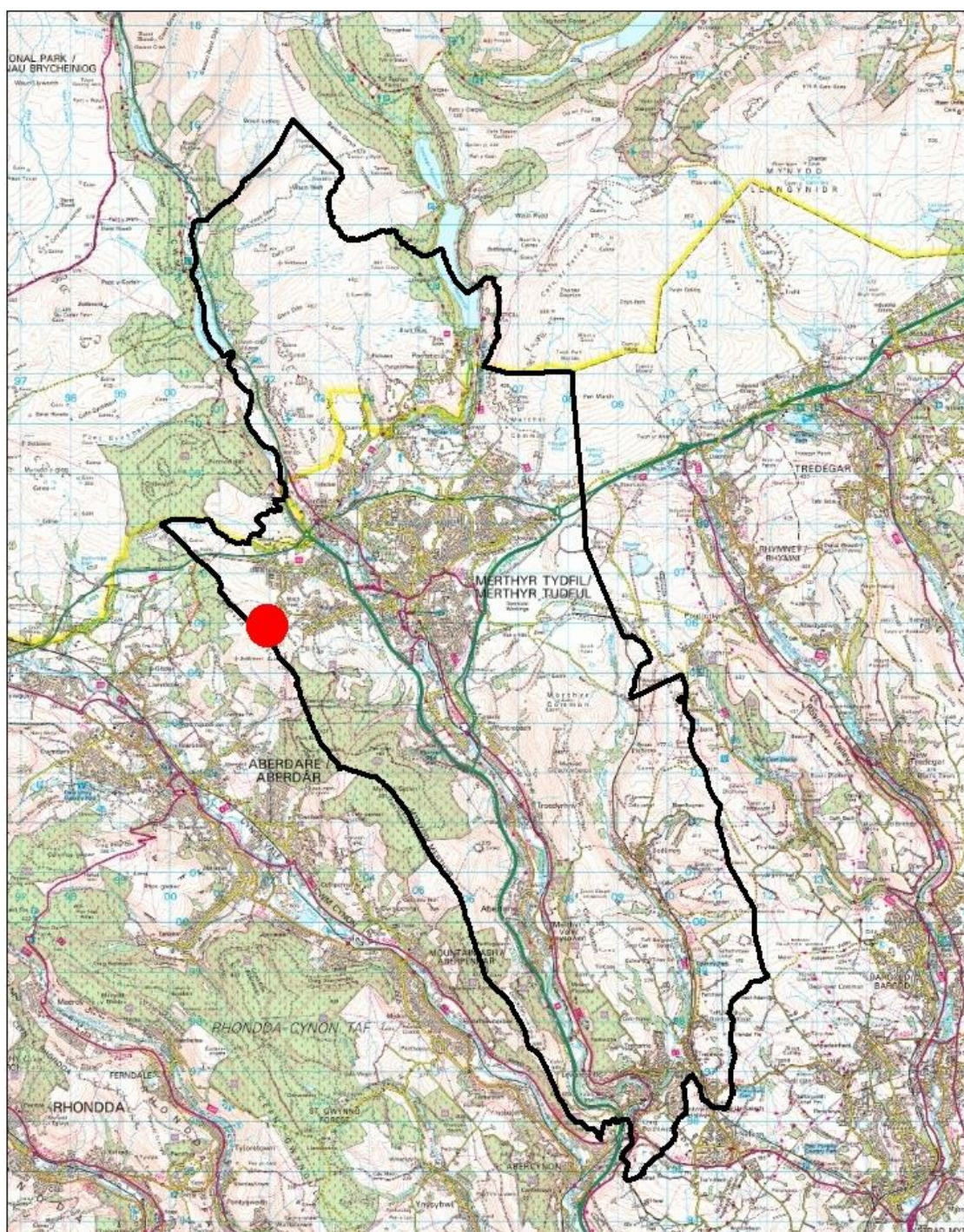




View looking north towards the site from Heolgerrig Road



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

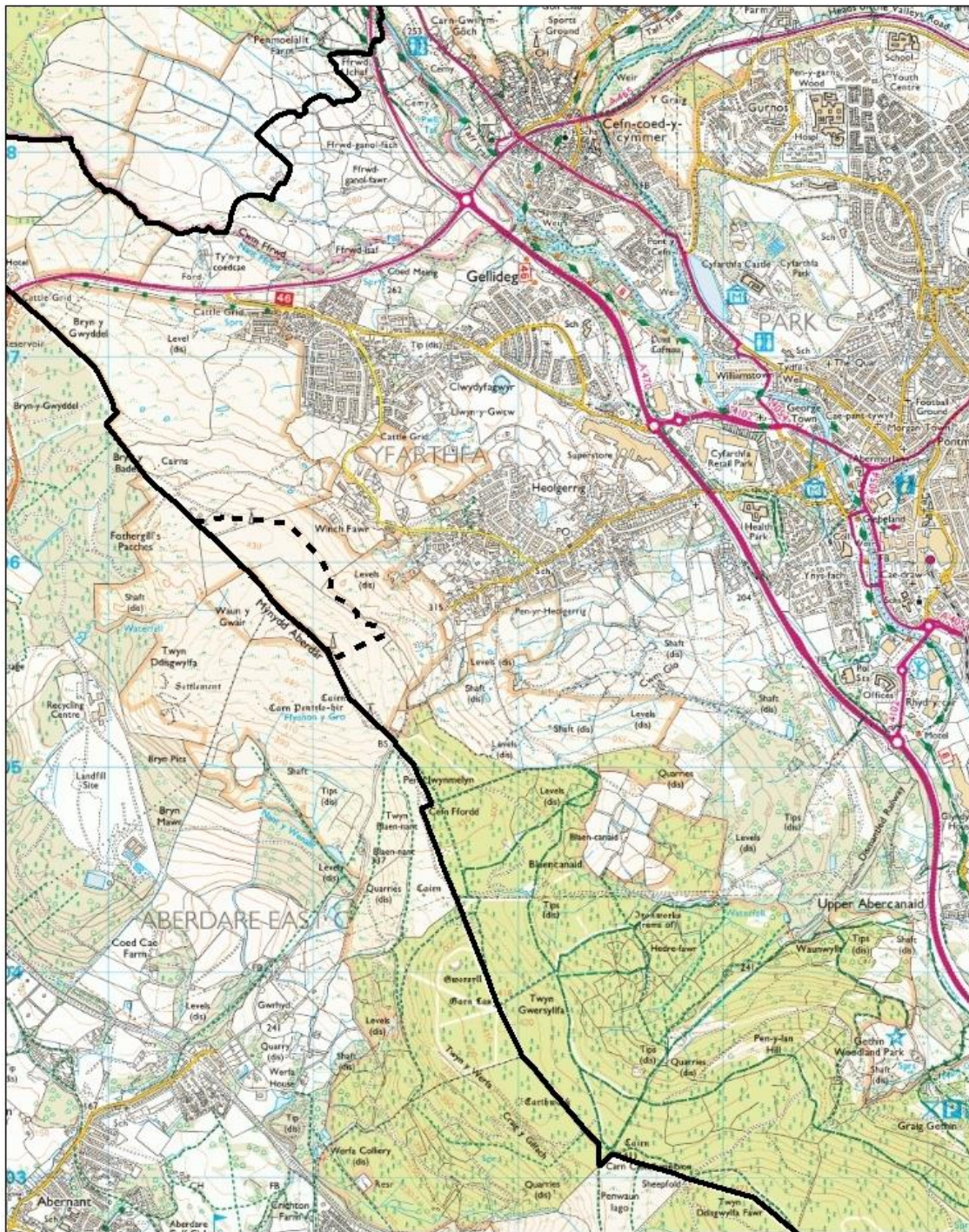




	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:100,000	<p>© Hawlfaint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2018 Arolwg Ordnans 100025302 "Ni chaniateir i chi w gopio, tan-drwydded u, dosbarthu neu werthu y data yma i unrhyw drydydd barti mewn unrhyw ffurf"</p> <p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302 "You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form."</p>	 <p>Cyngor Gwladrestraf Sirol MERTHYR TYDFUL County Borough Council</p>
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 01/11/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE:	SITE 10 WEST OF HEOLGERRIG		



