



Pennant Walters Ltd

Trecelyn Wind Farm

Draft Environmental Statement

Appendix 6I Assessment of landscape effects: Brecon
Beacon National Park LCAs

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Appendix 6I

Assessment of landscape effects: Brecon Beacon National Park LCAs

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This appendix provides a detailed assessment of effects on the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP). The assessment has been conducted for those LCAs which coincide with the blade tip ZTV as shown in **Figure 6.12** as follows:
- LCA 9: Mynyddoedd Llangatwg and Llangynidr; and
 - LCA 15: Bloreng Hill and Slopes
- 1.1.2 None of these landscapes would be directly affected by the Proposed Development as the turbines and associated infrastructure would not be located within them, and there would be no change to their physical characteristics. Potential effects on these landscapes would be limited to indirect effects on the key visual or perceptual characteristics of these landscapes, resulting from views of wind turbines. The assessment considers the likely change to landscape character and as such it is different from the visual assessment of particular views, as experienced by people.
- 1.1.3 The cumulative landscape assessment has been informed by a review of **Figure 6.7**, the cumulative ZTVs in **Figures 6.16a-e** and wirelines and has been undertaken in relation to the following scenarios:
- Cumulative Scenario 1: Baseline wind turbines (Operational + Consented); and
 - Cumulative Scenario 2: Other proposed wind turbines (Cumulative Scenario 1 + Planning Application + Scoping Opinion).

1.2 Assessment of landscape effects

Table 6I.1 Assessment of effects: LCA 9: Mynyddoedd Llangatwg and Llangynidr

LCA 9: Mynyddoedd Llangatwg and Llangynidr	LVIA viewpoint locations within the LCA: Viewpoint 24
<p>Distinctive characteristics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A north-facing scarp formed by Carboniferous Limestone; the moors to the south having a thin cover of Twrch Sandstone and displaying karstic features including cliffs, caves, shake holes and limestone pavement. Area of lowermost South Wales Coal Measures sandstones (‘Farewell Rock’) and mudstones in the east.</i> • <i>An elevated plateau-like landform, mostly above 400m ASL. From high ground, horizons appear low and smooth.</i> • <i>Boggy ground and springs forming the sources of several rivers. Few waterbodies, including small upland pools and Llangynidr reservoir.</i> • <i>Land use almost entirely open grazing on unenclosed common land. Extensive quarries (no longer worked), and small area of plantation on southern edge.</i> • <i>An open landscape with no field boundaries and very few trees.</i> • <i>Semi-Natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including dry dwarf shrub heath, marshy grassland, unmodified blanket bog, modified blanket bog, acid/ neutral flush and limestone cliff habitats.</i> • <i>A concentration of prehistoric archaeological sites, including numerous Cairns on high ground, plus more recent archaeology associated with quarrying.</i> • <i>Very limited settlement, but views to settlement in the Usk valley to the north, and other development (e.g., roads, pylons) beyond the southern boundary of the National Park.</i> • <i>An exceptionally open landscape, with subtle changes in texture and seasonal colour resulting from variations in moorland vegetation.”¹</i>
<p>Sensitivity</p>	<p>This LCA is located within a nationally designated landscape and the value is therefore considered to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>The perceptual characteristics relating to <i>“sense of tranquillity, remoteness and relative wildness in parts, despite its proximity to settlements to the south”¹</i> and visual characteristic relating to high levels of intervisibility with other landscapes are indicators of a landscape which is of higher susceptibility to change due to the type of development proposed. This is counterbalanced slightly by the baseline presence of vertical elements (pylons), which are noted as a distinctive characteristic, and by the presence of operational wind turbines including those within at Rassau Industrial Estate, Cruglwyn, Pen-y-Fan Ganol Farm, the industrial estates of Brynmawr, Pen Bryn Oer, Gelli-wen Farm as well as more distant south-western visibility to the operational wind turbines at Ferndale and the array of turbines within the Maerdy, Mynydd Bwlfa and Pen-y-Cymoedd wind farms.</p> <p>Sensitivities recorded in the published Profile in relation to <i>Scenic quality and Sense of place</i> and <i>Perceptual qualities</i> include <i>“Inappropriate development, including outside the National Park which affects skylines and/ or views”¹</i> and <i>“Proximity to settlement and development to the south means that perceptual qualities are sensitive to new development including beyond the National Park boundary”¹</i>. Whilst the key views recorded are those of prehistoric sites, views northwards across the Usk Valley and across to the Central Beacons (i.e., not in the direction of the Proposed Development), the LCA-Specific Management Guidelines seek to</p>

¹ Fiona Fyfe Associates, with Julie Martin Associates, Alison Farmer Associates and Countryside. (2012). *Brecon Beacons National Park Landscape Character Assessment. LCA 9 Profile* (Online). Available at: https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCA-9-PROFILE_final_120930.pdf (Accessed April 2022).

