



Galileo 03 Ltd.

Mynydd Ty-talwyn Energy Park - Environmental Statement Volume III

Appendix 8.6 National Landscape Designations Preliminary
Assessment

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APPENDIX 8.6 – NATIONAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Within the 35 km Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) study area, there are two Nationally Significant Landscapes, namely the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP) located 20.4 km to the north-east of the Site at its closest point and the Gower National Landscape (former AONB) which lies 21 km to the west (just outside of the detailed 20 km study area). Each of which are addressed in turn in this Appendix.
- 8.1.2 Given there is no substantive invisibility between either the National Park or the National Landscape and the solar and substation development, the introduction of the turbines is the potential element of the Proposed Development of primary relevance to the consideration of effects set out below.

8.2 Effects on the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

- 8.2.1 With reference to **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.3: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Viewpoints** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.7: Landscape Designations within 35 km**, theoretical visibility is predicted from only very small areas within the National Park, primarily within the Black Mountains which lie around 30 km from the Site, but also slightly to the east at Ogof-Ffynnon-Ddu, the view from which is represented by viewpoint 15 in **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.10: Visualisations: Viewpoints 1 to 15**.
- 8.2.2 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) 2 and 3 of the BBNP cover the area of theoretical visibility and each is discussed below. The sensitivity of each of these LCAs is considered to be **high**.

LCA 2 – Y Mynydd Du

- 8.2.3 With reference to **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.3: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Viewpoints** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.8: Landscape Designations within 20 km**, theoretical visibility is predicted from the central area of the LCA within the Y Mynydd Ddu (Black Mountains Range) from the south facing slopes and summits of peaks which range from 482 m AOD (Cefn Carn Fadog) up to 725 m AOD (Fan Gihirych), at distances from 23 km to approximately 36 km from the Proposed Development. Views from this area are represented by **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.10: Visualisations: Viewpoints 1 to 15**, Viewpoint 15 Ogof-Ffynnon-Ddu (BBNP).
- 8.2.4 Distinctive characteristics of this LCA pertinent to landscape and visual issues are described as *“Extensive upland LCA...remote, open exposed landscape with few*

trees or settlements...From the edges of the LCA there are spectacular views over surrounding lowlands."

- 8.2.5 The special qualities for this LCA in relation to scenic quality and sense of place, and perceptual qualities are described respectively as follows:
- Scenic quality and sense of place stemming from the scale and openness of the landscape, the distinctive topography of the summits, and the panoramic views over the LCA and surrounding lower land; and
 - High levels of tranquillity as a result of the landscape's openness, perceived naturalness, lack of noise and dark skies. Few factors detract from the tranquillity, and the LCA is within the BBNP core dark skies area. The LCA contains the National Park's most extensive area of land more than 2 km from a tarmac road. This remoteness, and the area's sense of relative wildness, is enhanced by the LCA's openness, exposure, timelessness and lack of human influences. Its perceptual qualities are influenced by changes in the weather, becoming much harsher and more disorientating in low cloud.
- 8.2.6 The sensitivities relating to these criteria are described as follows:
- *"Impacts from built or other developments (including those in long views) which may detract from its sense of tranquillity and remoteness. As well as visual impacts, the area is also sensitive to noise and night-time light pollution associated with developments beyond the National Park boundary; and*
 - *Features which break the smooth, open skylines."*
- 8.2.7 Given the distance from the proposed turbines beyond the National Park, the scale of change to the special qualities of the LCA would be very small, affecting a relatively small geographic extent of views experienced from the LCA. Effects would be limited to the central elevated parts of the LCA, particularly south-facing slopes and upland plateau areas. The parts of the LCA with the greatest theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines are generally those which are already influenced by intervisibility with settlements, to the south of the National Park. Although the proposed wind turbines introduce new elements, given the distance from the LCA they would not be notable and would lead to a **very low** magnitude of change to the character of the LCA overall, and, using professional judgement, no greater than a **minor effect** during construction and operation that would be **not significant**.

LCA 3 - Fforest Fawr

- 8.2.8 With reference to **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.3: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Viewpoints** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.7: Landscape Designations within 35 km**, theoretical visibility is largely confined to the south facing slopes of the single peak Fan Gllirich (725 m AOD) at a distance of c.25-26 km, below which there is very limited visibility to one or two turbines at most. There are a few other areas where visibility is predicted but this would be of a limited number of turbines only and at greater distance than 26 km. Views from this area are represented by

ES Volume III, Appendix 8.10: Visualisations: Viewpoints 1 to 15, Viewpoint 15 at Ogof-Ffynnon- Ddu (BBNP).

- 8.2.9 The special qualities for this LCA in relation to scenic quality and sense of place, and perceptual qualities are described respectively as follows:
- *“High scenic quality and a strong sense of place, particularly where there are views of distinctive summits and over surrounding lower land to provide a landscape context; and*
 - *High tranquillity, resulting from many factors including openness, perceived naturalness, low noise (though roads have localised impacts at the periphery of the LCA), landform and dark skies (this LCA is within the BBNP core dark skies area). With the exception of occasional roads and Penwyllt quarry, few factors detract from the tranquillity. The LCA’s inaccessibility, openness, timelessness and relative lack of human influence also contribute to its sense of relative wildness. In poor weather conditions the landscape becomes much more hostile and disorientating.”*
- 8.2.10 The sensitivities relating to these criteria are described as follows:
- *“Impacts from built or other developments (including quarrying within the LCA) which may detract from the LCA’s sense of tranquillity and remoteness;*
 - *Visual impacts, noise and night-time light pollution associated with developments beyond the National Park boundary; and*
 - *Features which break the smooth, open skylines”.*
- 8.2.11 The wireline view for **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.10: Visualisations: Viewpoints 1 to 15**, Viewpoint 15, shows it is the only the blade tips of two of the proposed turbines (no. 2 and 3) that are predicted to be glimpsed on the distant ridgeline hosting the Proposed Development. The existing panoramic photograph and cumulative wireline demonstrate there are a number of prominent windfarms over the intervening area looking south/southwest towards the ridgeline of the Site. The Proposed Development turbines are screened and therefore would not be viewed together with those visible within intervening ridge line windfarms, including Llynfi Afan, Fynnion Oer and Mynydd Brombil.
- 8.2.12 The effects would be, at most, a very small change in scale, affecting a small geographic extent of views experienced from the LCA. Considering the **very high** sensitivity, combined with a **very low** magnitude of change, that would likely not be noticeable to the causal viewer, this would equate to, using professional judgement, a **negligible** effect to the character of this area of the BBNP, both during construction and operation of the wind turbines and so the effects would be **not significant**.

