

Appendix 6C

Visual Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessments

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1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This appendix sets out the baseline descriptions and sensitivity assessments for the viewpoint locations and visual receptors.
- 1.1.2 The appendix is structured as follows:
- Section 1.2: Viewpoints/ Visual Receptors Baseline Descriptions; and
 - Section 1.3: Viewpoints/ Visual Receptors Sensitivity Assessments.
- 1.1.3 The Appendices are to be read in conjunction with the following Figures
- Figure 6.2: Public Rights of Way Plan and Viewpoint Location Plan;
 - Figure 6.5: Landscape Designations Plan; and
 - Figure 6.6 - 6.12: Viewpoints 1-7.

1.2 Viewpoint Baseline Descriptions

Baseline Descriptions

- 1.2.1 The Viewpoint/ Visual Receptor baseline descriptions are set out in **Table 6C.1** below.

Table 6C-1 - Viewpoint Descriptions

Viewpoint 1 – Footpath MAE/15/2

Description	<p>This viewpoint is located on a PRoW (MAE/15/2) which is positioned on the slopes of Foel y Dyffryn. Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to users of the footpath. The view is orientated southwest and overlooks the part of the northern section of the proposed northern OHL approximately 140m distance.</p> <p>The view south-west towards the proposed northern OHL overlooks the pastoral landscape of Foel Dryffyn in the foreground where fields are delineated with stone wall boundaries. In the midground there are views towards the coniferous slopes of Rhiw Tor Cymry where an area has undergone deforestation. In the distance there are views towards industrial buildings within Maesteg and there is a communications mast on a hillside that is backclothed by the coniferous hillside of Moel Sychbant.</p> <p>As the view proceeds west-north the pastoral foreground topography rises and the coniferous forest is hidden from view. Stone wall boundaries transcend across the landscape.</p> <p>The view north-east extends over pastoral fields with a post and wire fence in the foreground and in the midground there are views towards residential properties within Maesteg settlement in the valley below. There are distant views towards hillsides beyond with Pen y Cymoed Wind Farm to the north and Llynfi Afan Wind Farm to the northeast, both of which are visible on the skyline.</p> <p>The view east-south looks over pastoral fields in the foreground and extends along the settlement of Maesteg in the valley below. The topography rises towards Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch to the east-southeast. In the far distance there are views of distant hillsides and Cwm Risca Wind Farm (2 turbines). There are also 400km transmission lines and pylons in the view, some of which are visible on the skyline to the south. The proposed southern OHL may be visible in the distance to the south.</p>
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Viewpoint 2 – Bridleway MAE/77/6

Description	<p>This viewpoint is located near to the Keeper of the Collieries landmark on a bridleway (MAE/77/6) positioned on elevated ground to the southwest of Mynydd Pwll-yr-Lwrch. Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to visitors of the landmark, and users of the footpath/bridleway.</p> <p>The view is orientated southwest to northwest. The eastern section of the proposed northern OHL lies approximately 1.42km to the northwest. The proposed southern OHL lies approximately 2.48km to the southwest.</p> <p>The view west-north in the direction of the proposed northern OHL comprises a tarmac bridleway, rough grassland and scrub vegetation in the foreground. The view extends towards the slopes of Rhiw Tor Cymry where the lower and upper slopes contain coniferous woodland with the main slope area having undergone deforestation. Further north there are views towards Foel Trawsant and Foel y Dyffryn where the lower slopes comprise pastoral fields and the upper slopes comprise upland vegetation.</p> <p>The view north-east comprise scrub vegetation in the foreground with more distant views extending towards Mynydd Pwll-yr-Lwrch.</p> <p>The view east-south comprises the bridleway, rough grassland, scrub vegetation a field gate and post and wire fencing in the foreground. Beyond the gate there are glimpsed views towards Maesteg school beyond which are views towards the Maesteg settlement in the midground. There are distant views towards hillsides and Cwm Risca Wind Farm (2 turbines).</p> <p>The view south-west comprises a gravel track amongst rough grass, Keepers of the Colliery monument, bench and information signage board. Beyond the track is a post and wire fencing and tree and scrub vegetation. There are glimpsed views towards Maesteg settlement between gaps in the trees and the pastoral hillsides beyond where the proposed southern OHL is located.</p>
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Viewpoint 3 – Footpath MAE/50/2

