

Appendix 6E Visual Assessment



Contents

1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	Visual Assessment	3



1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This appendix sets out the visual assessment for the LVIA. It is to be read in conjunction with the Baseline Descriptions and Sensitivity Assessment in **Appendix 6C.**

1.2 Visual Assessment

1.2.1 The Viewpoint/ Visual Receptor assessments are set out in **Table 6E.1** below:

Table 6E-1 - Visual Assessment

Viewpoint 1 – Footpath MAE/15/2

Magnitude of Change during Construction

The footpath which is located on VP 1 passes beneath the proposed northern OHL route and therefore would require a temporary diversion during construction along with several other footpaths/ bridleway in the area. Footpath MAE/15/2 would likely be diverted along the A4063 and join another footpath which would run up towards Rhiw Tor Cymry and along the northern/ eastern edge of the forested area. (details of diversion routes would be confirmed at construction stage).

There would likely be views of construction machinery, vehicle movements and potentially the compound area.

From this viewpoint there is constant background road noise emanating from the settlement in the valley below. Further west along the footpath away from the settlement the tranquilly would increase. The movement, visual intrusion and noise of construction activity and any diversions along main roads shall have a temporary adverse effect on users of the footpath.

Views towards the proposed southern OHL construction works are unlikely.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpaths during construction would be **Medium (northern OHL).**

Magnitude of Change during Operation

The proposed northern OHL would be visible in the foreground from this viewpoint. The footpath crosses beneath the OHL and so users of the footpath would experience near distance views of the OHL in the direction of travel. The viewpoint is orientated southwest where the OHL would partially be visible against the hillside of Rhiw Tor Cymry containing coniferous forestry and a deforested area. From the eastern section of the footpath the northern OHL would be seen in context with the settlement of Maesteg in the valley below whilst from other sections of the footpath the OHL would be visible against hillsides with few manmade artifacts. Where the OHL proceeds along higher elevations the OHL would be visible against the skyline from some parts of the footpath.

Whilst there may be views of the proposed southern OHL from a short section of footpath the distance would vary between 3.8 km - 6.8 km and therefore the visual impact would be negligible.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpaths during operation would be **Medium** (northern OHL).

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Major to Moderate and Significant (northern OHL).

Level of effect during Operation – Major to Moderate and Significant (northern OHL).

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and negative (Construction), Long term, direct and negative (Operation).



Viewpoint 1 – Footpath MAE/15/2

Cumulative assessment

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm (8 turbines, 145m high) would be highly visible from VP 1 and the footpaths within the locality due to the proximity of the turbines. This consented windfarm would result in a High magnitude of change for users of the footpaths.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium (Northern OHL)

Additional Effect (PD Only) - **Major to Moderate and Significant (northern OHL)** Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) – High

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major – Major to Moderate and Significant** (Foel Trawsnant Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project

Y Bryn Windfarm is (Application Wind Farm for 18No turbines with 250m blade tip height). Five turbines would be located on the coniferous hillside of Rhiw Tor Cymry to the south-southwest of the proposed northern OHL and would be highly visible for users of the footpaths. The remaining turbines would be located on Mynydd Margam and would be visible from the eastern section of Footpath MAE/15/2 where views extend beyond the hillside of Rhiw Tor Cymry. The application windfarm would result in a High magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) - Medium

Additional Effect (PD Only) – **Major to Moderate and Significant (northern OHL)**Combined Magnitude (Consented, application and PD) – High
Combined Effect (Consented, application and PD) – **Major – Major to Moderate and Significant** (Foel Trawsnant and Y Bryn Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Viewpoint 2 - Bridleway MAE/77/6

Magnitude of Change during Construction

There would be views of construction machinery and vehicle movement experienced by visitors to the monument and users of the bridleway which would be more noticeable in views during the construction of the proposed northern OHL given the closer proximity to the receptors than in views to the proposed southern OHL. There may also be views of the machinery associated with the construction of the UGC for the section which lies outwith the settlement.

The main compound is also proposed near the proposed northern OHL which would not be visible from VP 2 but may be visible on sections of more elevated footpaths and from areas of open access land within Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch.

