

**Torfaen County Borough Council**

**Designation of Special Landscape Areas**

**May 2011**



# TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## DESIGNATION OF SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

**MAY 2011**

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Project No: 8270

Revision No.	Date of Revision	Checked by	Date	Approved by	Date
0	18.05.09	CD	18.05.09	LJ	18.05.09
1	04.05.10	CD	04.05.10	PMcC	04.05.10
2	17.05.11	CD	17.05.11	LJ	20.05.11

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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- 1.1** TACP Consultants were appointed in March 2009 by Torfaen County Borough Council (see Figure 1.0) to carry out a review of the Special Landscape Area (SLA) designations within their administrative area. The study uses the Special Landscape Area Designation Criteria originally developed for the South East Wales Local Authority Consortium now included within the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) LANDMAP Information Guidance Note 1 (June 2008). This utilises the comprehensive data sets found within the LANDMAP Information System landscape assessment methodology.
- 1.2** The use of non-statutory designations such as SLAs to protect areas of landscape value has long been a policy tool within the UK planning system. They have been seen by local planning authorities as a means of protecting sensitive landscapes and in developing an understanding and awareness of those features and characteristics that give a locality its sense of place.
- 1.3** There are currently four areas designated as SLAs identified within the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan (July 2000) which cross the period 1991 to 2006 (see Figure 2.0). These cover the majority of the rural areas of the County Borough, save from an area to the south of Cwmbran which runs up to the boundaries with Newport and Monmouthshire.
- 1.4** The SLA study has identified eight candidate SLAs (see Figure 3.0) which have been developed, in line with the methodology, from some twenty one broad search areas identified originally. The detailed boundaries of the SLAs will be subject to review by the Council and amended as required to take into account any requirements within the emerging Local Development Plan.

## 2.0 STUDY CONTEXT

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- 2.1** Torfaen County Borough covers an area of some 126 square kilometres centred around the valley of the Afon Lwyd which forms the eastern most valley of the South Wales coalfield. It includes the main communities of Blaenavon, Pontypool and the new town of Cwmbran. The physical and cultural landscape of the area reflects the industrial legacy associated with iron and coal production, together with their associated extractive industries. The resultant manmade landscapes are interspersed with the surrounding countryside. Over the past twenty years there have been a number of reclamation schemes that have removed much of the dereliction that existed, however affected areas still remain. The County Borough contains a range of distinctive landscape types ranging from the open, exposed uplands to the north of Blaenavon to the rolling, agricultural landscapes to the south and west of Cwmbran where the landscape runs over into the lower Usk Valley. There are areas of both coniferous and broad leaved woodland throughout the area.
- 2.2** The north and eastern boundaries of Torfaen abut the Brecon Beacons National Park and this indicates the underlying qualities of this northern section of the County Borough. This is complemented by the designation of the historic industrial landscapes around Blaenavon as a World Heritage Site as well as on the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales produced by CCW/Cadw/ICOMOS.

Within the wider landscape there are two formal areas identified on Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, namely Pontypool Park and Llantarnam Abbey. These provide distinctive elements within the overall Torfaen landscape.

- 2.3** In the development of the Local Plan the Council identified a number of SLAs in the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP). Following the adoption of the Local Plan in 2000, the Torfaen LANDMAP Study was completed and a report published in June 2002. This identified a smaller area of the County Borough warranting designation as SLAs and remains unadopted by the County Borough Council.
- 2.4** The LANDMAP Information System represents the methodology used in Wales for the purpose of landscape assessment, and provides a wealth of data in respect of the landscape. Within this system the landscape is subdivided into five aspect topic layers which are of equal value and are assessed in terms of their features and value against a standard set of criteria. The five aspect topic layers are:
- Geological Landscapes
  - Landscape Habitats
  - Visual and Sensory Landscapes
  - Historic Landscapes
  - Cultural Landscapes

For each of these aspect topic layers, discrete geographical units known as aspect areas are identified and mapped and a data set is developed that includes a

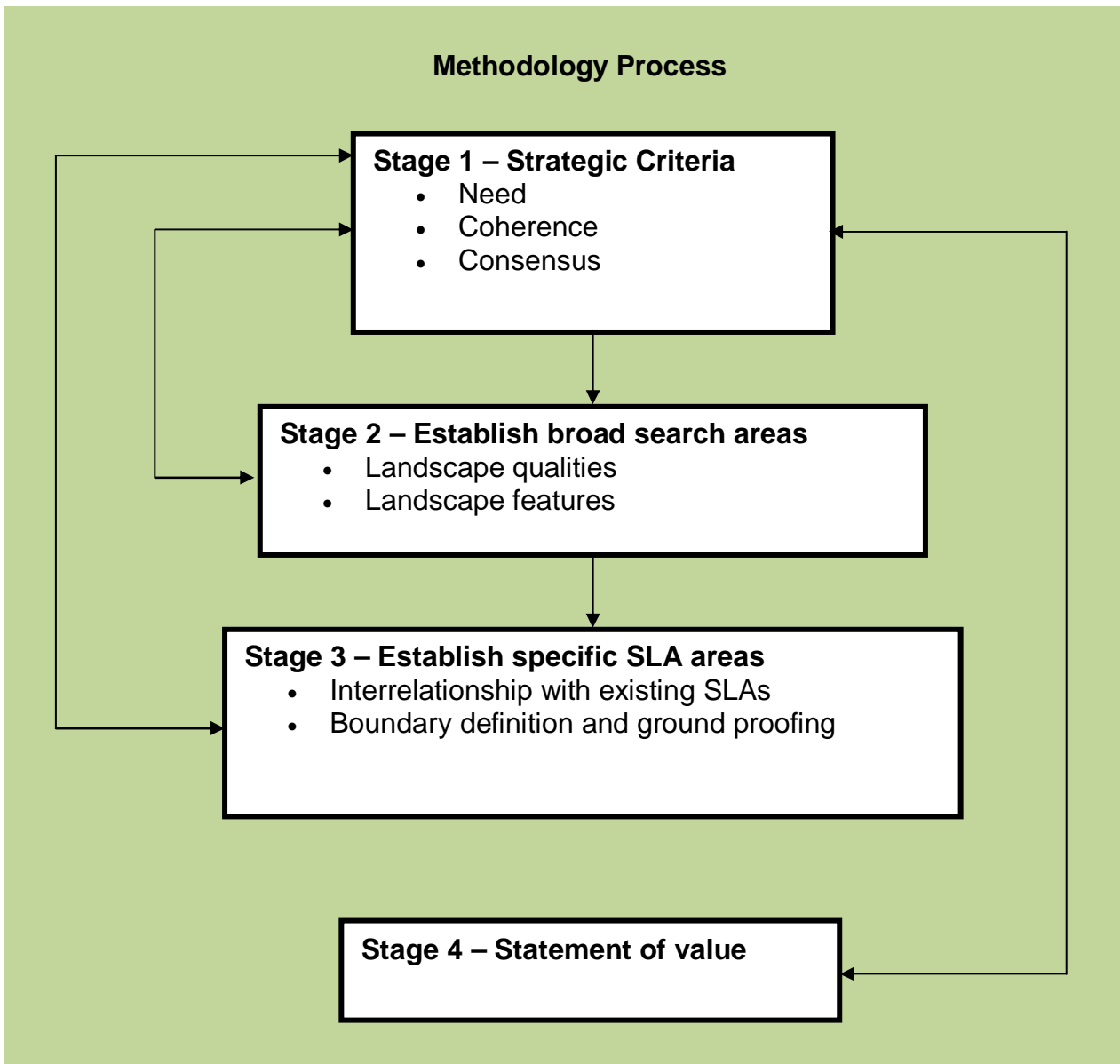
description classification and evaluation of quality. This is supported by non-evaluated data sets (Landscape Form and Function) and the findings from a Public Perception Study.

- 2.5** Furthermore guidance on the designation of SLAs has changed and is now contained in CCW LANDMAP guidance note No. 1 – LANDMAP and Special Landscape Areas (June 2008). This develops the use of the evaluation criteria to justify the designation of SLAs. This reflects guidance with Planning Policy Wales (2002), Section 5.3.11 states “....Non-statutory designations such as Special Landscape Areas..... should be based upon a formal scientific assessment of the landscape value of the site ....Local Planning Authorities should only apply these designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary level of protection”.

### 3.0 SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREA DESIGNATION - TORFAEN

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3.1 The CCW methodology uses a structured, iterative approach to the identification of SLAs. The process is illustrated on Figure 4.0 below:-



## 3.2 Stage 1 – Review of Strategic Criteria

3.2.1 In undertaking the study in Torfaen a Stage 1 Meeting was held on 9th March 2009 with the core client team. This reviewed the application of the criteria as follows:-

Strategic Criteria		Response
1.	<b>Need</b> - to what extent will designation be more effective in safeguarding, managing or providing for the special attributes of the area.	It was recognised that SLAs had been identified for the Local Plan and proved a useful policy. Given the change in guidance from CCW in order that the policy remains of value a review would need to be carried out to consider the validity of the existing SLAs and make any recommendations for change.
2.	<b>Coherence</b> - ensure that areas considered for designation make it practical to develop policies for its protection, management and production.	It was agreed that any proposals for SLAs should ensure coherence is considered. Given the pattern of landscape both within and around the County Borough, the Council were also keen that coherence with the proposals of adjacent authorities was also taken into account.
3.	<b>Consensus</b> - agreement and sufficient support for designation and must include all stakeholders including community as well as professional groups.	This was recognised by the client team. This initial review exercise was carried out with the core team of council staff. Inclusion of SLA policy with LDP process will provide for wider consultation and consensus.
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>		
Whilst SLAs have been identified within the current Local Plan and emerging LDP it was agreed that a review should be carried out using the new CCW guidance and proceed to Stage 2 of the process - Broad Search areas.		



### 3.3 Stage 2 - Establish Broad Search Areas

3.3.1 The broad search areas were established from a desk review and analysis of the LANDMAP Information System. In line with the methodology guidance this took the form of an iterative process, adding and reviewing aspect topic layers to establish where clustering of Outstanding and High evaluation levels override (see Figure 5.0) with the resultant identification of 21 broad search areas. The boundaries follow aspect area boundaries and allow for ground truthing and detailed review at the last stage of the process. The guidance does not specify the number of outstanding and high aspect areas required for the designation of a SLA. It is apparent that the greater the number, the stronger the rationale for designation will be. Conversely, the fewer the number, then the designation needs a sound basis. This is where reference to the three strategic criteria - Need, Coherence and Consensus - has to be made and the professional judgement of the assessor is important.

3.3.2 The broad search areas identified as follows:-

**Area 1 - North East of Blaenavon** - Large area of exposed upland, includes areas worked for minerals and closely associated with the historic development of the area. Whilst visually it contained only Moderate aspect areas, it contains four Outstanding areas (HL016, HL021, CL134 and CL960) which relate to the importance the industrial past of the area and its World Heritage Site designation.

**Area 2 - Western Flank of Blaenavon** - Another extensive upland area above Forgeside and Big Pit Mining Museum running up to the Torfaen boundary at Cefn Coed and Coity Mountain with four Outstanding aspect areas (HL016, HL017, GL015 and CL960) which relate to the World Heritage Site designation and two High (VS014 and LH016). The remaining nine areas are Moderate.

**Area 3 - Area of Afon Lwyd Valley and Mynydd-y-garn Fawr to the North East of Blaenavon** - Important open upland landscape and more wooded valley floor. There are six Outstanding aspect areas (LH022, HL015, HL016, HL021, HL022 and CL960), nine High areas (VS033, LH035, LH040, LH049, HL013, CL328, CL617 and CL897). Of the remainder, nine are Moderate, two Low and one is unassessed.

**Area 4 - Small Upland Area Centred on Mynydd Garnclody** - Two Outstanding aspect areas (HL022 and CL960), seven High aspect areas (VS033, LH035, LH040, LH048, HL013, CL328, CL617). The remaining four are Moderate or unassessed.

**Area 5** - Mixed landscape around Lasgarn Wood and County Borough boundary running down to the settlement edge at Trevethin. Area of variable character, upland edge, enclosed farmland and recreational landscapes. One Outstanding aspect area (CL263 – Pontypool Park), nine High (VS027, VS033, LH026, LH040, LH048, HL012, HL013, CL328, CL617). The remaining thirteen areas are Moderate, Low and unassessed.

