



## Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) - 2022-2037

### Candidate Sites – LANDMAP Guidance Note

July 2023

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg  
This document is available in Welsh*

This LANDMAP Guidance Note (July 2023) explains how Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resource Wales' (CNC/NRW) LANDMAP Characterisation mapping can be used to inform and support site assessment and design.

#### **Introduction**

This guidance note has been prepared to assist proposers of candidate sites where the effects of the development of a proposed site may result in significant effects on landscapes, views and visual amenity.

The note informs how LANDMAP characterisation mapping and resources can be utilised to inform the consideration of landscape aspects of the site required to support Candidate Site Assessment for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). The published Candidate Site Assessment Methodology (May 2023) identifies that all sites progressing to Stage 2 of the Assessment will be questioned on the Landscape and Environmental Impact of the development. This can be informed through a formal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and/or information provided through the LANDMAP resource which offers a mapped, contextual baseline of landscape information about landscape character, qualities and values.

Any sites for which there will be significant landscape issues should provide an appropriate level of assessment work with the initial site submission and site proposers of strategic scale (100+ dwellings, 10MW plus energy generation capacity, mineral extraction) sites are required to undertake a full review of the LANDMAP Characterisation Study for submission and consideration during the Call for Additional Supporting Information.

#### **Landscape Information**

Planning Policy Wales Ed 11 (2021) pp 6.3.20 advocates the use of LANDMAP assessments to inform landscape character assessment, design and landscape sensitivity studies.

To inform the allocation and deliverability of candidate sites through the RLDP process in line with relevant policy and legislation, Torfaen County Borough Council requires the submission of landscape and environmental impact information. This can be in the form of a LVIA and this process will be assisted by utilising the LANDMAP resource accessed via the CNC/NRW website - [Natural Resources Wales / LANDMAP - the Welsh landscape baseline](#)

LANDMAP Guidance Note GN 17 (Assessing Landscape Sensitivity in Wales) provides:

- A consistent approach across UK nations to avoid confusion
- Common method stages and terms, but keeping flexibility for a wide range of uses
- Keeping it simple to promote wider understanding of landscape sensitivity – notably not including landscape capacity, which depends on more factors than just sensitivity.
- Providing a robust evidence base that can withstand detailed scrutiny. [Natural Resources Wales / Assessing Landscape Sensitivity in Wales](#)

LANDMAP Guidance Note GN46 provides further guidance on LANDMAP relating to the use of LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments for more detailed strategic schemes. GN46 is provided by the NRW and can be located from the following link. [Natural Resources Wales / Using LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments GN46](#)

This will be particularly relevant for submissions to support strategic scale candidate sites during the Call for Additional Supporting Information.

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.

Submissions should utilise the LANDMAP resource and consider impact on the five aspect layers to provide an evaluation of status of the sensitivity of the site (Low, Moderate, High, Outstanding) and potential impact of the development of the site on the landscape value.

This impact/susceptibility should be summarised for each topic layer as either: High, Medium or Low impact on the quality of the landscape (Red, Amber, Green) and this should then be amalgamated into an overall score for the sites impact on the landscape. This status will be quality assured and checked by the Council through the Candidate Sites Assessment process.

### **Requirements for Candidate Site Assessment**

Due to the large number of candidate sites proposed, the Council requires a consistent approach to landscape data gathering and assessment. All assessments should follow the CNC/NRW guidance showing the value and sensitivity of proposed sites and the potential level of impact that proposals will have on the various Landscape characteristics.

The format of such assessments is detailed in the CNC/NRW guidance Summary of Outputs [Natural Resources Wales / Assessing Landscape Sensitivity in Wales](#). The following will be expected to be submitted to the LPA as a supporting document.

1. Preliminary Landscape Assessment - in accordance with the CNC/NRW - LANDMAP Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance for Wales GN17, giving assessment of site value and impact.
2. Site summary form - A Site Summary Form shall be completed for each Candidate Site based on both field survey and local knowledge of the site and desk-based assessments. The format of forms will be in line with the Presentation Example 1 (Section 7 Page 40): creating a single summary page for an assessment unit. This page shall include
  - i) Assessment of Landscape Value (based on the 5 topic layers identified) – Low, Moderate, High, Outstanding
  - ii) Assessment of Landscape Susceptibility to the development proposed High, Medium, Low and then combining these to produce the overall Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity scored as High, Medium, Low.