Description	<p>This viewpoint is located on a PRoW (MAE/50/2). Within the vicinity are some residential properties Cae Emi Farm and Llest Wen. Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to users of the footpath and typical views that may be experienced by residents.</p> <p>The view is positioned approximately 155m at its closest point to the east of the proposed Southern OHL.</p> <p>The view east-south comprises a belt of foreground mixed deciduous and coniferous trees beyond which the roof of Cae Emi Farm is visible. There are views towards the pastoral land in the middleground in between gaps in foreground trees. The land steadily increases in elevation towards hillsides in the distance with coniferous plantations. The proposed southern OHL would be located within the pastoral land.</p> <p>The view south-west comprises a gravel footpath/ private access track with coniferous trees above Cae Emi Farm to the east of the track. Land north of the road rises steeply where there are mature hedgerow/ tree boundaries beyond which would lie the proposed southern OHL.</p>
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Viewpoint 3 – Footpath MAE/50/2

The view continues around west-north where the view comprises a post and wire fences and the rough grass embankment with mature scrub/ hedgerow and individual trees along the top of the embankment. The proposed southern OHL would be located beyond this embankment.

The view north-east comprises the gravel footpath/ private access track which steadily rises up towards the bend in the track beyond which and at a lower elevation would be the proposed southern OHL. To the north there is a scrub embankment and to the south there is a post and wire fence separating the steeply sloping pastoral land to the south. The roof of an agricultural building belonging to Cae Emi Farm can be seen to the east. Further east is a 400kv transmission line and pylon beyond which lies Pentre Farm. There are views towards Maesteg in the valley below in the mid distance and the rising hillsides beyond. To the northeast lies Llynfi Afan Wind Farm which is visible on the skyline.

Viewpoint 4 – Cistercian Way Long Distance footpath/ Bridleway LDM/17/1

Description

This viewpoint located on a Long-Distance Path (Cistercian Way)/ Bridleway (LDM/17/1) and to the south of the Y Bwlwarca Hill Fort. Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to users of the footpath/ bridleway.

The view is positioned approximately 470m to the west of the southern section of the proposed southern OHL and would be visible in views experienced to the northeast – southeast.

The view north-east comprises pastoral farmland in the foreground with topography falling towards Cwm Cerdin watercourse. In the mid distance there are scattered farm properties including Lluest-wen and Cae Emi Farm beyond which in the valley below are properties within the settlement of Maesteg. Further to the east, the village of Llangynwyd including St Cynwyd's Church is visible. The field boundaries comprise mature hedgerows and trees and there are pockets of both coniferous and broadleaf woodland throughout the view. There are distant views towards hillsides including Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch.

There are several Wind Farm developments visible on the skyline including Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm, Llynfi Afan Wind Farm and Pany y Wall & Fforch Nest Wind Farms and a communications mast on the skyline towards the east. Other detracting features include the 400kv transmission line which is visible across the view in the mid-distance and is backclothed by landform.

The view east-south comprises pastoral farmland in the foreground with post and wire fencing. Gilfach Cottages are visible in the middle distance some of which are partially screened by the landform. There are numerous pylons and 400kv transmission lines in the mid distance and some small electricity grid connections on wooden poles. Also in the view are industrial buildings including WEPA paper mill and Llynfi Power Station and the settlement of Maesteg can be seen further in the distance. Cwm Risca Wind Farm (2 turbines) is visible in the distance backclothed by landform along with a communications mast visible on the skyline to the south.

The view south-west and west to north comprises pastoral land with marshy vegetation, hedgerows and post and wire fencing which are near distance views due to the profile of the land. To the north views extend towards coniferous plantations on the skyline.

Viewpoint 5 – Footpath LDM/12/1

Description

This viewpoint is located on a junction of a minor road and PRoW (LDM/12/1) overlooking the proposed southern OHL. There are also some residential properties within the vicinity (Glifach Cottages). Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to users of the footpath, road users and typical views experienced by residents.

The view is positioned 345m at its closest point to the southeast of the proposed Southern section OHL. The Project would potentially be visible in views experienced to the northwest – southwest.

The view orientated in a southwest-northwest direction comprises agricultural land in the foreground with field gates, post and wire fencing and hedgerow boundaries. The landform rises steadily where an overhead electricity line and a wooden H pole are visible on the horizon along with 400kv transmission line and a pylon.