**Area 6 - Pontypool Park** - Formal parkland and historic urban park area close to Penygarn/Pontypool. Included on Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. Two outstanding aspect areas (HL011 and CL263) that both relate

to the formal park area. Seven High areas (LH011, LH023, LH026, LH012, HL013, GL035, CL124) the remainder are Moderate to Low.

**Area 7 - Predominantly built up area, including Tranch and Cwmyynyscoy** - Two Outstanding areas (HL011 and CL263) both relating to Pontypool Park, nine High areas (LH031, HL007, HL012, HL018, GL003, GL005, CL124, CL670, CL983) the remaining ten are Moderate to Low. A number of the aspect areas relate to historic/cultural industrial landscapes and urban areas as well as specific geological landscape features.

**Area 8 - Lowland Area straddling the A4042(T) as it reaches the Monmouthshire boundary** - includes a number of large scale business parks including the extensive complex at Mamhilad. One Outstanding aspect area (CL354) which directly relates to the business park land use. Five High aspect areas (LH023, HL012, HL013, CL124, CL913). The remaining seven are Moderate or Low.

**Area 9 - Llandegfedd Reservoir** - that part of the reservoir and its hinterland in Torfaen and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Attractive views into the surrounding rolling lowland landscape. Seven High aspect areas (VS013, LH001, LH024, HL002, GL012, CL570, CL913), one Moderate aspect area (VS014) and one Low (GL010).

**Area 10 - Mixed Use Landscape within the Afon Lwyd Valley between Sebastopol and New Inn** - Dominated by communication routes - road and railway. Two outstanding aspect areas (CL354 and CL498) which relate to business parks and Cwmbran New Town, six High aspect areas (LH024, LH028, HL002, HL012, CL124 and CL913). Of the remaining areas, three are Moderate value and six Low.

**Area 11** - Large area of gentle, rolling farmland situated in the south-eastern corner of the County Borough between the A4042(T) road and the Monmouthshire border. One Outstanding aspect (CL498) which relates to Cwmbran New Town. Five High aspect areas (VS011, LH024, LH027, HL002, CL913) of the remainder five are Moderate (VS014, LH007, GL002, GL033, CL872) and six Low.

**Area 12** - Small lowland area which includes the grounds of Llantarnam Abbey which is on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Somewhat constrained by roads and the industrial estate at Llantarnam. Four Outstanding aspect areas (LH030, HL004, CL354, CL498), seven High aspect areas (LH024, LH025, LH027, HL002, HL005, CL265, CL913). Of the remainder, seven are Moderate and four Low.

**Area 13** - Extended area of rolling, lowland agricultural landscapes, typified by a pattern of small/mixed sized fields bounded by hedgerows and interspersed by areas of woodland. Includes Henllys Bog SSSI and the Monmouthshire – Brecon Canal. Area is sandwiched between the southern edge of Cwmbran and the Newport/Caerphilly boundaries to the south. Two Outstanding aspect areas (LH030 and CL498), eight High aspect areas (VS044, LH025, HL005, HL006, HL007, CL288, CL670, CL913). Of the remainder, seven are Moderate and two Low.

**Area 14** - Western side slopes of the valley centred around Mynydd Henllys which forms an important, wooded backdrop to Cwmbran. Four High aspect areas (VS024, VS044, GL001, CL913). Three Moderate areas (LH009, HL008, GL002) and two Low areas.

**Area 15** - Long, linear area immediately abutting the edge of Cwmbran formed by the intermediate slopes between the town and higher land to the west. Includes a number of important woodland blocks around Upper Cwmbran. Two Outstanding aspect areas (LH030 and CL498), the latter relates to Cwmbran New Town. Eight High aspect areas (VS024, VS044, LH031, LH032, HL007, GL005, CL913, CL971). The remainder include thirteen Moderate areas and three Low.

**Area 16** - Small area of upland fringe landscape centred around the settlement of upper Cwmbran. Seven High aspect areas (VS044, LH031, LH032, HL007, GL005, CL971) and three Moderate.

**Area 17** - Area of open exposed uplands centred on Mynydd Lwyd and Twyn Calch above Cwm Lickey. Four High aspect areas (VS024, LH020, HL018, GL003) the remaining five areas are Moderate.

**Area 18** - Area of open, exposed plateau dissected by a number of small, incised valleys. Ranges from 400-550 metres AOD and includes the peaks of Byrgwm, WaunWen and Gwastad.

One Outstanding aspect area (HL017) which forms part of the Registered Historic Landscape in the area. Five High aspect areas (VS024, LH036, LH056, GL014, CL917). The remaining six areas are Moderate.

**Area 19** - Small open upland area relating to abutting Area 18 above. Includes three High aspect areas (VS024, GL014, CL917) and two Moderate.

**Area 20** - Series of incised valleys related to Area 18 above, includes Cwm Sychan, and Cwm Ffrwd which forms an intermediate agricultural landscape between the uplands to the west and the extensive derelict landscape associated with the former British Colliery to the east. One Outstanding aspect area (HL017) which forms part of the Registered Historic Landscape area. Four High aspect areas (VS024, LH055, LH056 and CL017), of the remaining seven are Moderate and one Low.

**Area 21** - Small isolated upland landscape area on the southern edge of Mynydd Farteg Fawr around Blaenmelyn. One outstanding aspect area (HL017), two High (VS024 and CL617) the remaining six are Moderate.

### 3.4 Stage 3 - Establish the Specific Areas

3.4.1 Following the identification of the broad search areas, a meeting was held with the client team on 20th April 2009 to discuss the findings of this exercise and agree an appropriate way forward. These took the form of a review of the results against the three strategic criteria as follows:-

Strategic Criteria		Response
1.	<b>Need</b>	The review identified a smaller extent of land cover for SLA designation than that already included within the Local Plan. It was agreed that notwithstanding this or the presence of other designations such as the World Heritage Site, SLAs have a useful policy, management and implementation function. Furthermore the review had been carried out using current guidance.
2.	<b>Coherence</b>	<p>The review had identified a number of fragmented areas particularly in the central and southern areas of the County Borough. It is also apparent that a number of areas can join and therefore present the opportunity to be rationalised into more coherent areas. There were a number of areas discussed as follows.</p> <p><b>Area 9 - Llandegfedd Reservoir</b> - given its form and scale to make a meaningful SLA it requires a similar designation to be made by Monmouthshire Council to give coherence and the inclusion of the whole water body and its hinterland. The intentions of Monmouthshire in this respect currently remain unknown. It was agreed to leave the area in pending a decision.</p> <p><b>Area 5</b> - Given the mixture of landscape types and uses, particularly the golf course, it was decided not to include this area in the next stage of work but to include Lasgarn Woods in an extended Area 3A – Afon Lwyd Valley.</p> <p><b>Areas 6, 7, 8 and 10</b> - Whilst containing a number of historically and culturally important aspect areas, most of them related to urban or industrial areas. Given that, and the other detractors associated with the areas, it was agreed to discontinue work on these areas.</p>

3.	<b>Consensus</b>	<p>It was agreed to rationalise the numbers of SLAs by forming some together and deleting others totally. Those identified to be taken forward to Stage 4 – Statement of Value tend to show a spread of Outstanding and High aspect areas across the range of the five LANDMAP aspect topics as thus have a stronger rationale for designation. As discussed in ‘2 – Coherence’ above the following was agreed.</p> <p>Areas 1 and 2 - join  Areas 3 and 4 - join  Area 3A - extend southwards to include Lasgarn Woods (from Area 5) and include full extent of the valley.  Areas 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 – delete  Area 9 - retain, subject to proposals by Monmouthshire Council for SLA designation.  Areas 11 and part 12* - join  Areas 13 and part 12* - join  Areas 14, 15, and 16 - join  Areas 18, 19 and 20 - join  Area 21 - delete</p> <p>*Area 12 - that part between A4042(T) and Cwmbran Drive is deleted from Area 12 in both instances.</p> <p>It was also agreed that where SLAs abutted settlements then the designated settlement boundary or development area boundary would define the extent of the SLA.</p>
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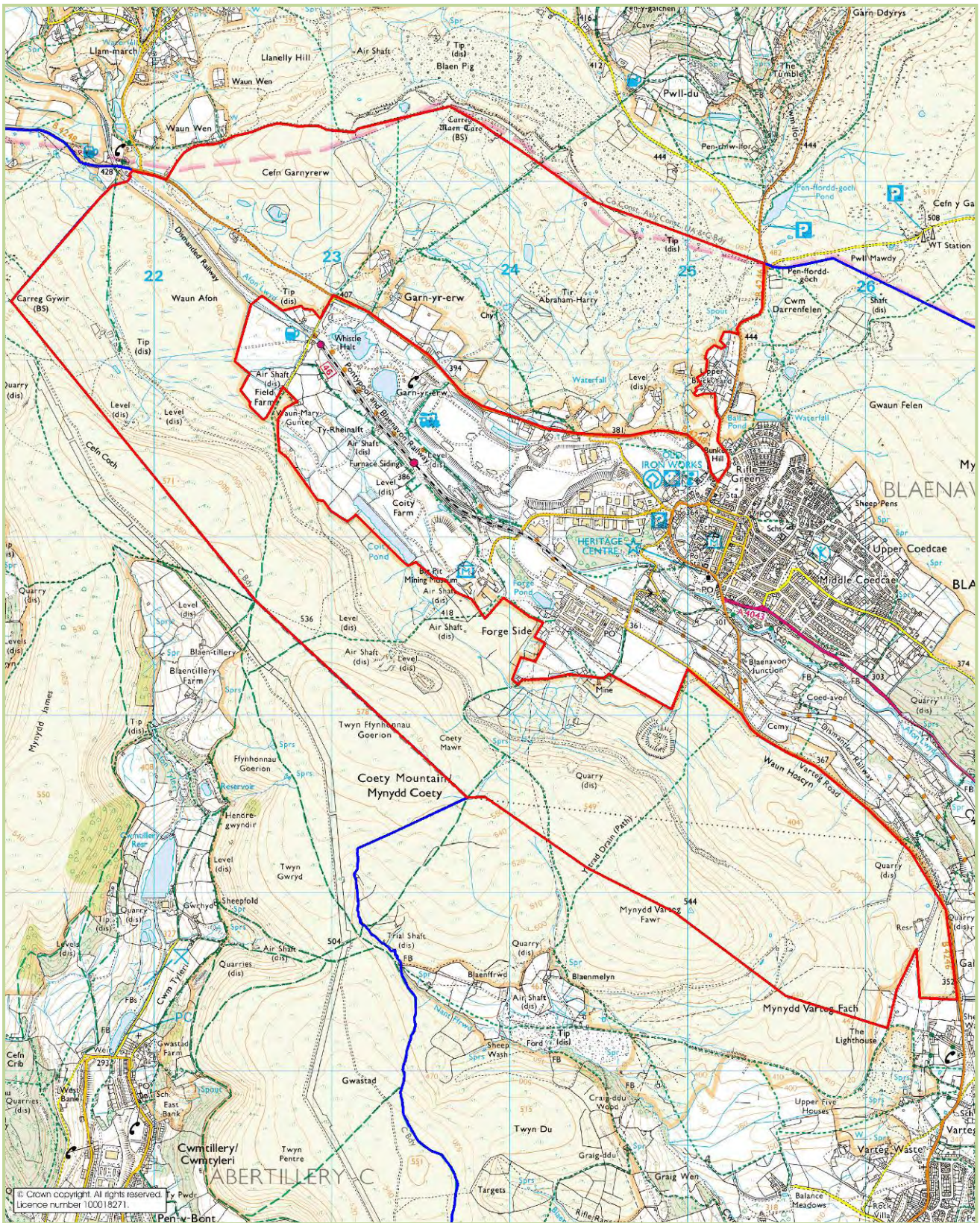
### **3.5 Stage 4 - Statement of Value**

**3.5.1** The Statement of Value sets out the key qualities of the individual SLAs. This has been undertaken through a combination of desk survey and field work. This has included ground truthing of the boundaries for the SLAs and a more detailed investigation of the LANDMAP criteria. Under the methodology the final boundaries will be determined by the Local Authority, however, the Statement of Value includes the justifications for the proposed designation of an area. Thus the areas recommended for designation (see Figure 3.0) are:-

- SLA 1 - Blaenavon Heritage Landscape (Broad Search Areas 1 and 2)
- SLA 2 - Eastern Uplands (Broad Search Areas 3 and 4)
- SLA 3 - Afon Llwyd Valley (Broad Search Area 3 extended)
- SLA 4 - Llandegfedd Reservoir (Broad Search Area 9)
- SLA 5 - South Eastern Lowlands (Broad Search Areas 11 and part 12)
- SLA 6 - Southern Lowlands (Broad Search Areas 13 and part 12)
- SLA 7 - South West Uplands (Broad Search Areas 14, 15 and 16)
- SLA 8 - Western Uplands (Broad Search Areas 18, 19 and 20)

# SLA 1 - BLAENAVON HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

## Location Plan



## Photographs



Blaenavon Heritage Landscape from B4246 Abergavenny Road



View of Blaenavon Heritage Landscape from Blaenavon-Pontypool Railway car park

## Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - the area includes the upland hinterland to Blaenavon which underpins the designated World Heritage Site. It represents an important historical and cultural landscape which requires careful management. Despite the presence of detractive features associated with past industry it is the focus for a number of key resources including Big Pit Mining Museum, and the scheduled sites associated with early industry.