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



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	DYDDIAD / DATE: 23/11/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWDY GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE:	SITE 10 WEST OF HEOLGERREG		

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE

	HIGH	OUTSTANDING
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness		
Geological Landscape Classic Example		
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats	XX	
Landscape Habitats Significance	XX	
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality		
Visual and Sensory Integrity		
Visual and Sensory *Character		
Visual and Sensory Rarity		
Historic Landscape *Integrity	X	X
Historic Landscape Survival	X	X
Historic Landscape Condition		
Historic Landscape *Rarity	X	

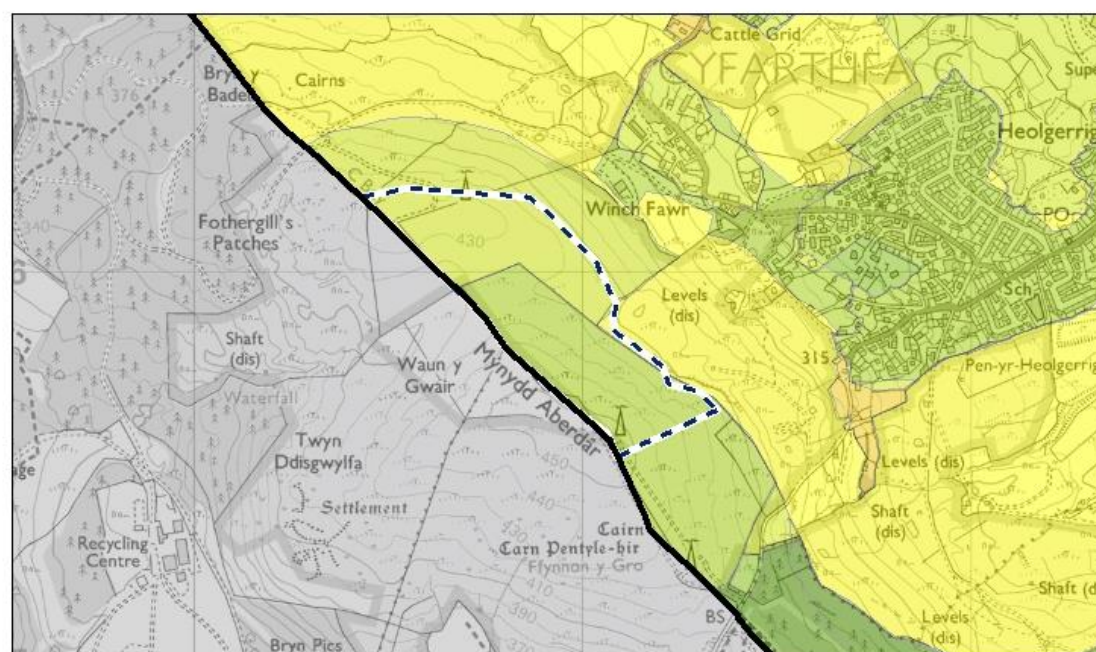
**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: MEDIUM**

### Notes:

**Historic Landscape Integrity: OUTSTANDING/HIGH** across the entire site.






## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



 Brecon Beacons National Park

 Unitary Authority Boundary

	<b>SCALE:</b> 1:14,748 at A4		
	<b>DATE:</b> 23/11/2018		
	<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> PLANNING & COUNTRYSIDE		
	<b>ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY:</b> GIS		
<b>TITLE:</b> POTENTIAL SOLAR SITE 10	© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.		Cyngor Bwrdestrae' Strol <b>MERTHYR TYDFIL</b> Merthyr Tydfil Council, Borough Council



## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY

Susceptibility Criteria	V.High	High	Mod	Low	V. Low
Landform	X				
Sense of openness / enclosure	X				
Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use	X				
Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity	X				

**Susceptibility Score: VERY HIGH**

### Field Notes:

The site forms dominant ridge that forms part of the coalfield plateau with long views. It is a prominent high point, which punctuate the skyline. It has variable land cover which cuts across the line of the landform. There is no settlement and very limited access apart from a few minor tracks cross the ridge. [The site is wholly within Open Access land.](#)