The effects on tranquillity are considered to be negligible given that the settlement of Maesteg is positioned between the Project and the receptors.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpaths during construction would be **Low** (northern OHL) – Negligible (southern OHL).



Viewpoint 2 - Bridleway MAE/77/6

Magnitude of Change during Operation

At Operation all construction activity will have ceased and shall have no effect on the landscape character.

From VP 2 users of the bridleway and visitors to the moment would experience views of the eastern part of the proposed northern OHL which would partially be backclothed by landform but then becoming visible on the skyline as the route proceeds onto higher ground.

The OHL would similarly be visible from other footpaths in the vicinity of Mynydd Pwll-yr lwrch becoming increasingly visible north of VP 2 and on more elevated footpaths and open access land. There would also be views of the proposed northern OHL from the National Cycleway NCN885 to the west of VP 2 where the route is positioned above Maesteg. Views of the proposed northern OHL within the settlement of Maesteg are fragmented due to the screening provided by built form, vegetation and intervening landform of Foel y Dyffryn from views further to the north.

There would also be views of the proposed southern OHL from VP 2 and the footpaths on the southern slopes of Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch. The northern most section of the proposed southern OHL would be visible climbing part way up the pastoral hillside of Waun Lluest-wen approximately 2-3km distance but would then cease to be visible as the route travels down hill and crosses the Cwm Gerdin Watercourse. Visibility would resume again as the landform rises approximately 3.5km distance and beyond.

From many sections of these PRoWs the Project would be seen in conjunction with the settlement of Maesteg and from some areas the 400kv overhead transmission line.

The magnitude of change for this Viewpoint and users of nearby PRoWs during operation would be **Medium-Low (northern OHL)** and **Low-Negligible (southern OHL)**.

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Moderate to Minor – Minor and not Significant (northern OHL), Minor to Negligible and not Significant (southern OHL).

Level of effect during Operation – Moderate and not Significant (northern OHL) and Moderate to Minor - Minor – Minor to Negligible and not Significant (southern OHL).

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and negative (Construction), Long term, direct and negative (Operation).

Cumulative assessment

<u>Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project</u>

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm (8 turbines) would be positioned to the northwest of this Viewpoint and visitors to the monument and users of the Bridleway would experience views towards the turbines on the skyline with Rhiw Tor Cymry and coniferous vegetation screening the lower parts of the turbines. Views of the consented windfarm would become increasingly visible from other PRoWs and open access land on more elevated areas within Mynydd Pwll-yr-lwrch. This consented windfarm would result in a High-Medium magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium-Low (northern OHL), Low- Negligible (southern OHL)

Additional Effect (PD Only) - Moderate and not Significant (northern OHL) and Moderate to Minor - Minor - Minor to Negligible and not Significant (southern OHL).

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) - High-medium

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major – Major to Moderate and Significant** (Foel Trawsnant Windfarm).



Viewpoint 2 - Bridleway MAE/77/6

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project

Y Bryn Windfarm (application Wind Farm -18 turbines) would be positioned to the northwest/ southwest of this Viewpoint on the coniferous hillsides of Rhiw Tor Cymry and Mynydd Margam. The turbines would be highly visible in views experienced by visitors to the monument and users of the neaby PRoWs. The application windfarm would result in a High magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium-Low (northern OHL), Low- Negligible (southern OHL

Additional Effect (PD Only) - Moderate and not Significant (northern OHL) and Moderate to Minor - Minor - Minor to Negligible and not Significant (southern OHL).

Combined Magnitude (Consented, application and PD) - High

Combined Effect (Consented, application and PD) – **Major – Major to Moderate and Significant** (Foel Trawsnant and Y Bryn Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Viewpoint 3 – Footpath MAE/50/2

Magnitude of Change during Construction

There would be views of construction machinery and vehicle movement experienced by users of the footpath and nearby farm properties during the construction of the proposed southern OHL.

The area experiences higher levels of tranquillity therefore the introduction of construction activities would have a temporary adverse effect on tranquillity during the construction period.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpaths and residents during construction would be **Medium (southern OHL).**

Magnitude of Change during Operation

At Operation all construction activity will have ceased and shall have no effect on the landscape character.