**Coherence** - a distinctive upland massif forming the backdrop to Blaenavon/Forgeside settlement. It is included within the World Heritage Site designated area, including some of the oldest areas of iron and coal extraction between Blaenavon and Pwll Du. Abuts a designated SLA in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council area and Brecon Beacons National Park to the north.

**Consensus** - has been identified as a SLA within both the adopted Torfaen Local Plan and a potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP Strategy. It is agreed that the area has the underlying qualities and values to be designated.

## Primary Landscape Quality and Features

A prominent area of open upland hillside and scarp with strongly defined slopes rising to the head of the valley, ranging between 390 and 470 metres AOD. A large scale landscape, characterised by a sense of exposure, panoramic views and a strong sense of place with a simple set of defining features. There are a range of upland habitats - bog, bare peat, flushes, springs, blanket bog and heathland. It forms the edge of the County Borough, abutting neighbouring authorities on the prominent skyline formed by the distinctive upland outcrops such as Coity Mountain and Cefn Coch. It is closely associated with the Blaenavon World Heritage Site which forms a remarkable contribution of historic sites and features associated with the early iron and coal industries, the development of which is exemplified in the Big Pit Mining Museum to the north of Forgeside.



## **Key Policy and Management Issues**

The World Heritage Site Management Plan provides the key guidance in this respect and should focus any proposed management actions.

Avoid encroachment upon SLA through development.

## **Boundary Justification**

The defined settlement boundary and County Borough boundaries provides the definition of the SLA itself. Final boundary details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

## **Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information Systems**

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes        1 – Rarity  
   2 – Survival/Preservation  
   3 – Coherence  
   4 – Potential  
   5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes        1 – Recognition/Transparency  
   2 – Period  
   3 – Rarity  
   4 – Documentation  
   5 – Group Value  
   6 – Survival  
   7 – Vulnerability  
   8 – Diversity  
   9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

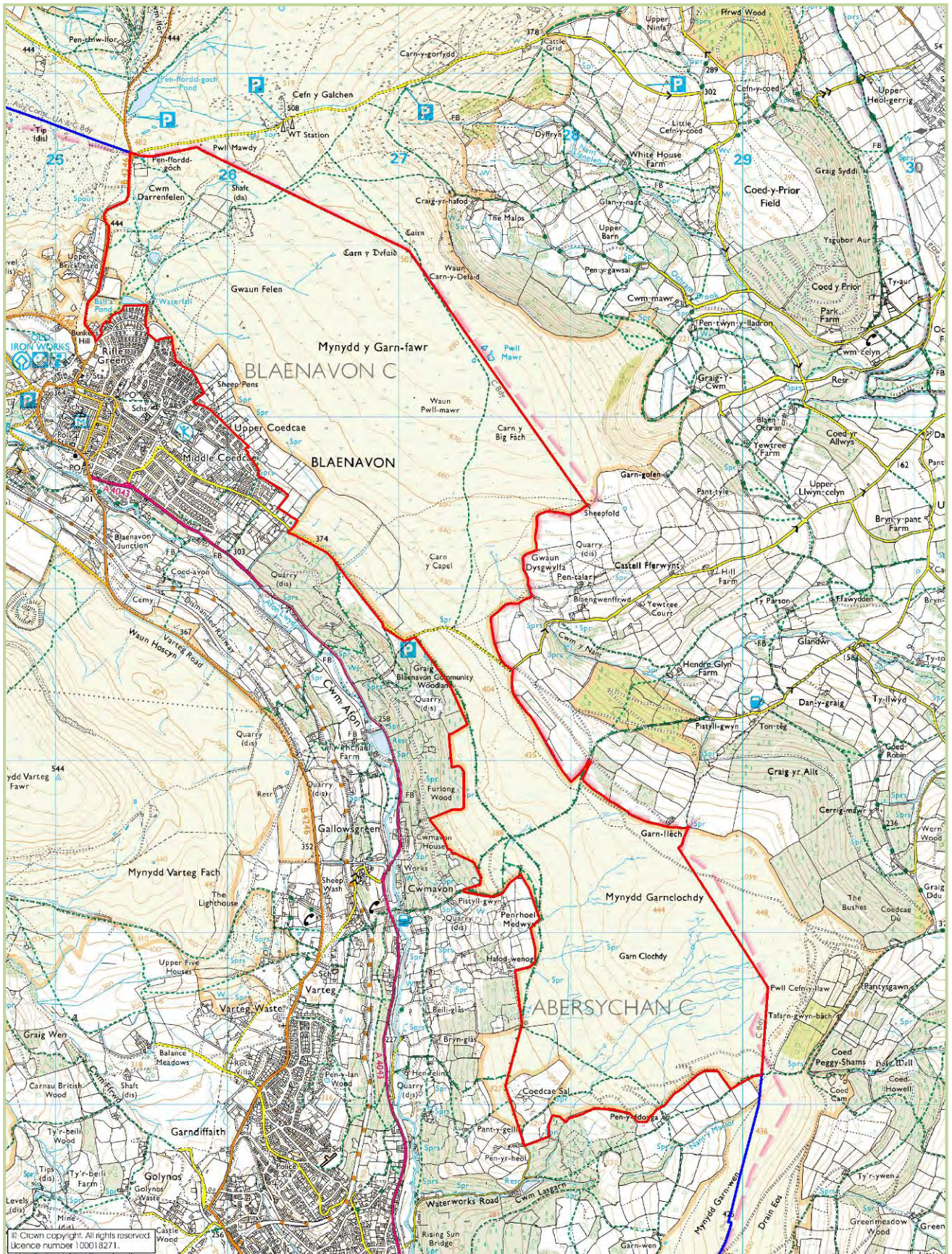
More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

**SLA 1 Blaenavon Heritage Landscape**

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Visual and Sensory	VS 024		H	H	H	H						High
	VS 030		M	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 016											High
	LH 018											Moderate
	LH 039											High
	LH 041											Moderate
	LH 043											Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 016	Blaenavon										Outstanding
	HL 019	Waun-wen and Mynydd Llanhilleth										Moderate
	HL 020	Mynydd Coety										Outstanding
	HL 021	Cefn Garnyrerw and Cwm Darrenfelen										Outstanding
Geological	GL 015	Waun Wen	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 016	Mynydd Varteg Fach	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 017	Varteg	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 018	Blaenavon	L	L	L	L						Low
Cultural	CL 615	Garn-yr-erw	M	M	M	M	M	M	U	M	M	Moderate
	CL 897	Blaenafon Town	H	H	H	O	U	O	L	H	O	High
	CL 960	Blaenafon World Heritage Site	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Outstanding

# SLA 2 - EASTERN UPLANDS

## Location Plan



## Photographs



View across to Eastern Uplands from Big Pit

## Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - area formed by the upland ridge that forms the eastern boundary of Torfaen, formed by Mynydd-y-garn-fawr and Mynydd Garnclochdy. It abuts the Brecon Beacons National Park in the areas of Upper Llanover and Blorengce.

**Coherence** - forms a unified upland landscape running up to the National Park boundary in the east and the edge of Blaenavon and the Afon Lwyd valley in the west. The open character provides for a distinct sense of place.

**Consensus** - has been identified as a SLA before within both the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan and a potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP Strategy. The area exhibits underlying qualities and values and warrants designation.

## Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

Dominant ridgeline on the eastern flanks of the narrow Afon Lwyd Valley, rising up to 500 metres AOD at Mynydd-y-gam Fawr. An open, exposed landscape of medium scale and uniform character it includes areas of upland karst landscapes. Historically an important relict landscape of upland common, with Bronze Age funerary deposits. Forms part of the Registered Historic Landscape and World Heritage Site. The vegetation is dominated by dry, dwarf heathland and it lies within the Blorengce SSSI.

## Key Policy and Management Issues

The World Heritage Site Management Plan provides the key guidance in this respect and should form the focus for management actions.

Ensure proper management of upland common to retain habitat diversity and maintain SSSI status.

Careful management of historic landscape features, including distinctive boundary network and styles of stone walling and cloddiau.

## Boundary Justification

The County Borough Boundary forms the eastern boundary of the SLA, the northern boundary aligns with that of SLA 1 which follows the B4246 Blaenavon-Govilon road. The western boundary is formed by the defined settlement boundary for Blaenavon, together with the change in vegetation from upland to lower valley upland. The southern boundary follows the field boundary that marks the end of open upland common and start of the

enclosed agricultural landscape near to Pen-y-ddoyga. Final boundary details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

### **Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System**

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes        1 – Rarity  
   2 – Survival/Preservation  
   3 – Coherence  
   4 – Potential  
   5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes        1 – Recognition/Transparency  
   2 – Period  
   3 – Rarity  
   4 – Documentation  
   5 – Group Value  
   6 – Survival  
   7 – Vulnerability  
   8 – Diversity  
   9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

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- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

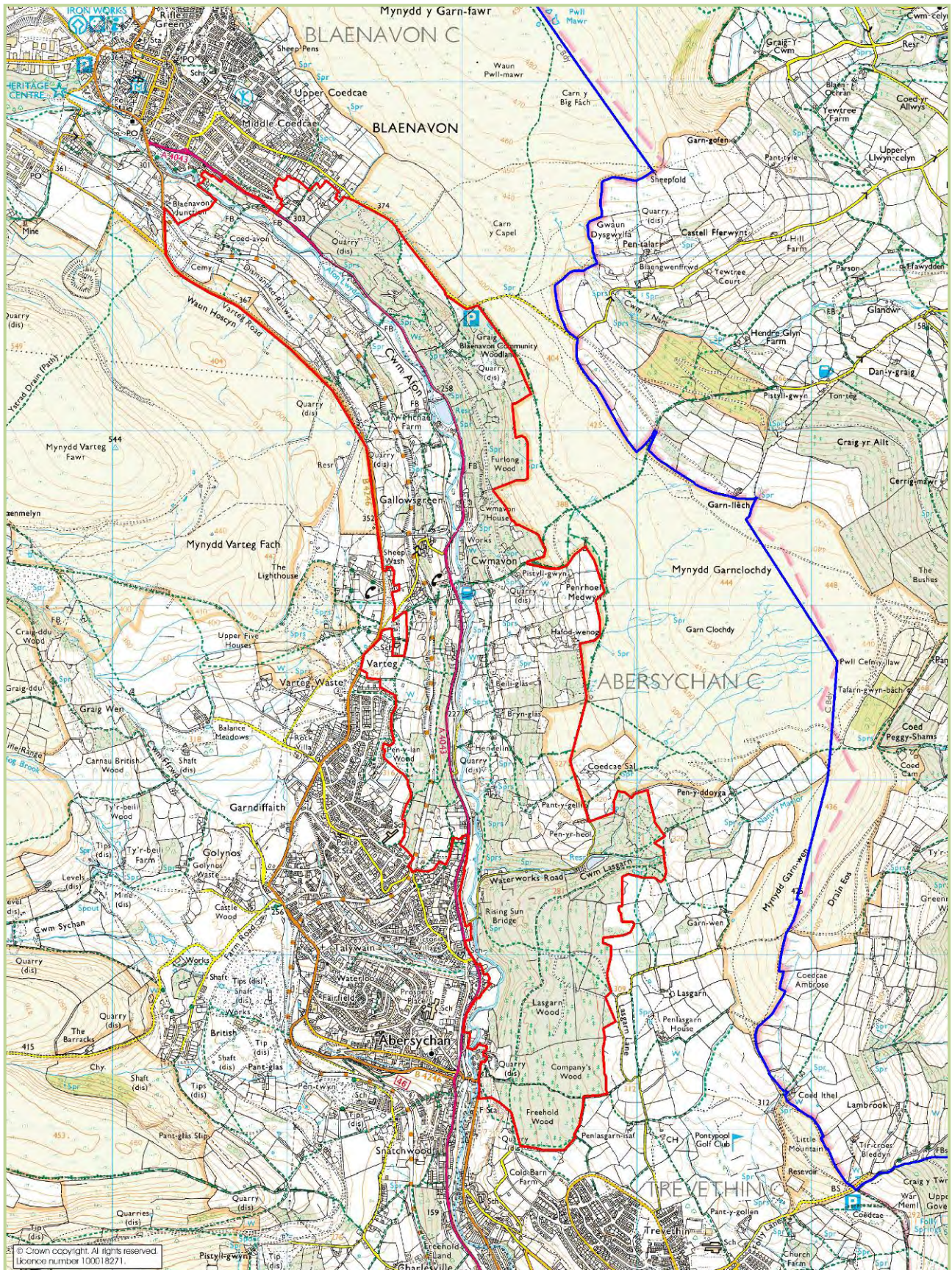
More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