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

### Landscape Susceptibility

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Very High				
High				
Medium	X			
Low				

### Landscape Sensitivity: Medium - High

**MEDIUM** Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb change, some alteration in character may result.

### Conclusion:

This is an exposed landscape which is visible from upland location particularly from the eastern side of the valley. The site is located within 3.5 km of the BBNP boundary and located within the Winchfawr Special Landscape Area. There are few opportunities for mitigation against the exposed aspects of the site. The susceptibility of the landscape to accept change is such that it renders this site unsuitable for development.



**SOLAR RESOURCE AREA ASSESSMENT  
SITE 12 SOUTH WEST OF MERTHYR VALE  
ST 07108 98102**

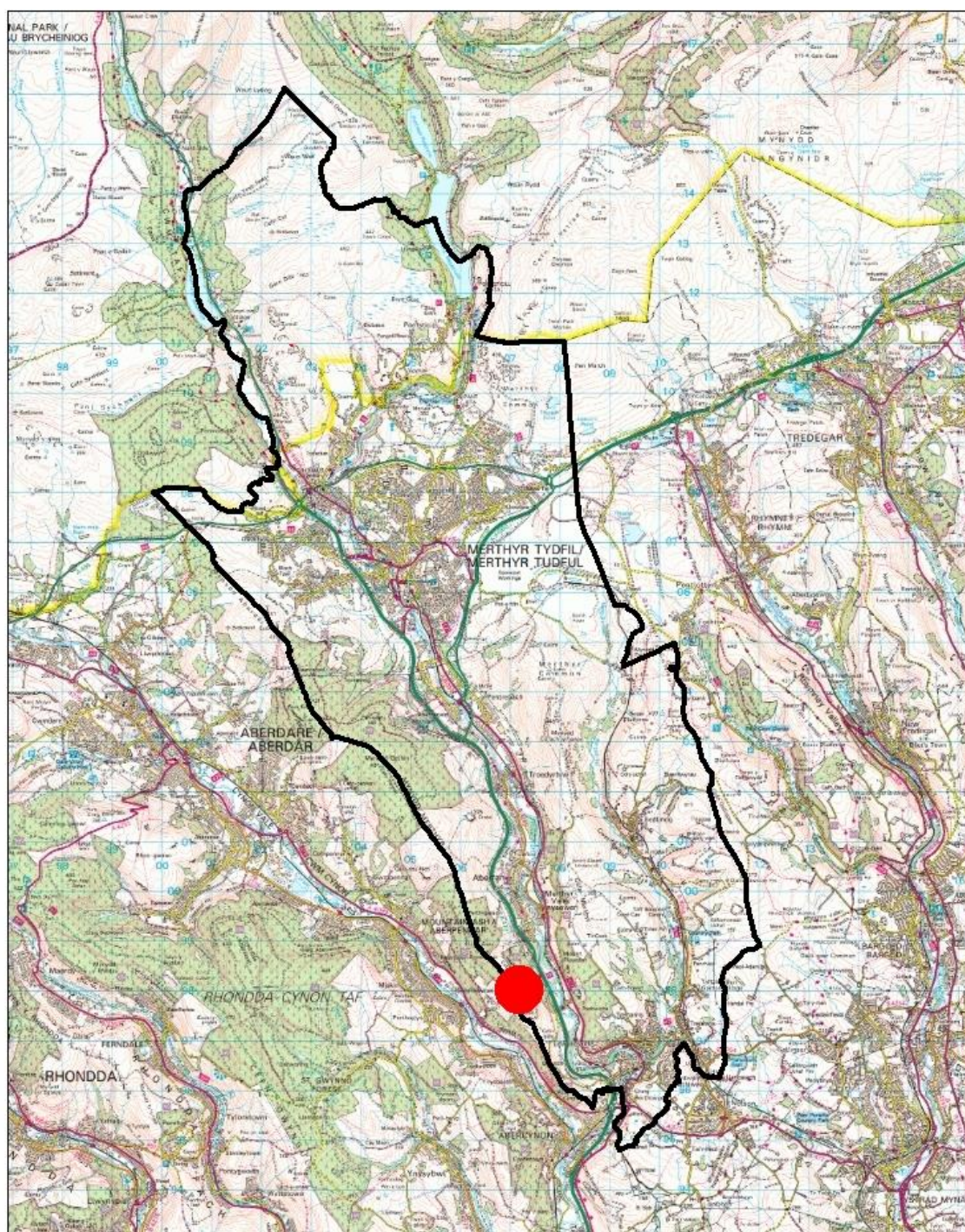




View looking west towards the site from Cardiff Road A4054



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS

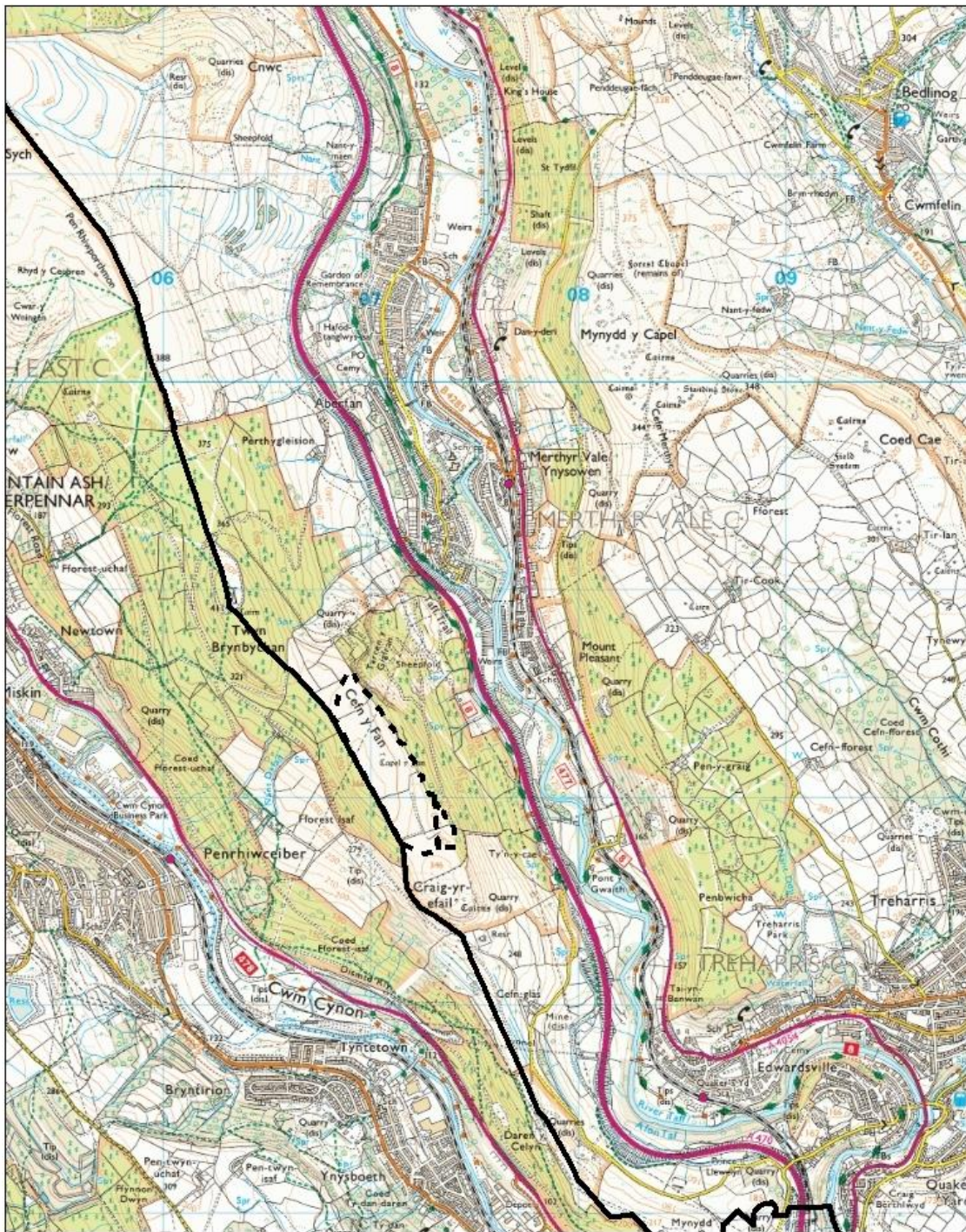




	GRADDFA / SCALE: 1:100,000	<p>© Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2018 Arolwg Ordnans 100025302 "Ni chaniaid i chi wrio, tan-dwydded u, dosbarthu neu werthu y data yma i unrhyw drydydd barti mewn unrhyw ffurf"</p> <p>© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100025302 "You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form."</p>	 <p>Cyngor Gwladrestraf Sirol MERTHYR TYDFIL County Borough Council</p>
	DYDDIAD / DATE: 25/10/2018		
	ADRAN / DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE		
	ARLUNIWDY GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