From the viewpoint location there would be fragmented views south towards the proposed southern OHL between the existing coniferous trees to the west of Cae Emi Farm. There would also be fragmented views to the west through gaps in the hedgerow field boundaries. There would be no visibility of the proposed southern OHL from this location to the north – northwest due to the rising landform.

There would be greater visibility of the proposed southern OHL experienced sequentially by users of the footpath where the footpath runs alongside the OHL to the north. From this location there would also be visibility of the eastern most section of the proposed northern OHL. The remainder of the proposed northern OHL would be screened due to the intervening topography and vegetation on Rhiw Tor Cymry only the eastern most section would be visible. Given the distance of approximately 3.5km the magnitude of change would be less than negligible.

There would also be greater visibility of the proposed southern OHL experienced sequentially by users of the footpath further south of the viewpoint where the footpath



Viewpoint 3 – Footpath MAE/50/2

passes beneath the OHL and visibility opens up across the pastoral landscape towards the south and across the Cwm Cerdin Watercourse. The OHL would be viewed in conjunction with the 400kv overhead transmission line and pylons and existing OHL (H Poles) in near and distant views.

There are several scattered residential properties within the vicinity the two properties within closest proximity to the OHL include Cae Emi Farm which would experience views of the OHL as it continues further south in the landscape and Lluest-wen which would experience views from the northeast to the south. There would be views of some parts of the route where the topography is more elevated, but the majority would be backclothed by landform.

The magnitude of change for residents and users of nearby PRoW's during operation would be **Medium (southern OHL).**

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL).

Level of effect during Operation – Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL).

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and negative (Construction), Long term, direct and negative (Operation).

Cumulative assessment

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm (8 turbines) would be positioned north of this Viewpoint and would not be visible from the viewpoint.

<u>Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project</u>

Some of the turbines for Y Bryn application Windfarm would be visible on the hillside from the west from the footpath just south of the viewpoint. The application windfarm would result in a Medium magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium (southern OHL)

Additional Effect (PD Only) - **Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL)**

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) - High-Medium

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major to Moderate - Moderate and Significant** (Y Bryn Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

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

Magnitude of Change during Construction

There would be views of construction machinery and vehicle movement experienced by users of the footpath/ bridleway during the construction of the proposed southern OHL.

The area experiences higher levels of tranquillity therefore the introduction of construction activities would have a temporary adverse effect on tranquillity during the construction period.



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

The magnitude of change for users of the footpath/bridleway during construction would be **Medium (southern OHL).**

Magnitude of Change during Operation

At Operation all construction activity will have ceased and shall have no effect on the landscape character.

Users of the footpath would experience sequential views of the proposed southern OHL which would span approximately a 160° horizontal field of view across a rural pastoral farmland setting from the Viewpoint location. The proposed southern OHL would be largely backclothed by landform except where the topography rises further south where a short section may be visible on the skyline. The OHL would be in conjunction with existing overhead transmission lines carried on H poles and the 400kv OHL carried on pylons (some of which are visible on the skyline) throughout this section of the proposed southern OHL route. When travelling in an easterly direction the proposed southern OHL would be visible in conjunction with the settlement of Maesteg and the village of Llangynwyd. There is also Llynfi Afan Wind Farm, Peny y Wal & Fforch Nest Wind Farms, Cwm Risca Wind Farm and two communications mast. The built development which is present in the view within this rural landscape would help to lessen the impact of the proposed southern OHL as it would not form a completely discordant element within this landscape.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpath during operation would be **Medium** (southern OHL).

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL).

Level of effect during Operation – Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL).

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and negative (Construction), Long term, direct and negative (Operation).

Cumulative assessment

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm (8 turbines) would be positioned to the north of this Viewpoint. The Windfarm may be visible above the treeline of Rhiw Tor Cymry. This consented windfarm would result in a Medium-Low magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium (southern OHL)

Additional Effect (PD Only) - **Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL)**

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) – Medium

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant** (PD).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project

Y Bryn application Windfarm would be positioned to the northwest of this Viewpoint on the coniferous hillsides of Rhiw Tor Cymry and Mynydd Margam. The turbines located on Mynydd Margam would be visible in views experienced by the receptors at this location. The application windfarm would result in a High-medium magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium (southern OHL).