#### SLA 2 Eastern Uplands

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Visual and Sensory	VS 027		H	H	M	H						High
	VS 030		M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 031		L	L	M	H						Moderate
	VS 032		M	H	M	M						Moderate
	VS 033		H	H	M	H						High
Landscape Habitats	LH 006											Moderate
	LH 022											Outstanding
	LH 040											High
	LH 048											High
Historic Landscapes	HL 013	Cilgoegan and Lasgarn										High
	HL 014	Mynydd Garnlochdy										Unassessed
	HL 016	Blaenavon										Outstanding
	HL 017	Waun-wen and Mynydd Llanhilleth: Valley										Outstanding
	HL 021	Cefn Garnyrenw and Cwm Darrenfelen										Outstanding
	HL 022	Mynydd y Garn-fawr										Outstanding
Geological	GL 018	Blaenavon	L	L	L	L						Low
	GL 019	Mynydd y Garn Fawr	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 020	Mynydd Garn Clochdy	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 021	Cwm y Nant	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 024	Cwm Lasgarn	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Cultural	CL 328	Cwmafon	H	M	H	H	H	H	L	H	U	High
	CL 617	Uplands	H	U	L	U	H	M	M	U	U	High
	CL 897	Blaenafon Town	H	H	H	O	U	O	L	H	O	High
	CL 960	Blaenafon World Heritage Site	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Outstanding

# SLA 3 - AFON LLWYD VALLEY

## Location Plan



## Photographs



View across Afon Llwyd Valley looking down to Cwmafon



View towards Lasgarn Wood from Varteg Incline car park

## Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - an area of lowland valley mosaic landscape set between the adjacent upland flanks in a narrow valley. The area is characterised by transport corridors (A4043) and disused railways' track beds. The area has been subject to development pressures, with the western valley sides given over to settlements such as Abersychan, Garndiffaith and Varteg. From Cwmafon northwards to Blaenavon, the valley retains an intimate, rural, agricultural landscape character, with small fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and small spinneys. The southern extent is formed by the prominent woodland block of Lasgarn Woods.

**Coherence** - the extension to include Lasgarn Wood provides a coherent landscape unit which with the more open areas above Cwmafon provides a distinctive SLA.

**Consensus** - already identified as a SLA in the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan and partly as a potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP Strategy. A distinctive landscape character, the area exhibits qualities and values that justify its designation as a SLA.

## Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

A lowland valley landscape running up to the edge of the upland commons, up to 300 metres AOD. It has two distinct yet interrelated landscape types. From Blaenavon southwards to Cwmafon, the landscape is one of a network of enclosed fields, bounded by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees and interspersed with small broad leaved woods. The settlement pattern is scattered with individual farms and small groups of houses. It results in a balanced landscape form and character with a muted sense of colour, albeit autumn colour is an important feature of the SLA. It retains many elements of the post-medieval/urban industrial landscape with a number of relict features including disused



railways. Its historical value is recognised by its inclusion within the Blaenavon World Heritage Site area. Southwards from Cwmavon, the landscape is more enclosed albeit still reflecting the relict agricultural landscape pattern. The last third of the SLA is formed by the extensive mixed woodland of Lasgarn Wood/Company's Wood and Freehold Wood. These contain important remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland.

### **Key Policy and Management Issues**

The World Heritage Site Management Plan provides the key guidance for that part of the SLA within the Heritage Site area, and should focus any proposed management actions.

Management of relief historic landscape features.

Management and development of woodland habitats and features.

Pressure for further development along SLA boundary edges.

### **Boundary Justification**

Primarily a Lowland SLA, the western and eastern boundaries are defined by the transition from enclosed fields to open upland common. It is considered that the whole of the valley floor, including the A4043 corridor should be included, and the SLA should follow defined settlement boundaries, such as at Varteg. The northern boundary is formed by the settlement boundary for Blaenavon, whilst in the south the woodland area defines the boundary location. Final boundary details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

### **Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System**

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluation aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes	1 – Rarity 2 – Survival/Preservation 3 – Coherence 4 – Potential 5 – Amenity Value
Cultural Landscapes	1 – Recognition/Transparency 2 – Period 3 – Rarity 4 – Documentation 5 – Group Value 6 – Survival 7 – Vulnerability 8 – Diversity 9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

SLA 3 Afon Llwyd Valley

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Visual and Sensory	VS 027		H	H	M	H						High
	VS 031		L	L	M	H						Moderate
	VS 032		M	H	M	M						Moderate
	VS 033		H	H	M	H						High
	VS 040		L	L	L	L						Low
Landscape Habitats	LH 005											Moderate
	LH 006											Moderate
	LH 019											Moderate
	LH 034											Moderate
	LH 035											High
	LH 040											High
	LH 048											High
	LH 049											High
Historic Landscapes	HL 012	Pontypool										High
	HL 013	Cilgoegan and Lasgarn										High
	HL 015	Cwm Afon										Outstanding
	HL 016	Blaenavon										Outstanding
	HL 020	Mynydd Coety										Outstanding
Geological	GL 009	Afon Llwyd	L	L	L	L						Low
	GL 016	Mynydd Varteg Fach	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 017	Varteg	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 020	Mynydd Garn Clochdy	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 022	Cwm Afon	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 023	Garndiffaith	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 024	Cwm Lasgarn	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 025	Lasgarn Wood	U	M	H	M						Moderate
	GL 026	Trevethin	U	M	M	M						Moderate
Cultural	CL 328	Cwmafon	H	M	H	H	H	H	L	H	U	High
	CL410	Torfaen	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	Moderate
	CL 617	Uplands	H	U	L	U	H	M	M	U	U	High
	CL 897	Blaenafon Town	H	H	H	O	U	O	L	H	O	High
	CL 960	Blaenafon World Heritage Site	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Outstanding

## SLA 4 - LLANDEGFEDD RESERVOIR

### Location Plan



## Photographs



View across Llandegfedd Reservoir towards Sluvad Wood

### Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - unique landscape element within the Torfaen landscape. The reservoir is both important for wildlife (designated a SSSI) but also for recreational activities, such as walking, wind surfing and sailing. The designation as a SSSI, a statutory nature conservation designation, may obviate the need to designate as a SLA. This will need to be reviewed by the Council.

**Coherence** - somewhat fragmented because half of the reservoir and its hinterland lies within Monmouthshire. Would benefit from complete designation as SLA if this was the agreed approach from the two local authorities.

**Consensus** - had been identified as a SLA with Approved Torfaen Local Plan and a potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP Strategy. However, the reservoir is already protected by a statutory nature conservation designation (SSSI) and the view of Monmouthshire to designate their part of the reservoir and hinterland is required. Notwithstanding this, the reservoir and hinterland does form an important landscape feature within Torfaen.

### Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

The reservoir covers an area of just over 175 hectares (430 acres) and was opened in 1965 by Newport Corporation. It forms a visually distinct landscape element, and from its hinterland pleasant views are afforded over the wider, rolling agricultural landscape to the east, and the valley of the Sor Brook to the south. Although enclosed it has a strong sense of place reflecting the unity of the landscape character. Designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for overwintering and migrating birds it also forms an important recreational and cultural function, being important for sailing, wind surfing and fishing. The landscape around the reservoir is underlain by rocks of the Silurian inlier of the north-south Usk antiform, which is an important geological outcrop that extends eastwards into Monmouthshire.

## Key Policy and Management Issues

Work closely with Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru on ongoing recreational use of reservoir.

Reflect SSSI designation and any requirements in developing landscape management proposals.

Work in conjunction with Monmouthshire County Council in developing any landscape management policies.

## Boundary Justification

The primary boundary is that formed by the Torfaen-Monmouthshire boundary which crosses the main water body of the reservoir, and down the Sor Brook valley, before running back westwards. The western boundary is formed by the unclassified track that runs from the local authority boundary to the north down through Sluvad Farm down to the local authority boundary at Ty Mawr Llanddewi. Final boundary details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

## Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes    1 – Research/Educational Value  
                                  2 – Historic Value  
                                  3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
                                  4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
                                  2 – Significance  
                                  3 – Opportunity  
                                  4 – Decline Rates  
                                  5 – Threat  
                                  6 – Fragmentation  
                                  7 – Habitat Evaluation  
                                  8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
                                  2 – Integrity  
                                  3 – Character  
                                  4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes        1 – Rarity  
                                  2 – Survival/Preservation  
                                  3 – Coherence  
                                  4 – Potential  
                                  5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes        1 – Recognition/Transparency  
                                  2 – Period

- 3 – Rarity
- 4 – Documentation
- 5 – Group Value
- 6 – Survival
- 7 – Vulnerability
- 8 – Diversity
- 9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

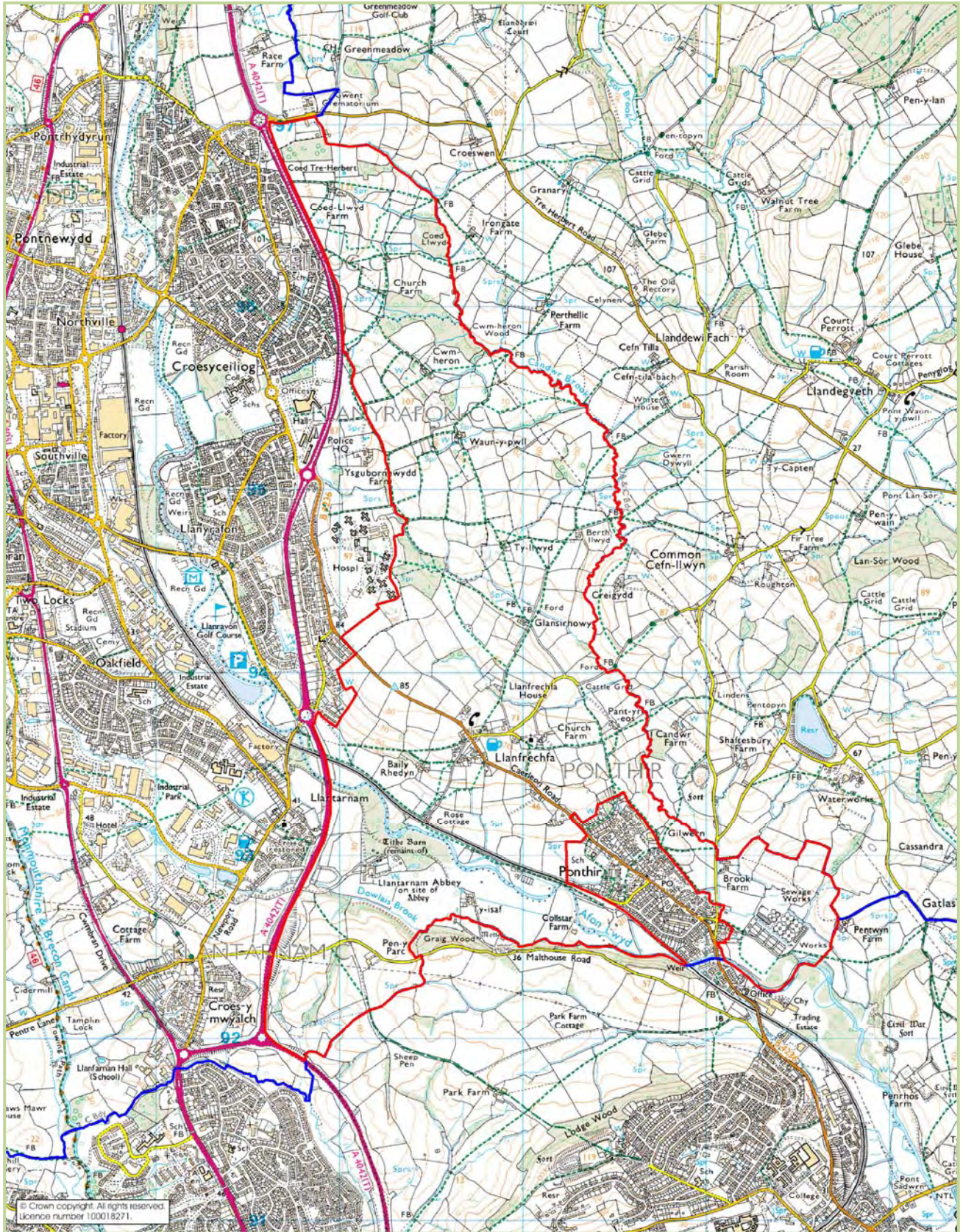
More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