“Protect the long views from the area, including those southwards to land outside the National Park.”¹.
 These factors combine to give rise to a susceptibility to change which is assessed as *Medium*. The overall sensitivity is assessed as High.

Magnitude of Change (Proposed Development only)

Whilst in Operation:
 With reference to **Figure 6.12**, the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible from across a small part of the LCA concentrated across the southern hill slopes of Mynydd Llangatwg and Mynydd Llangynior, at a minimum distances of 16.0km and 18.5km respectively, as well as the eastern slopes of Cefn yr Ystrad at a minimum distance of 19.5km.
 The Proposed Development would affect a narrow portion of the overall horizontal field of view and visual experience gained from this landscape. The proposed turbines would be experienced as part of much wider panoramas where existing vertical structures beyond the National Park boundary are present and hence would not introduce an incongruous feature to the view.
 The Proposed Development would not alter the key views north across the Usk Valley nor those to the Central Beacons, as cited in the extant Profile¹, which are orientated in the opposite direction to the Proposed Development Site which lies to the south-southeast. It is not considered that the Proposed Development would significantly alter the distinctive characteristics or the key perceptual and visual characteristics of LCA 9, which would continue as an elevated plateau of moorland, characterised by its openness, smooth profile, lack of settlement, prehistoric archaeology and quarrying legacy.
 The magnitude of change on the landscape character would range from *Very Low* within areas which overlap with the blade tip and hub height ZTVs, reducing to *Zero* for the remainder of the LCA.

Whilst Under Construction:
 Ground based construction activities would not be visible from this location due to the separation distances, although a crane may be visible from areas of landscape which coincide with the hub height ZTV in optimum viewing conditions and when deployed during the construction period.
 The magnitude of change would range from *Zero to Very Low*.

Assessment	Sensitivity	High
	Magnitude	Very Low to Zero
	Level of Effect	Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
	Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), indirect and adverse

Cumulative Assessment: Operational + Consented (Baseline) and Planning application + Scoping Opinion (Other proposed) wind turbines and the Proposed Development (PD).

Cumulative Magnitude excluding the Proposed Development

Baseline wind turbines (Operational + Consented): *Low*
 As many as 10 operational wind turbine schemes within the CLVIA study area could be visible in southerly and westerly views from this LCA. A large number of these operational schemes would represent minor vertical features of southerly views from the LCA either as a result of turbine dimensions, the relative position on or below the horizon and/or increasing separation distance meaning they would have a limited characterising influence.
 The most noticeable operational turbines include those at Cruglwyn, Gelli-wen Farm, Bryn Ysgawen Farm, and Crwth which, although small scale and less

prominent features due to their separation distance, extend across a moderate part of southerly views towards the Proposed Development Site. The three turbines at Pen Bryn Oer would be noticeable vertical components of south-westerly views due to closer proximity to the LCA. The consented turbines at Llwynceilyn Farm would comprise a very minor, distant vertical feature of south-westerly views and would have a limited characterising influence upon the LCA.

The magnitude of change on the landscape character would range from *Low* within areas which overlap with ZTVs, reducing to *Zero* for the remainder of the LCA.

Other proposed wind turbines (Planning application + Scoping Opinion): High

The planning application schemes at Pen March, Manmoel, Mynydd Carn y Cefn, Mynydd Llanhilleth, Twyn Howel, Bryntail Farm and Mynydd y Glynn would form visible features of southerly and south-westerly views from the southern boundary of the LCA, occupying a large part of the visible horizon albeit at mid-to-long range separation distances. The turbines at Pen March would have the greatest influence due to their location close to the southern edge of this LCA and would represent more dominant visual components in views south from Cefn yr Ystrad.

The scoping request schemes at Mynydd Maen and Abertillery would increase the proportion of the visible horizon occupied by wind turbine development within southerly views beyond the boundary of the BBNP.

The magnitude of change on the landscape character would range from *High* within areas which overlap with ZTVs, reducing to *Zero* for the remainder of the LCA.

Scenario 1: Baseline wind turbines and the Proposed Development (PD)	Additional Magnitude: (PD only)	Very Low to Zero	Additional Effect: (PD only):	Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
	Combined Magnitude: (Baseline + PD)	Low to Zero	Combined Effect: (Baseline + PD)	Moderate and Not Significant to None
Scenario 2: Baseline turbines + Other proposed wind turbines and the Proposed Development (PD)	Additional Magnitude: (PD only)	Very Low to Zero	Additional Effect: (PD only):	Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
	Combined Magnitude: (Baseline + Other proposed and PD)	High to Zero	Combined Effect: (Baseline + Other proposed and PD)	Major and Significant to None
Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), indirect, cumulative and adverse.			