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

Additional Effect (PD Only) - Major to Moderate – Moderate and Significant (southern OHL)

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) – High-Medium Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major to Moderate - Moderate and Significant** (Y Bryn Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

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

Magnitude of Change during Construction

There would be views of construction machinery and vehicle movement experienced by residents, users of the footpath and road users during the construction of the proposed southern OHL. The area experiences higher levels of tranquillity therefore the introduction of construction activities would have a temporary adverse effect on tranquillity during the construction period.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpath/bridleway during construction would be **Medium-Low** (southern OHL).

Magnitude of Change during Operation

The proposed southern OHL would be visible in views spanning west- north from the viewpoint location. Users of the minor road would experience views transiently and users of the footpath sequentially. The horizontal field of view would span 150° across the pastoral farmland landscape. The proposed southern OHL route would be seen against the skyline on the elevated section of land to the west and southwest of the viewpoint. The OHL will cease at the point where the pylon is visible in the landscape. An existing OHL (H pole) line is also visible in the landscape leading up towards the existing pylon and heading in a southeasterly direction. Where the route continues north of the viewpoint the topography beings to fall towards Cwm Cerdin watercourse and then steadily rises up again where it would continue and appear between the properties of Lluest-wen and Cae Emi Farm and continue over the brow of the hill beyond. This section of the OHL would be backclothed by landform.

There are some residential properties (Glifach Cottages) located to the north of the viewpoint which would have glimpsed views towards the proposed southern OHL route. Roadside vegetation would completely or partial screen the OHL route from the ground floor windows of these properties.

There would also be views towards the proposed northern OHL from the viewpoint location. However, due to the intervening topography and vegetation on Rhiw Tor Cymry only the eastern most section would be visible. Given the distance of approximately 5.3km the magnitude of change would be negligible.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpath during operation would be **Medium-Low (southern OHL).**

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Moderate and not Significant (southern OHL). Level of effect during Operation – Moderate and not Significant (southern OHL).

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and negative (Construction), Long term, direct and negative (Operation).



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

Cumulative assessment

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm (8 turbines) would be positioned to the northnorthwest of this Viewpoint. The Windfarm may be visible above the treeline of Rhiw Tor Cymry. This consented windfarm would result in a Medium-Low magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium-Low (southern OHL)
Additional Effect (PD Only) - Moderate and not Significant (southern OHL)
Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) – Medium
Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – Moderate – Moderate and Not
Significant (southern OHL and Foel Trawsnant Wind Farm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project

Y Bryn application Windfarm would be positioned to the northwest of this Viewpoint on the coniferous hillsides of Rhiw Tor Cymry and Mynydd Margam. The turbines would be visible in views experienced by the receptors at this location. The application windfarm would result in a High-medium magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Medium-Low (southern OHL)
Additional Effect (PD Only) - Moderate and not Significant (southern OHL)
Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) – High-Medium
Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major to Moderate - Moderate and Significant** (Y Bryn Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Viewpoint 6 – Minor road, Llangynwyd

Magnitude of Change during Construction

There would be fragmented views of construction vehicles and machinery along sections the proposed southern OHL route beyond intervening buildings. Given the distance of between 1-2km and the intervening built form the magnitude of change is judged to be **Negligible (southern OHL).**

Magnitude of Change during Operation

Fragmented views of sections the proposed southern OHL route would be visible beyond intervening buildings. The proposed southern OHL would be visible in the distance within an area of pastoral landscape and would appear small in the landscape. The route would also be seen in context with the foreground pylon and distant overhead transmission lines (H poles and pylons). The proposed southern OHL would be backclothed by landform.

The proposed northern OHL would not be visible from this location.

The magnitude of change for users of the footpath during operation would be **Low – Negligible (southern OHL).**

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Minor to Negligible and not Significant (Residents and Road users) – southern OHL.



Viewpoint 6 - Minor road, Llangynwyd

Level of effect during Operation – Minor (Residents) and Minor-Minor to Negligible (Road users) and not Significant – southern OHL.

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and neutral (Construction), Long term, direct and neutral (Operation).