The view orientated in a northwest-northeast direction comprises a country lane in the foreground with a post and rail fence on an embankment to the west and a stone wall to the east. In the middle distance on the hillside there are the farm properties of Lluestwen and Cae Emi Farm to the north and the settlement of Maesteg set within the context of the valley lies north-east. Maesteg school is visible in the view at a slightly more elevated position from the main settlement. There are a number of pylons in the view which are backclothed by Maesteg and landform. There are distant views towards hillsides such as Rhiw Tor Cymry (vicinity of proposed northern OHL) and Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch. The Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm is located on the skyline in the distance.

The view northeast-southeast (away from the Project) comprises pastoral field with mature hedgerow boundaries and a country lane in the foreground. There is also an overhead electricity cable on single timber poles in the foreground extending into the middle distance. Also in the middle distance there is deciduous and coniferous woodland with glimpsed views towards the village of Llangynwyd beyond. On the distant hillsides there are views towards Llynfi Afan Wind Farm, Pant y Wal & Fforch Nest Wind Farms, Taf Ely, Mynydd Portref & Mynydd Portref Extension Wind farms and communications mast which are all visible on the skyline.

The view southeast-southwest (away from the Project) comprises the access road to Gilfach Uchaf Farm & The Windsor Barn, the country lane, stone walls and pastoral fields. There are overhead electricity lines on H poles across the view in the middle distance, some of which are backclothed by vegetation and some are visible on the skyline. There is also a communications mast in the far distance.

Viewpoint 6 – Minor Road, Llangynwyd

Description

This viewpoint is located off a minor road near the Hopcyn Cross Memorial and Saint Cynwyds Church in the village of Llangynwyd. Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to road users, pedestrians and typical views experienced by residents.

The view is positioned approximately 1km at its nearest point to the east of the proposed southern OHL. The Project would potentially be visible in views experienced southwest-west.

Viewpoint 6 – Minor Road, Llangynwyd

The view orientated southwest-northwest comprises a residential property, minor road and mature hedgerow in the foreground with telegraph poles and street lighting along the roadside. Beyond the property, there are views towards a 400kv transmission line and a pylon which is backclothed by coniferous forestry on the rising hillside beyond. The tip of the pylon is visible on the skyline. Further in the distance, there are views towards pastoral fields on the hillside where further transmission lines and pylons and overhead lines on wooden poles are visible, some backclothed by vegetation and some parts are visible on the skyline.

The view orientated northwest-northeast comprises a Public House, minor road, junction in the foreground. In the near distance, the view extends towards St Cynwyd's Church gravel yard and residential properties along Llan Road. There are glimpsed views towards pastoral fields to the west beyond the foreground buildings.

Views orientated northeast – southeast (away from the Project) comprise St Cynwyd Church, The Hopcyn Cross Memorial (located on the junction) roadside infrastructure, lighting, telegraph poles and The Old Vicarage residential property.

Viewpoint 7 – Junction of A4063 and Brynheulog Road and National Cycle Route 885

Description

This viewpoint is located on a junction of the A4063/ Brynheulog Road and on the National Cycle Route (NCR) 885 positioned towards the southwest corner of the village of Croeserw. Visibility of the Project from this location is representative of views available to road users, users of the NCR, typical views experienced by residents and recreational users of the Tudor Park Playing fields, playground and Bowling green.

The view is positioned approximately 2.3km to the northeast of the northern section of the proposed southern OHL and the proposed northern OHL would potentially be visible in views experienced to the southwest.

The view orientated approximately south-west comprises Brynheulog Road and the A4063 with associated infrastructure such as lighting columns and road signage in the foreground. There is also an Overhead line and Terminal Connection H pole within the view to the west of the road. To the east of the view is Tudor Park Bowling Green and just beyond lies Caerau Substation with a comms mast visible against the skyline. In the middle distance there are views towards the hillsides of Rhiw Tor Cymry and Foel y Dyffryn.

Views orientated south-east include the upper parts of electricity poles within Caerau Primary Substation, the bowling green and Croeserw Social Club. Beyond the buildings, the topography rises towards hillsides including Llyndwr Fawr and Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch. Llynfi Afan Wind Farm is visible on the skyline.