#### SLA 4 Llandegfedd Reservoir

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Visual and Sensory	VS 013		H	H	H	H						High
	VS 014		H	M	M	M						Moderate
Landscape Habitats	LH 001											High
	LH 024											High
Historic Landscapes	HL 002	Edlogan and Tregrug										High
Geological	GL 010	Llanfrechfa	U	M	M	L						Low
	GL 012	Llandegfedd Reservoir	H	H	H	M						High
Cultural	CL 570	Llandegfedd Reservoir	M	H	L	U	U	U	L	H	H	High
	CL 913	Lowland and Southern Ridges	M	H	M	L	H	M	M	M	M	High

## SLA 5 - SOUTH EASTERN LOWLANDS

### Location Plan





## Photographs



View towards Llanfrechfa



View from Croes-y-mwlach towards Llantarnam Abbey

## Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

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

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

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

## Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

A rolling, lowland agricultural landscape, ranging from 30-110 metres AOD. It forms a quiet, secluded area to the east of Cwmbran with scattered settlements pattern, Llanfrechfa being the main village in the area. This part of the SLA has a strong visual unity eastwards into Monmouthshire. The southern part of the SLA includes the grounds of Llantarnam Abbey which is included on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. However the presence of roads and more urban influences associated with Llantarnam Business Park and Ponthir give a more discordant feel to the area. The landscape is typified by a patchwork of small to medium sized fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and interspersed with a range of small and some larger woodland

blocks. A number of these retain many of their ancient semi-natural woodland features which contributes to the overall quality of the area. The main river valley of Torfaen, the Afon Lwyd dissects the SLA at Ponthir as it runs southwards into the Usk.

### **Key Policy and Management Issues**

Ongoing pressure for development, particularly around Llantarnam and Llanfrechfa Hospital.

Retention of lowland agricultural landscape pattern of hedge bounded fields with hedgerow trees, spinneys and woodlands.

Loss of quality of settlement edges with inconsistent boundary treatment, fly tipping etc.

### **Boundary Justification**

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

### **Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System**

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes        1 – Rarity  
   2 – Survival/Preservation  
   3 – Coherence  
   4 – Potential

5 – Amenity Value

- Cultural Landscapes
- 1 – Recognition/Transparency
  - 2 – Period
  - 3 – Rarity
  - 4 – Documentation
  - 5 – Group Value
  - 6 – Survival
  - 7 – Vulnerability
  - 8 – Diversity
  - 9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.cw.gov.uk>

**SLA 5 South Eastern Lowlands**

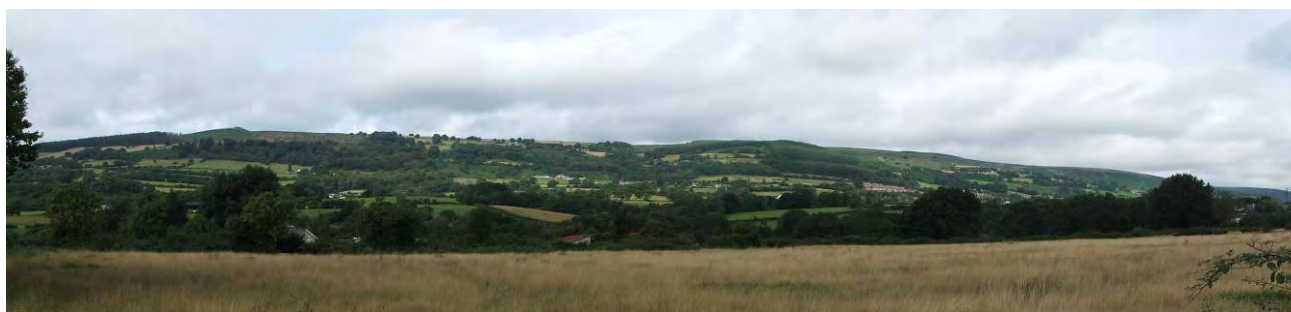
	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
<b>Visual and Sensory</b>	VS 008		L	M	L	M						Moderate
	VS 009		L	L	L	L						Low
	VS 011		M	H	H	M						High
	VS 045		L	L	L	L						Low
<b>Landscape Habitats</b>	LH 003											Low
	LH 007											Moderate
	LH 024											High
	LH 025											High
	LH 027											High
<b>Historic Landscapes</b>	HL 002	Edlogan and Tregrug										High
	HL 003	Ponthir										Moderate
	HL 004	Llantarnam Abbey	O	O	O	O	O					Outstanding
<b>Geological</b>	GL 008	Llantarnam	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 009	Afon Llwyd	L	L	L	L						Low
	GL 010	Llanfrechfa	U	M	M	L						Low
	GL 032	Church Farm	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 033	Creigydd	U	M	M	M						Moderate
<b>Cultural</b>	CL 265	Llantarnam Abbey	H	H	H	M	U	H	L	L	L	High
	CL 498	Cwmbran	H	H	O	H	U	H	U	H	U	Outstanding
	CL 872	Ponthir	M	M	M	U	U	U	U	U	U	Moderate
	CL 913	Lowland and Southern Ridges	M	H	M	L	H	M	M	M	M	High

# SLA 6 - SOUTHERN LOWLANDS

## Location Plan



## Photographs



View towards Henllys Vale



View northwards from Pentre Lane

## Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - area of predominantly rolling, lowland landscape to the south of Cwmbran running down to the County Borough boundary with Newport and Caerphilly. The western edge runs up to the lower slopes of Mynydd Henllys at about 200 metres AOD. The area is subject to ongoing development pressure yet remains one of the County Borough's undervalued landscapes exhibiting pleasant, rural character.

**Coherence** - the area provides a uniform sense of place and character and reflects the disposition of local authority boundaries. It abuts the Bettws SLA in Newport to the south.

**Consensus** - not identified as a SLA in the Approved Torfaen Local Plan but identified as a potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP Study. Pressures for development and qualities of the area justify designation as a SLA.

## Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

A large area of pleasant rolling, lowland agricultural landscape formed by a series of enclosed hollows and valleys ranging between 20 and 150 metres AOD. It provides for a distinct sense of enclosure and isolation. The majority of the area is of medium scale with muted colours. The western edge rises slightly higher to some 200 metres AOD on the lower side slopes of Mynydd Henllys. It includes Henllys Bog, designated a SSSI, a rich soligeneous lowland fen. Around Henllys are remnants of an earlier medieval landscape characterised by irregular field patterns although the majority of the area is post medieval, with regular fields bounded by hedgerows and in places hedgebanks. With associated sunken lanes there are a number of small spinneys and larger woodlands scattered across the area such as Coed Y Twlch near Greenmeadow. The Monmouthshire-Brecon Canal crosses the eastern part of the areas as does part of the National Cycle network – Lon Las

Cymru. There are a number of detractors, particularly along the northern edge of the area on boundary with Cwmbran, and in the Cwmbran Drive area to the east. Furthermore the area is crossed by a number of overhead power lines.

### **Key Policy and Management Issues**

Pressure for development, particularly along the northern and eastern boundaries.

Fly tipping. Litter an issue in places.

Maintenance and management of agricultural landscape features, hedgerows and trees, hedgebanks, spinneys and woodlands.

Management of Monmouthshire – Brecon Canal corridor.

Cross boundary working with Newport on SLA management.

### **Boundary Justification**

Northern and eastern boundaries formed by defined settlement boundaries and Cwmbran Drive. Southern boundary formed by local authority boundary with Newport and Caerphilly. Western boundary formed approximately along the 250 metre contour. This will require rationalisation on the ground and further consideration in conjunction with the adjacent SLA 7 – Western Uplands. Final boundary details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

### **Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System**

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes      1 – Rarity  
 2 – Survival/Preservation  
 3 – Coherence  
 4 – Potential  
 5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes      1 – Recognition/Transparency  
 2 – Period  
 3 – Rarity  
 4 – Documentation  
 5 – Group Value  
 6 – Survival  
 7 – Vulnerability  
 8 – Diversity  
 9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

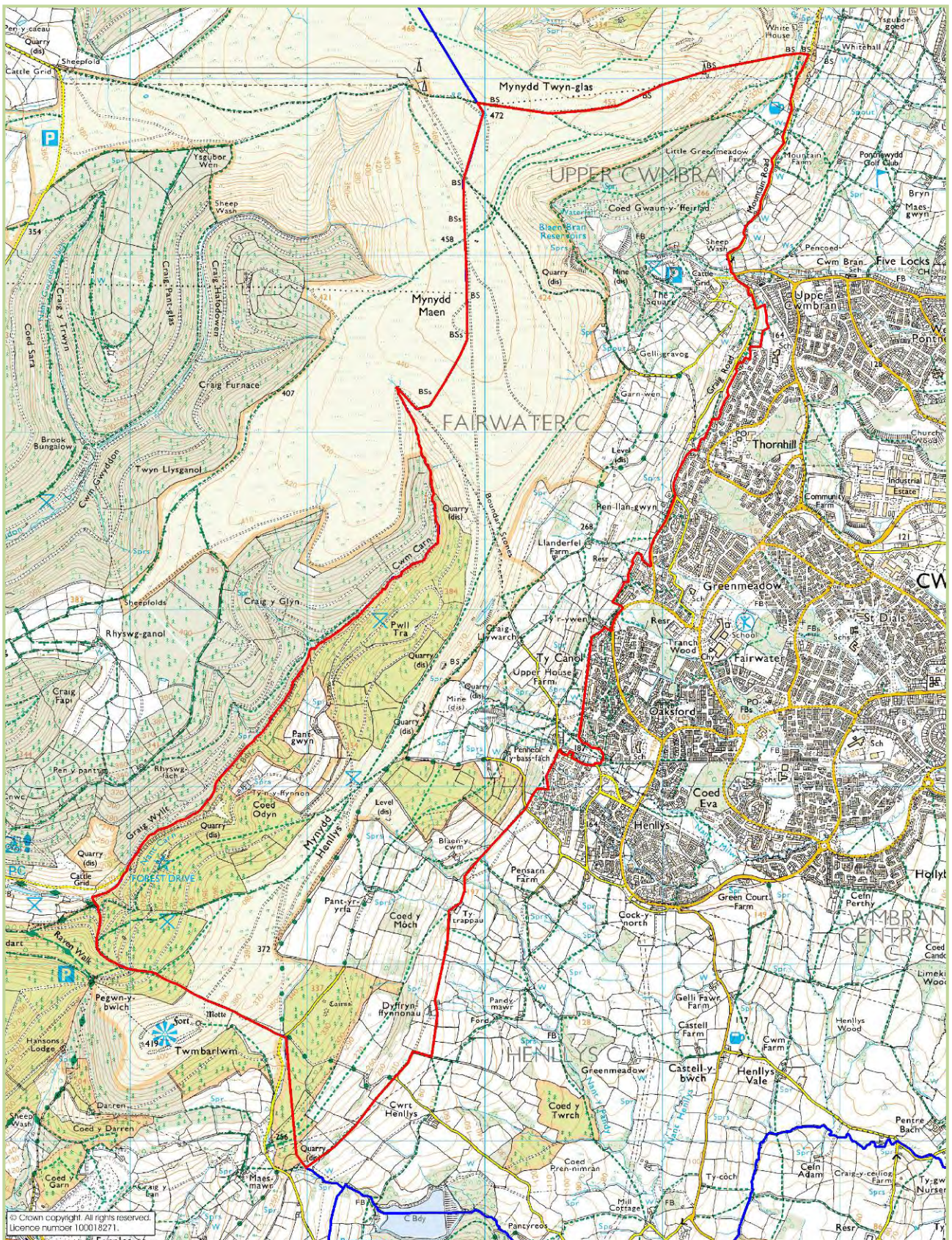
More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

**SLA 6 Southern Lowlands**

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
<b>Visual and Sensory</b>	VS 002		H	H	M	M						Moderate
	VS 004		M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 044		H	H	M	M						High
	VS 045		L	L	L	L						Low
<b>Landscape Habitats</b>	LH 002											Moderate
	LH 025											High
	LH 030											Outstanding
	LH 052											Moderate
<b>Historic Landscapes</b>	HL 005	Cefn Mynach Grange										High
	HL 006	Henllys										High
<b>Geological</b>	GL 006	Oaksford	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	GL 007	Castell y Bwch	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 008	Llantarnam	U	M	M	L						Moderate
<b>Cultural</b>	CL 288	National Cycle Network	H	H	L	H	○	○	L	○	U	High
	CL 498	Cwmbran	H	H	○	H	U	H	U	H	U	Outstanding
	CL 670	Canal	H	H	M	H	H	○	L	H	H	High
	CL 913	Lowland and Southern Ridges	M	H	M	L	H	M	M	M	M	High

# SLA 7 - SOUTH WEST UPLANDS

## Location Plan





## Photographs



View across towards Uplands from Henllys Road



View across Uplands from Green Court farm, Henllys

## Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - an area of rising ground to the west of Cwmbran running up to the County Borough boundary along Mynydd Henllys and Mynydd Maen, including part of Upper Cwmbran. It forms an important visual backdrop to the town and a logical boundary to the extension of the town. It provides an important walking and informal recreational zone.