Visual Effects and Overall Effects on the Special Qualities

- 8.2.13 With regard to visual effects from the National Park, Viewpoint 15 at Ogof-Ffynnon-Ddu would have **no effect** which would be **not significant** and is indicative of the impact to visual receptors from those few locations in the National

Park from which the Proposed Development may be visible. Further details of the assessment of Viewpoint 15 are set out in **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.8: Viewpoint Assessment**.

- 8.2.14 When considering there would be no greater than minor effects on character and no effects on the views from Viewpoint 15 at Ogof-Ffynnon-Ddu, it is considered that there would be no significant effects on the Special Qualities of the National Park.

8.3 Effects on Gower National Landscape

- 8.3.1 With reference to **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.3: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Viewpoints** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.7: Landscape Designations within 35 km**, theoretical visibility is predicted from only very small areas within the National Landscape, all of which would lie over 20 km from the Site, the closest point of which being Mumbles Hill, Swansea the view from which is represented by **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.10: Visualisations: Viewpoints 1 to 15**, Viewpoint 14.

- 8.3.2 The Gower National Landscape Plan is currently being reviewed as of late 2024. The extant Management Plan is the former Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB)'s Management Plan (2017) which states the following:

“The primary objective for the Gower AONB designation is for the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 requires the City and County of Swansea (CCS) to: take all such actions as appears expedient to them to the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area...”

- 8.3.3 The Management Plan (2017) lays out the special qualities of the Gower National Landscape which are grouped into four themes:
- Natural: Biodiversity, Geology, Landscape and Seascape;
 - Cultural: Archaeology, Historic Landscapes, Historic Parks and Gardens Historic Buildings, and Conservation Areas;
 - Environmental: Air Quality, Water Quality, Soil Quality and Tranquillity; and
 - Recreation: Public Rights of Way, Access Land and Beaches.
- 8.3.4 Considering the distance of the National Landscape from the site (>20 km) it is the landscape and seascape qualities that are most pertinent to LVIA and their potential to be impacted by the proposals.
- 8.3.5 The LANDMAP study for Swansea identified nine landscape character types within the Gower National Landscape (former AONB). The Management Plan also refers to the updating of LANDMAP data for the Gower which took place during 2024. The LANDMAP study also informed the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA, 2013) for the former AONB which divides the Gower into 40 LCAs. The character area descriptions include special qualities and characteristics,

management guidelines and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

- 8.3.6 In relation to landscape change and cumulative impacts, the Management Plan considers that the National Landscape (the former AONB) “*remains largely unaffected by significant or large scale developments, landscapes and key features remain vulnerable to small-scale and gradual changes that may lead to cumulative effects over time; these effects are difficult to quantify and address.*” The potential for cumulative effects upon the Gower and other designated landscapes is considered in the assessment of cumulative effects at **ES Volume II, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual, Section 8.12.**
- 8.3.7 With reference to **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.3: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Viewpoints** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 8.7: Landscape Designations within 35 km**, there is theoretical visibility from the eastern coastal fringes of the National Landscape and more limited visibility from raised areas inland to the central and western areas, which then diminishes beyond c.25 km away. However, actual visibility would be further reduced by existing field hedgerows and tree cover. From any locations where clear open views are available at distances of >20 km, the magnitude of change would be **very low**, which combined with the **very high** sensitivity would result in **minor-moderate** visual effects which are **not significant**. This is demonstrated with reference to the assessment of Viewpoint 14 Mumbles Hill, Swansea as shown in **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.10: Visualisations: Viewpoints 1 to 15**. Further details of the assessment of Viewpoint 14 are set out in **ES Volume III, Appendix 8.8: Viewpoint Assessment**.
- 8.3.8 Similarly, the potential for effects on landscape character within the National Landscape is notably reduced by the distance from the Site (>20 km) and the limited extent of visibility of the Proposed Development across the landscape of the National Landscape.
- 8.3.9 The magnitude of change to the landscape character of the Gower National Landscape would be **very low**. This assessment takes into account:
- The substantial distance of the National Landscape from the Site (over 20 km at the closest point);
 - The very limited geographical extent of the National Landscape from which the Proposed Development would be visible;
 - The existing influence of built development in views towards the Site, including the large steel works complex at Port Talbot and the town of Port Talbot itself;
 - The context of the Proposed Development being seen within a very wide panorama across Swansea Bay; and
 - The screening effect of existing field hedgerows and tree cover which would further reduce actual visibility beyond that shown in the theoretical ZTV.
- 8.3.10 Using professional judgement, when this **very low** magnitude of change is combined with the **very high** sensitivity of the National Landscape as a receptor, the resulting effect on landscape character within the Gower National Landscape would be assessed as **minor** and **not significant**.



- 8.3.11 As such, with no significant effects identified on either visual amenity or landscape character within the National Landscape, it is considered that there would be no significant effects on the special qualities on the Gower National Landscape.