1.3 Viewpoint Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.3.1 The sensitivity assessment for the Viewpoints/ Visual Receptors are set out in **Table 6C.2** below

Table 6C-2 - Viewpoint Sensitivity Assessment

Viewpoint 1 – Footpath MAE/15/2	
Sensitivity	<p>The viewpoint is located within a Foel y Dyffryn SLA. There is some scenic quality to the view particularly of the surrounding hillsides and wooded vegetation however there are views towards several windfarms and a comms mast in wider 360° views. The value of the view is assessed as <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>The view would be experienced by users of the footpath whose views are orientated towards the Project. The susceptibility would therefore be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be High-Medium Sensitivity.</p>
Viewpoint 2 – Bridleway MAE/77/6	
Sensitivity	<p>The viewpoint is not located within a designated landscape and the levels of scenic quality are moderate. There are some detractors in the wider view including an overhead line with H poles to the east, 2 turbines to the southeast and a comms mast to the west (views away from the Project) The value of the view is assessed as <i>Medium</i>.</p> <p>The viewpoint is located on a bridleway. There are a series of informal paths adjacent to the Keepers of the Colliery monument and an information sign and bench.</p> <p>The viewpoint is representative of views experienced by visitors of the Keepers of the Colliery landmark and users of the footpath/ bridleway whose views are orientated towards the Project from certain sections of the path. The susceptibility would therefore be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be High-Medium Sensitivity.</p>
Viewpoint 3 – Footpath MAE/50/2	
Sensitivity	<p>The viewpoint is located within a Western Uplands SLA in a rural location. There are long-distance scenic views in some directions although with some detractors including Wind Farms and 400kv overhead transmission line with pylons. The value of the view is assessed as <i>High-medium</i></p> <p>The view would be experienced by users of the footpath and nearby residents. The susceptibility would therefore be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be High – Medium Sensitivity.</p>

Viewpoint 4 – Cistercian Way Long Distance footpath/ Bridleway LDM/17/1

Sensitivity

The viewpoint is located within a Western Uplands SLA and near to the Y Bwlwarc Hill Fort Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are detracting features within distant views such as wind farms to the north-northeast and southeast. There is also visibility towards the 400kv overhead transmission line and pylons in the middle distance. The value of the view is assessed as *Medium*.

The view would be experienced by users of the Long-distance footpath and bridleway. The susceptibility would therefore be *High*.

In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be **High-medium**.

Viewpoint 5 – Junction of Minor Road and Footpath LDM/12/1

Sensitivity

The viewpoint is located within a Western Uplands SLA. The landscape is pleasantly rural with distant views towards the surrounding hillsides however there are some detracting features such as wind farms, OHLs (H poles and pylons). The value of the view is assessed as *Medium*.

The view would be experienced sequentially by users of the footpath and there are some residential properties whose views are oriented towards the Site (High Susceptibility). Transient views would be experienced by users of the minor road (Medium Susceptibility).

In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be **High-Medium (Residents/ Users of the footpath) and Medium (Road users)**

Viewpoint 6 – Minor road, Llangynwyd

Sensitivity

The viewpoint is not located within a designated landscape however the Western Uplands SLA does surround the village. There are views out of the village towards pastoral hillsides and coniferous woodland plantations. There are also detractors such as the 400kv overhead transmission line and pylons. The value of the view is assessed as *Medium*.

The view would be experienced by some properties within the village (High Susceptibility) and road users including pedestrians (Medium Susceptibility).

In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be **High (Residents) and Medium (Road users)**.

Viewpoint 7 – Junction of A4063 and Brynheulog Road and National Cycle Route 885

Sensitivity

The viewpoint is not located within a designated landscape. There are a number of detractors within the view including the substation, telecoms mast, OHL (H pole), road signage and light which compromise the more scenic quality of the distant hillsides. The value is therefore assessed as Low.

The view would be experienced by some residential properties to the south of Brynheulog Road, the rear of the properties and gardens are oriented south and therefore have a High Susceptibility. The recreational users of the nearby sports facilities whose attention would not solely be on the surrounding landscape would have a Medium Susceptibility. Transient views would be experienced by users of the A road in the direction of the site and the residential road which is not orientated towards the site therefore would have a Low Susceptibility. Transient views would be experienced by users of the NCR and they would have a Medium Susceptibility.

In combination of value and susceptibility this visual receptor is judged to be **High-Medium (Residents), Medium-Low (NCR and Recreational users) and Low (Road users)**.