**Coherence** - a logical area between the town and local authority boundary, it abuts the Abercarn Visually Important Local Landscape in Caerphilly which was identified in the recently undertaken SLA review.

**Consensus** - identified as a SLA in the Approved Torfaen Local Plan and potential SLA in the Torfaen LANDMAP study. Agreed qualities and values of the area warrant designation.

## Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

An area of upland hillside and scarp slopes, typified by rough pasture, rising up to 460 metres AOD. The southern section has extensive woodland cover, primarily coniferous but includes areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved habitat, elsewhere it is characterised by dry terrestrial heath and unimproved acid grasslands. It includes important geological features, Mynydd Henllys being the site of an ancient rotational landslip, and the area contains substantial coal reserves. The area also exhibits medieval and post medieval agricultural landscapes, such as on Mynydd Maen, with later industrial relics making it an

archaeologically sensitive area. The settlement of Upper Cwmbran predates the Newtown development and reflects the earlier development and land use of the area.

### **Key Policy and Management Issues**

Longer term management and development of plantations.

Impact from recreational use.

Management of open upland landscapes.

Management of agricultural landscape features, particularly field boundaries and small woodlands.

### **Boundary Justification**

The western boundary is formed by the County Borough boundary with Caerphilly whilst the eastern boundary follows the defined settlement limit for Cwmbran in parts and the Southern Lowlands SLA. This latter section will need clarification on the ground. The northern boundary follows an unclassified road near Penyrheol. Final details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

### **Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System**

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats        1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory        1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes        1 – Rarity  
   2 – Survival/Preservation  
   3 – Coherence  
   4 – Potential

5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes

- 1 – Recognition/Transparency
- 2 – Period
- 3 – Rarity
- 4 – Documentation
- 5 – Group Value
- 6 – Survival
- 7 – Vulnerability
- 8 – Diversity
- 9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

- Red – Outstanding
- Green – High
- Blue – Moderate
- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

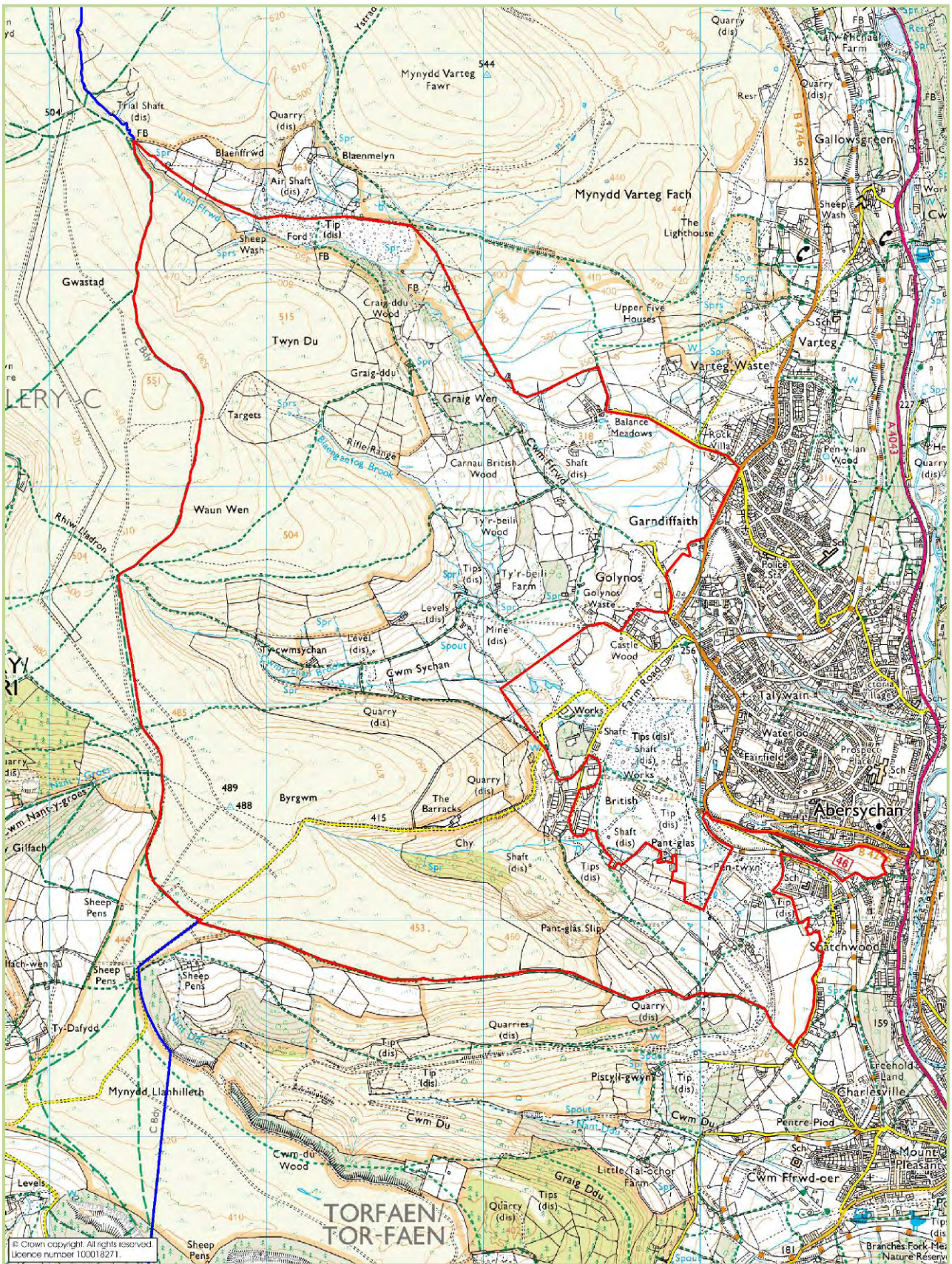
More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk>

**SLA 7 South West Uplands**

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Visual and Sensory	VS 002		H	H	M	M						Moderate
	VS 024		H	H	H	H						High
	VS 042		M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 044		H	H	M	M						High
	VS 045		L	L	L	L						Low
Landscape Habitats	LH 002											Moderate
	LH 009											Moderate
	LH 014											Moderate
	LH 021											Moderate
	LH 030											Outstanding
	LH 031											High
	LH 032											High
	LH 045											Low
	LH 051											Moderate
	LH 052											Moderate
Historic Landscapes	HL 006	Henllys										High
	HL 007	Myrdd Henllys and Myrdd Maen Valley										High
	HL 008	Myrdd Henllys and Myrdd Maen										Moderate
	HL 009	Cwm Cam										Low
Geological	GL 001	Myrdd Henllys	U	M	H	H						High
	GL 002	Myrdd Maen	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 004	Myrdd Maen	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 005	Cwm Lickey	H	H	H	M						High
	GL 008	Cwmiriscwy	U	M	M	L						Moderate
	Cultural	CL 498	Oakford	H	H	H	H	U	H	U	H	U
CL 913		Cwmbran	M	H	M	L	H	M	M	M	M	High
CL 971		Lowland and Southern Ridges	M	M	H	M	M	M	L	M	H	High

# SLA 8 - WESTERN UPLANDS

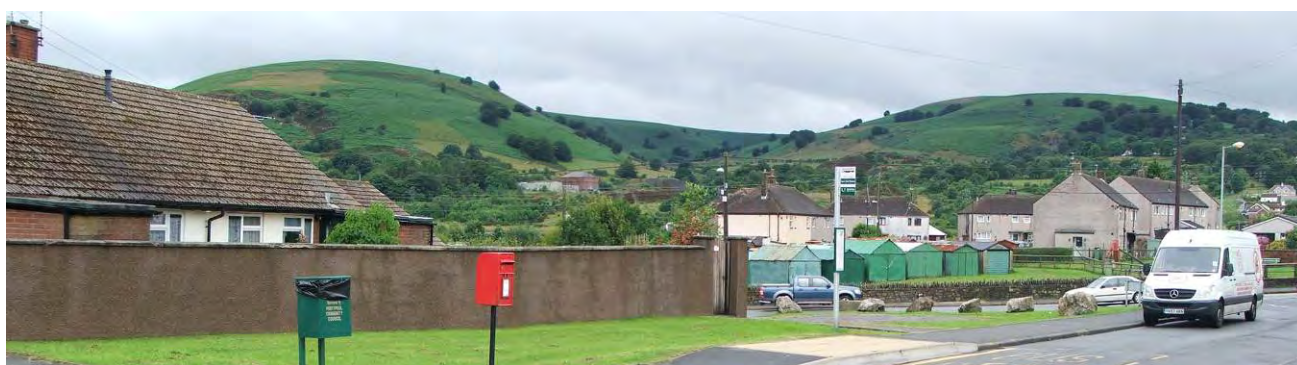
## Location Plan



## Photographs



View across to 'The British' and adjacent Uplands from Talywain



View across to Western Uplands from Talywain

### Relevance Against Strategic Criteria

**Need** - an area of uplands and upland agricultural landscapes to the west of Abersychan, Garndiffaith and Varteg running up to the County Borough boundary. Subject to development pressure in the form of the regeneration of the former British Colliery site.

**Coherence** - area includes a distinct landscape character form and mix. Boundaries are determined by development areas and the local authority boundary where it abuts a designated SLA in Blaenau Gwent.

**Consensus** - identified as a SLA in the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan. Forms key setting to redevelopment of The British site and is adjacent to the Blaenavon World Heritage Site boundary. Agreed qualities and values of area warranted designation as a SLA.

### Primary Landscape Qualities and Features

An area of mixed landscapes including an open upland plateau which rises to 550 metres AOD and includes the peaks of Brygwm, Waun Wen and Gwastad. This is dissected by a series of small valleys, more enclosed and vegetated with a regular pattern of small side fields bounded by hedgerows and walls and small areas of broadleaved woodland. The uplands have a vast, open character, mostly covered in dry heathland and acid grasslands but with a strong sense of place. As with much of the area, the SLA exhibits the impacts of post medieval industrial landscapes upon the post medieval agricultural landscape which results in the area being archaeologically sensitive.

## Boundary Justification

The western boundary is formed by the County Borough boundary, the southern follows the line of a path across the uplands running from the County Borough boundary to the settlement edge at Snatchwood to the south of Abersychan. The eastern boundary for reasons of delineation follows the defined settlement boundary and the British Colliery site boundary. The northern boundary will need clearer definition on the ground. Final details will be approved by Torfaen County Borough Council.

## Cross Reference to LANDMAP Information System

The validation of the SLA designation has been made against a consideration of the sub-criteria used to produce the evaluation levels for each of the five evaluations aspect area topics. These are shown on the evaluation matrix.