Cumulative assessment

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm would be positioned to the northwest of this Viewpoint. Due to intervening built for the Windfarm would not be visible from this location.

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project

Y Bryn Windfarm (application Wind Farm -18 turbines) would be positioned to the west and northwest of this Viewpoint on the coniferous hillsides of Rhiw Tor Cymry and Mynydd Margam. There may be glimpsed views of some of the turbines to the west between buildings. The application windfarm would result in a Low magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Negligible (southern OHL)

Additional Effect (PD Only) - Minor (Residents) and Minor-Minor to Negligible (Road users) and not Significant – southern OHL

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) - Low

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – Moderate to Minor - Minor and not Significant (Y Bryn Windfarm).

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

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

Magnitude of Change during Construction

There would be fragmented views of construction vehicles and machinery during the construction of the eastern section of the proposed northern OHL. Intervening landform would screen the remaining section of the route from view. For road and NCR users the construction would be viewed in combination with traffic along the A4073 and effects on tranquillity would be negligible.

There would be no visibility of the proposed southern OHL from the viewpoint location however there maybe visibility from the properties to the south of Brynheulog road. Given that the OHL is 6km distance (closest point) the magnitude of change would be negligible.

The magnitude of change is judged to be **Low – Negligible (northern OHL)**.

Magnitude of Change during Operation

The visual receptors would experience views of the eastern section of the proposed northern OHL in views to the southwest. The OHL would be backclothed by the hillside of Rhiw Tor Cymry and as the OHL progresses further northwest would become visible on the skyline. The visibility of the OHL route would become increasingly fragmented due to intervening landform of Foel y Dyffryn and then would be screened by Foel Trawsnant for the remainder of the route.



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

The OHL would occupy a relatively small horizontal field of view and it would be seen in combination with existing foreground OHLs, street lighting and road signage which would lessen the visual impact.

There would be no visibility of the proposed southern OHL from the viewpoint location however there maybe visibility from the properties to the south of Brynheulog road. Given that the OHL is 6km distance (closest point) the magnitude of change would be negligible.

The magnitude of change during operation would be **Low (northern OHL)**.

Level of Effect (of Project)

Level of effect during Construction – Minor (Residents), Minor – Minor to Negligible (NCR and Recreational Users) and Minor – Negligible and not Significant (Road users) (northern OHL).

Level of effect during Operation – Moderate to Minor – Minor (Residents), Minor (NCR, Recreational Users and road users) (northern OHL).

Type of Effect

Short term, direct and negative (Construction), Long term, direct and negative (Operation).

Cumulative assessment

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Project

Foel Trawsnant consented Wind Farm (8 turbines) would be positioned to the southwest of this Viewpoint and there would be views of the eastern most turbines on the skyline with intervening landform of Foel y Dyffryn screening the remainder of the turbines. This consented windfarm would result in a Medium magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) - Low (northern OHL),

Additional Effect (PD Only) - Moderate to Minor – Minor (Residents), Minor (NCR, Recreational Users and road users)

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) -Medium

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – **Major to Moderate and Significant** (**Residents**) (Foel Trawsnant Windfarm) and Moderate to Minor (NCR, Recreational Users) Minor (Road Users) and not Significant.

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

Cumulative Assessment: Consented Sites + Applications + Project

Y Bryn Windfarm (application Wind Farm -18 turbines) would be positioned to the southwest of this Viewpoint on the coniferous hillsides of Rhiw Tor Cymry and Mynydd Margam. The turbines would be visible in views experienced by the receptors at this location. The application windfarm would result in a High-medium magnitude of change.

Additional Magnitude (PD Only) – Low (northern OHL),

Additional Effect (PD Only) - Moderate to Minor – Minor (Residents), Minor (NCR, Recreational Users and road users)

Combined Magnitude (Consented and PD) -High-Medium

Combined Effect (Consented and PD) – Major – Major to Moderate and Significant (Foel Trawsnant and Y Bryn Windfarm) (Residents), Moderate and Significant (NCR, Recreational Users) and Moderate to Minor- Minor (Road users) and not Significant.

The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), cumulative, direct and negative.