TEITL / TITLE: SITE 16 SW OF MERTHYR VALE			



# MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031

## BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS



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	DYDDIAD / DATE: 25/10/2018		
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	ARLUNIWYD GAN / DRAWN BY: TB		
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**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 - 2031**

**BACKGROUND PAPER: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY FOR SOLAR ENERGY SEARCH AREAS**

**ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE VALUE**

	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING</b>
Geological Landscape Rarity / Uniqueness	<b>X</b>	
Geological Landscape Classic Example	<b>X</b>	
Landscape Habitats Priority Habitats		
Landscape Habitats Significance		
Visual and Sensory *Scenic Quality		
Visual and Sensory Integrity		
Visual and Sensory *Character		
Visual and Sensory Rarity		
Historic Landscape *Integrity		
Historic Landscape Survival	<b>X</b>	
Historic Landscape Condition		
Historic Landscape *Rarity		

**RELATIVE LANDSCAPE VALUE: LOW**

**Notes:**

*There are no key drivers within this site.*

## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY

	V.High	High	Mod	Low	V. Low
Susceptibility Criteria					
Landform	X				
Sense of openness / enclosure	X				
Nature, Scale and Complexity of Land Use	X				
Development, Activity, Remoteness and Tranquillity	X				

**Susceptibility Score: VERY HIGH**

### Field Notes:

This exposed and dominant ridge forms part of the coalfield plateau with long views with the site occupying the prominent high point of Cefn y Fan. It has variable land cover which cuts across the line of the landform. Blocks of forestry contrast with open upland grassland and the forestry appears to pay little heed to the underlying land form. This results in a disjointed edge to this side of the Taf valley in contrast to the relatively clean lines of the ridge occupied by Merthyr Common. There is no settlement and very limited access. [The entire site is within Open Access land.](#)



## ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Landscape Susceptibility					
Landscape Value		Very High	High	Medium	Low
	Very High				
	High				
	Medium				
	Low	X			

### Landscape Sensitivity:

**MEDIUM** Some of the key characteristics of the landscape may be vulnerable to the type of change being assessed

### Conclusion:

While the landscape susceptibility is high the landscape value is relatively low. There is limited potential for solar energy given the inter visibility between ridgelines and further assessment work would be required.

#### 14. Comparison Table of Landscape Sensitivity

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Landscape Value</b>	<b>Landscape Susceptibility</b>	<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>
Site 1 – Ffos-y-fran	LOW - MEDIUM	HIGH	<b>MEDIUM</b>
Site 2 – North East of Trelewis	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	<b>MEDIUM - LOW</b>
Site 4 – North of Bedlinog	HIGH	VERY HIGH	<b>HIGH</b>
Site 5 – Merthyr Road	HIGH	VERY HIGH	<b>HIGH</b>
Site 8 – North of Cefn Coed	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	<b>VERY HIGH</b>
Site 10 – West of Heolgerrig	MEDIUM	VERY HIGH	<b>MEDIUM - HIGH</b>
Site 12 – South West of Merthyr Vale	LOW	VERY HIGH	<b>MEDIUM</b>