Table 6I.2 Assessment of effects: LCA 15: Bloreng Hill and Slopes

LCA 15: Bloreng Hill and Slopes	LVIA viewpoint locations within the LCA: Viewpoints 11, 13 and 20
Distinctive characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Old Red Sandstone and mudstones underlie most of the area, with Carboniferous Limestone, Marros Group and South Wales Lower Coal Measures Sandstones forming the plateau areas.</i> • <i>Highest land of Bloreng in the north-west of the LCA, extending southwards in a craggy ridge along the western boundary of the LCA. Land slopes downwards towards the east, with concave slopes (more pronounced in the north) creating ‘punchbowl’ shapes to the landform.</i> • <i>Fast-flowing streams (often spring fed) running down from the ridge towards the Usk (to the east of the LCA). Small, glaciated cwm lake lying below Bloreng summit. Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal forming the eastern boundary of the LCA.</i> • <i>Land cover of open moorland on Bloreng summit and ridge tops, with pastoral farmland & pockets of woodland/forestry on lower slopes.</i> • <i>Irregular fields on valley sides (possibly resulting from assarting) enclosed by hedgerows with some stone walls. Some replacement of traditional boundaries with post and wire fences. Moorland unenclosed.</i> • <i>A well-treed landscape, including a blend of deciduous and coniferous trees in valley-side woodlands, plus hedgerow and riparian trees and tree-lined lanes.</i> • <i>Semi-Natural Habitats of Principal Importance to Wales including wet and dry dwarf shrub heath, acid grassland, blanket bog, broadleaved woodlands, calcareous grassland and acid/ neutral rock exposure.</i> • <i>Many historic features relating to the area’s agricultural and industrial past, in particular its associations with the Blaenavon iron industry.</i> • <i>A very lightly-settled landscape, with scattered farms increasing in density towards the east of the LCA. Distinctive domestic building styles more associated with canal architecture than the local vernacular.</i> • <i>The high plateau of the Bloreng is easily accessible by car (B4246) and the public can enjoy panoramic views from the high car park.</i> • <i>Contrasts in scale, texture, colour and enclosure between the open moorland and the pattern of woodland and pasture below. Together they create a harmonious composition with strong seasonal changes in colour. Folly prominent on western horizon in south of the LCA.”²</i>
Sensitivity	<p>This LCA is located within a nationally designated landscape and the value is therefore considered to be <i>High</i>.</p> <p>Perceptual characteristics of relevance to the Proposed Development for LCA 15 include <i>“High scenic quality resulting from the harmonious juxtaposition of moorland, woodland and pasture. Distinctive concave landforms, the Bloreng ridge and long views across the Usk valley create a strong sense of place...”²</i> as well as visual characteristics relating to <i>“longer views over surrounding landscapes”</i>. These characteristics are indicators of a landscape which is of higher susceptibility to the type of development proposed. This is counterbalanced, to an extent, by the baseline presence of the vertical elements at the Bloreng Weather Station within the LCA, although this is not noted as a distinctive characteristic in the published LCA profile². Baseline visibility of operational wind turbines is attained from the summit of The Bloreng, but this is limited to the distant schemes at Pen Bryn Oer (14.9km), Solutia (27.3km) and Tesco Newport (28.8km).</p>

² Fiona Fyfe Associates, with Julie Martin Associates, Alison Farmer Associates and Countryside. (2012). *Brecon Beacons National Park Landscape Character Assessment. LCA 15 Profile* (Online). Available at: https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCA-15-PROFILE_final_120930.pdf (Accessed October 2023).

Sensitivities recorded in the published LCA profile in relation to ‘*Scenic quality and Sense of place*’, ‘*Landscape quality and integrity*’ and ‘*Perceptual qualities*’ include the “*introduction of visually intrusive features into views*”. The protection of panoramic and long-range views over the surrounding landscape, including from The Blorenges Car Park, is reflected in the LCA-Specific Management Guidelines, which state “*Protect the long views from the area, including those to land outside the National Park*” and “*Plan to reduce the visual impact of development beyond the National Park boundary.*”

These factors combine to give rise to a susceptibility to change which is assessed as *Medium*. The overall sensitivity is assessed as *High*.

Magnitude of Change
(Proposed Development only)

Whilst in Operation:

Reference to **Figure 6.12** indicates that the Proposed Development would be visible from a localised part of this LCA, concentrated across the summit and southern hill slopes of The Blorenges, at a distance of 14.0km, and along the southern craggy ridge of terrain forming western boundary of LCA 15 and the BBNP at a minimum distance of 6.9km.