The sub criteria for each aspect topic layer are as follows:-

Geological Landscapes      1 – Research/Educational Value  
   2 – Historic Value  
   3 – Rarity/Uniqueness  
   4 – Classic Example

Landscape Habitats            1 – Priority Habitats  
   2 – Significance  
   3 – Opportunity  
   4 – Decline Rates  
   5 – Threat  
   6 – Fragmentation  
   7 – Habitat Evaluation  
   8 – Importance for Key Species

Visual and Sensory            1 – Scenic Quality  
   2 – Integrity  
   3 – Character  
   4 – Rarity

Historic Landscapes            1 – Rarity  
   2 – Survival/Preservation  
   3 – Coherence  
   4 – Potential  
   5 – Amenity Value

Cultural Landscapes            1 – Recognition/Transparency  
   2 – Period  
   3 – Rarity  
   4 – Documentation  
   5 – Group Value  
   6 – Survival  
   7 – Vulnerability  
   8 – Diversity  
   9 – Potential

Each of the aspect tables are colour coded as detailed below:

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- Yellow – Low
- White – Unassessed

More detailed definitions of each of the sub criteria are available in the LANDMAP Handbook or through the LANDMAP website – <http://landmap.cw.gov.uk>

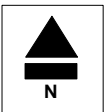
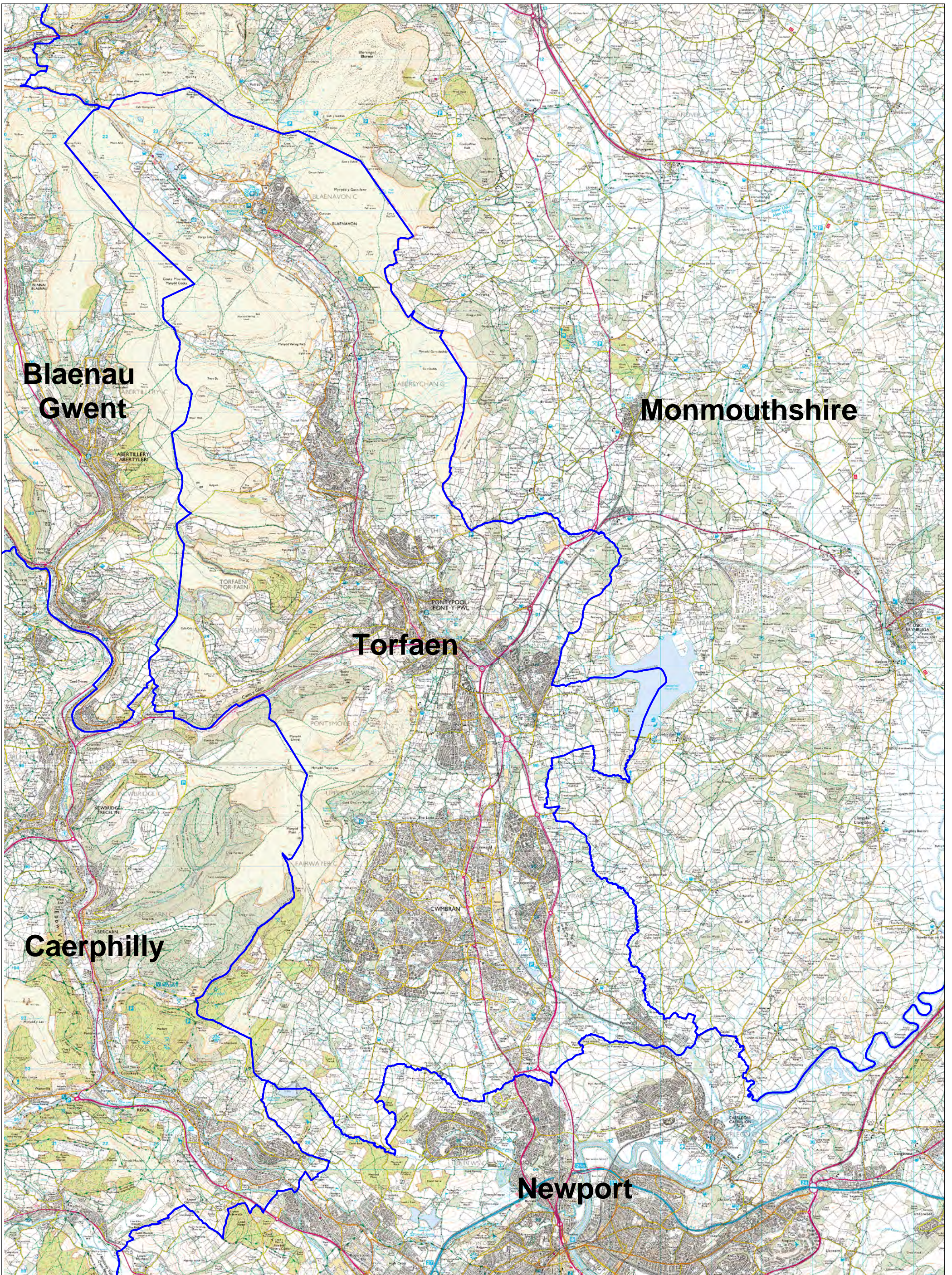
**SLA 8 Western Uplands**

	Aspect Area	Area Name	Evaluation Criteria									Overall Evaluation
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
<b>Visual and Sensory</b>	VS 024		H	H	H	H						High
	VS 025		L	L	M	L						Low
	VS 026		M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 030		M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 036		M	M	M	M						Moderate
	VS 040		L	L	L	L						Low
<b>Landscape Habitats</b>	LH 005											Moderate
	LH 018											Moderate
	LH 036											High
	LH 042											Moderate
	LH 046											Moderate
	LH 055											
	LH 056											High
<b>Historic Landscapes</b>	HL 012	Pontypool										High
	HL 017	Waun-wen and Mynydd Llanhilleth: Valley										Outstanding
	HL 019	Waun-wen and Mynydd Llanhilleth										Moderate
<b>Geological</b>	GL 014	Cwm Du	U	M	M	H						High
	GL 015	Waun Wen	U	M	M	M						Moderate
	GL 016	Mynydd Varteg Fach	U	M	M	M						Moderate
<b>Cultural</b>	CL 617	Uplands	H	U	L	U	H	M	M	U	U	High
	CL 972	Industrial - Rural	M	M	M	U	U	M	U	U	U	Moderate

## **APPENDIX**

Fig 1.0	County Borough Location
Fig 2.0	Existing Special Landscape Areas
Fig 3.0	Candidate Special Landscape Areas
Fig 4.0	Methodology (see page 4)
Fig 5.0	Broad Search Areas





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**TACP**

**Torfaen County Borough Council**  
**Torfaen County Borough Location**

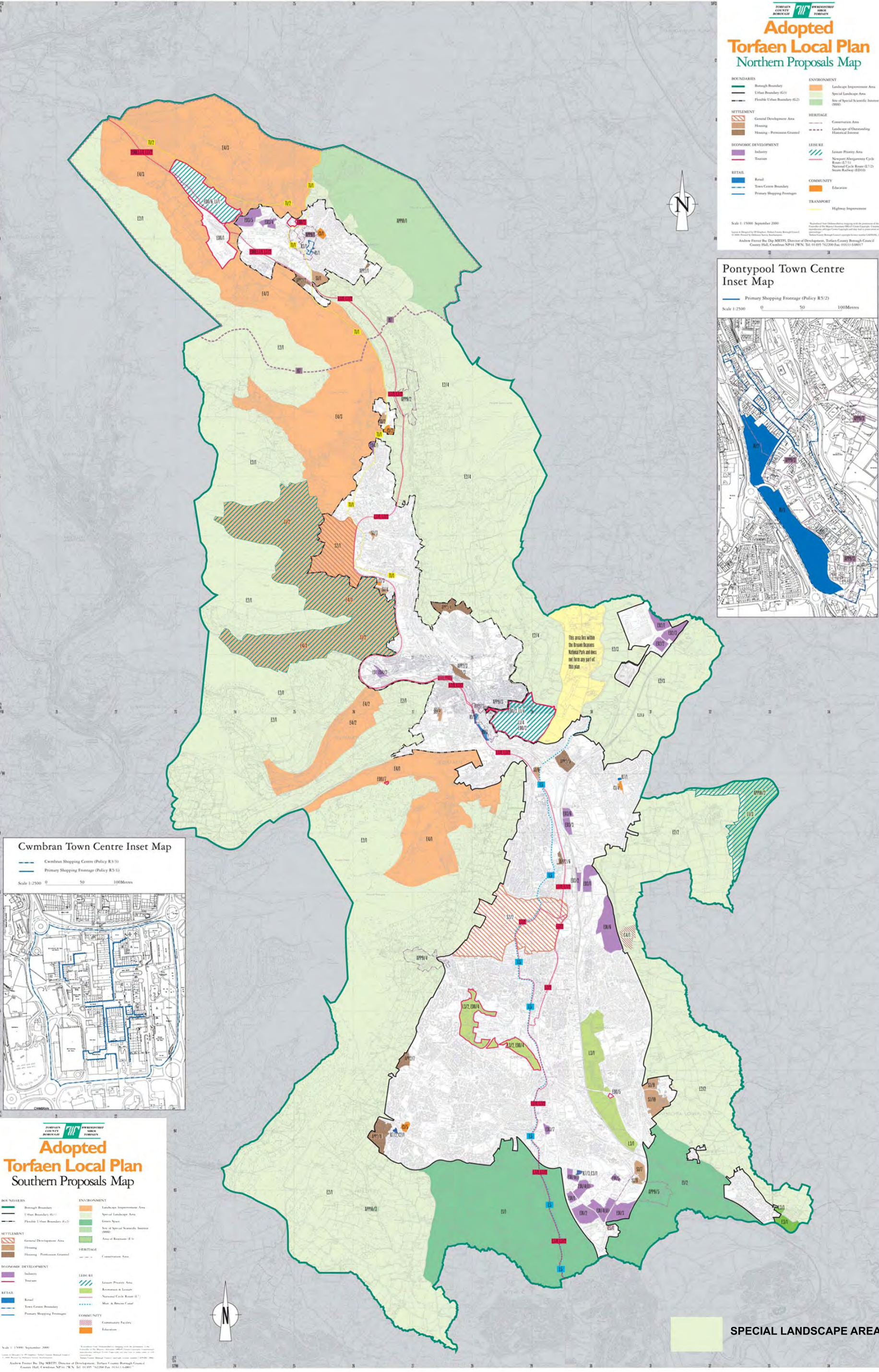
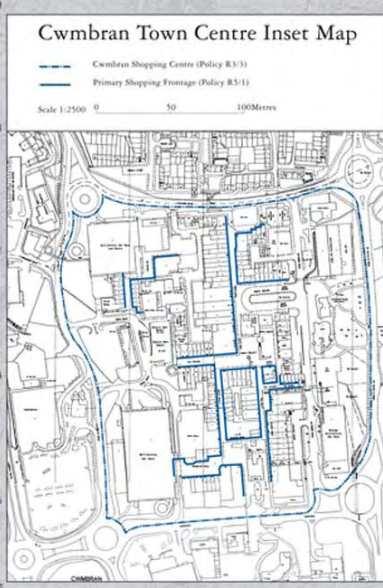
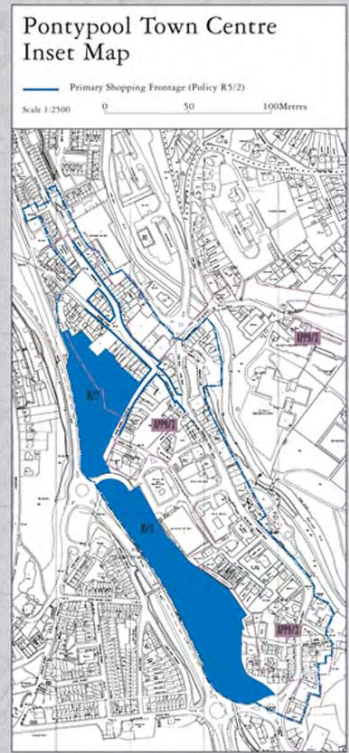
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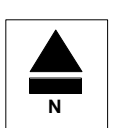
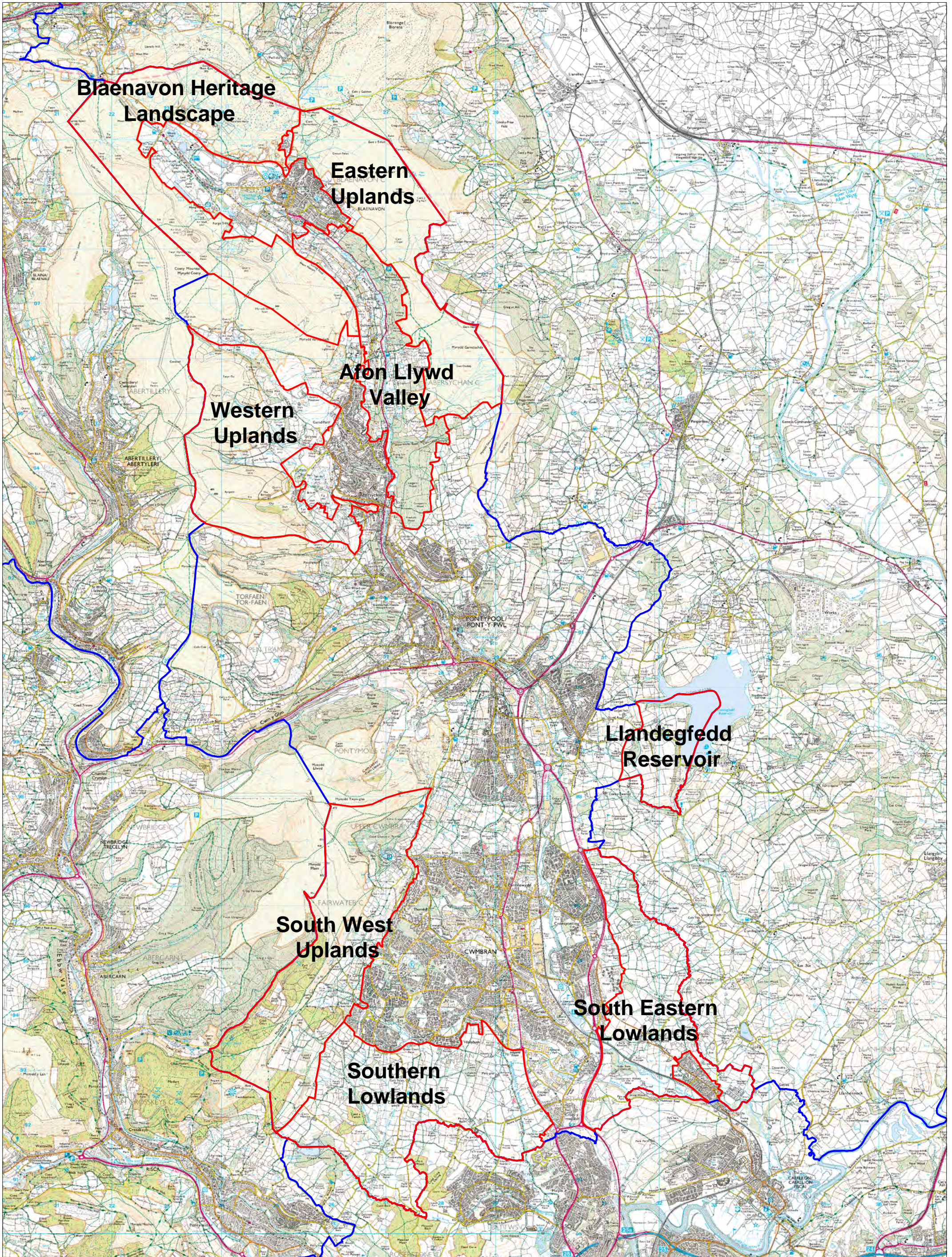
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**REV**