The Proposed Development would introduce a new man-made vertical structure to a small part of south-westerly views from the elevated ridgeline of terrain that forms the western boundary of the LCA and the BBNP. This new introduction would be experienced as part of much wider panoramas, frequently away from the principal orientation of views and in combination with either existing vertical structures or built influences.

The Proposed Development would not be visible from the central or eastern parts of the LCA and would not alter the key views east across the Usk Valley, as cited in the extant Profile², with the Proposed Development located in the opposite direction to the southwest.

It is not considered that the Proposed Development would significantly alter the distinctive characteristics or the key perceptual and visual characteristics of LCA 15, which would continue as a peninsula of land with an exceptional timeless and peaceful quality and a sense of being rarely visited. Scattered farms linked by deep lanes lined with exposed tree roots and flower-rich banks, would remain unaffected by the Proposed Development, as would the back-clothing influence and sense of orientation provided by the Blorenges moorland.

The magnitude of change on the landscape character would range from *Low* within areas which overlap with the blade tip and hub height ZTVs and in closest proximity to the Proposed Development, reducing to *Very Low* with increased separation distance and to *Zero* for the remainder of the LCA that lies outside the ZTVs.

Whilst Under Construction:

Ground based construction activities would not be visible from this location due to the separation distances, although a crane may be visible from areas of landscape which coincide with the hub height ZTV when deployed during the construction period and in optimum viewing conditions from more distant locations.

The magnitude of change would range from *Zero to Very Low*.

Assessment	Sensitivity	High
	Magnitude	Low reducing to Very Low to Zero
	Level of Effect	Moderate reducing to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
	Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), indirect and adverse

Cumulative Assessment: Operational + Consented (Baseline) and Planning application + Scoping Opinion (Other proposed) wind turbines and the Proposed Development (PD).

Cumulative Magnitude excluding the Proposed Development	<p>Baseline wind turbines (Operational + Consented):</p> <p>Visibility of operational wind turbines schemes within the CLVIA study area would be limited to five schemes representing minor vertical features of north-westerly, westerly and south-westerly views from the LCA. As a result of turbine dimensions and long separation distances they would have a limited characterising influence.</p> <p>The most noticeable operational turbines viewed from the LCA are those at Pen Bryn Oer when viewed within south-westerly views from the summit of the Blorenge. However, this visibility is achieved over a distance of 14.9km with the three turbines forming a very minor and distant feature of the skyline profile, occupying a very small portion of the horizontal field of view from this panoramic viewpoint location. The consented turbines at Llwynceilyn Farm would not be visible from this LCA.</p> <p>The magnitude of change on the landscape character would range from <i>Very Low</i> within areas which overlap with ZTVs, reducing to <i>Zero</i> for the remainder of the LCA.</p> <p>Other proposed wind turbines (Planning application + Scoping Opinion):</p> <p>The planning application schemes at Pen March, Manmoel, Mynydd Carn y Cefn, Mynydd Llanhilleth and Twyn Howel would form visible features of north-westerly, westerly and south-westerly views from the ridgeline of topography forming the western boundary of the LCA and the BBNP, including the summit of the Blorenge. These planning application schemes would occupy a moderate portion of the visible horizon, albeit at mid-to-long range separation distances, introducing new built features to currently undeveloped skylines in views beyond the boundary of the BBNP from elevated western parts of the LCA. The turbines at Mynydd Llanhilleth would have the greatest influence due to their proximity to the western edge of this LCA and would represent more dominant visual components in south-westerly views.</p> <p>The scoping request schemes at Mynydd Maen and Abertillery would increase the proportion of the visible horizon occupied by wind turbine development within north-westerly, westerly and south-westerly views beyond the boundary of the BBNP.</p> <p>The magnitude of change on the landscape character would range from <i>High</i> within areas which overlap with ZTVs, reducing to <i>Zero</i> for the remainder of the LCA.</p>			
Scenario 1: Baseline wind turbines and the Proposed Development (PD)	Additional Magnitude: (PD only)	Low to Very Low to Zero	Additional Effect: (PD only):	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
	Combined Magnitude: (Baseline + PD)	Low to Very Low to Zero	Combined Effect: (Baseline + PD)	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
Scenario 2: Baseline turbines + Other proposed wind turbines and the Proposed Development (PD)	Additional Magnitude: (PD only)	Low to Very Low to Zero	Additional Effect: (PD only):	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant to None
	Combined Magnitude: (Baseline + Other proposed and PD)	High to Zero	Combined Effect: (Baseline + Other proposed and PD)	Major and Significant to None
Type of Effect	Long term (reversible), indirect, cumulative and adverse.			



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