<b>BOUNDARIES</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>
Borough Boundary	Landscape Improvement Area
Urban Boundary (U1)	Special Landscape Area
Public Urban Boundary (U2)	Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)
<b>SETTLEMENT</b>	<b>HERITAGE</b>
General Development Area	Conservation Area
Housing	Landscape of Outstanding Historical Interest
Housing - Premium Ground	
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LEISURE</b>
Industry	Leisure Priority Area
Tourism	Non-statutory Cycle Route (L12)
<b>RETAIL</b>	Statutory Cycle Route (L12)
Retail	Station Railway (L12)
Town Centre Boundary	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
Primary Shopping Frontage	Education
	Highways Improvement

Scale 1:15000 September 2009  
 Prepared for the Torfaen County Borough Council by the Planning Department  
 Author: Andrew Foster BSc, Dip. MPTP, Director of Development, Torfaen County Borough Council  
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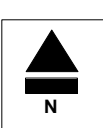
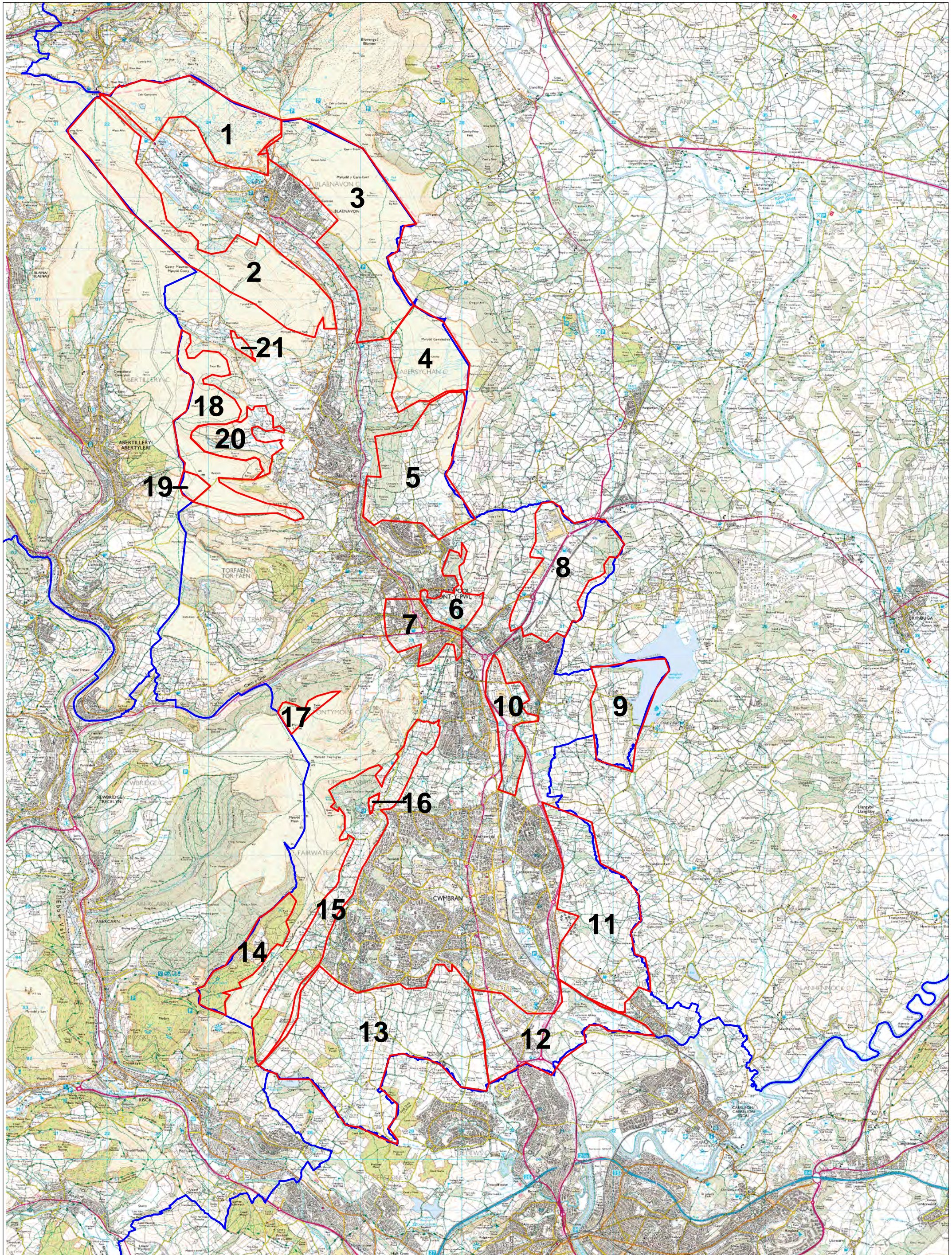


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**Torfaen County Borough Council**  
**Candidate Special Landscape Areas**  
  
DRAFT- Urban Boundary TBC  
Rev A: SLA 5 boundary revised

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<b>FIGURE / DRAWING NO.</b>		<b>REV</b>
<b>FIG 3.0</b>		<b>A</b>



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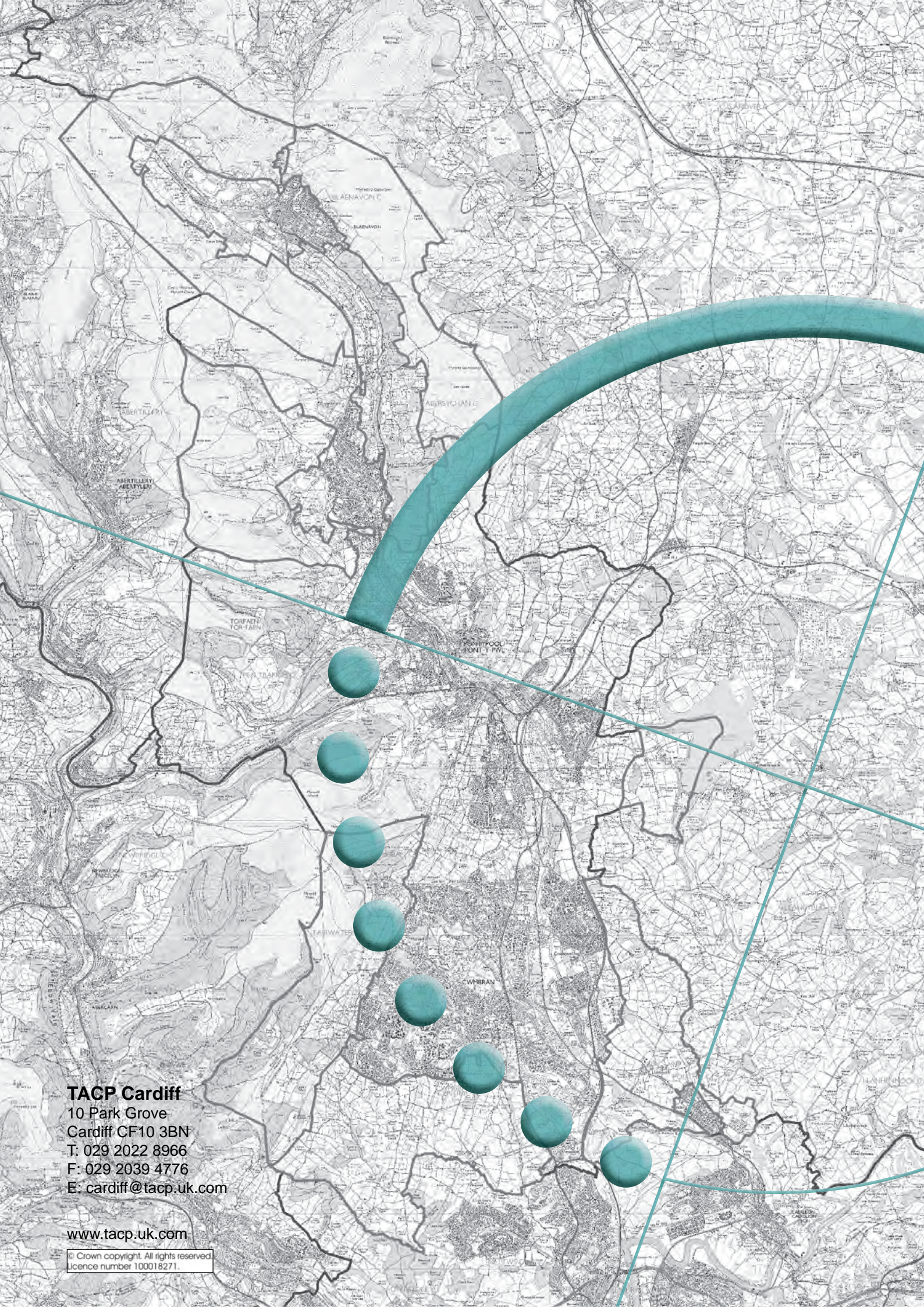


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Broad Search Areas**

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<b>FIGURE / DRAWING NO.</b> FIG. 5.0	<b>REV</b>
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