

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
RHONDDA CYNON TAFF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
VISUAL AND SENSORY ASPECT - TECHNICAL REPORT**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

TACP Consultants were appointed in October 2003 by the Countryside Council for Wales to undertake Quality Assurance Upgrading and Updating for the Visual & Sensory Aspect for Bridgend/Caerphilly/Rhondda Cynon Taff LANDMAP Assessment. Following QA comments a further site visit was undertaken, additional Aspect Areas were created and alterations made to the digitisation and text in January/February/March 2005. Further QA comments were received during January 2006 and in response to these an additional site visit was made during March 2006 followed by the creation of new Aspect Areas, refinement of digitisation and updating of the Technical Report to reflect the alterations

The original Visual & Sensory Aspect for Bridgend/Caerphilly/Rhondda Cynon Taff had been undertaken by TACP in 1999 using the approved LANDMAP methodology of that time.

2.0 EVALUATED ASPECTS

2.1 Cyflwyniad

- 2.1.1 Cafodd arolwg maes ei wneud yn ystod gaeaf 2003, i gloriannu Meysydd Agwedd gan ddefnyddio'r canllawiau LANDMAP presennol. Roedd y tywydd yn amrywio o ddydd i ddydd/awr i awr, ond ar y cyfan roedd yn gymylog ac yn wlyb. Ymwelwyd â'r safleoedd eto yn ystod 2005 pan oedd y tywydd yn oer ac yn sych, ond dechreuodd fwrw eira tua diwedd cyfnod yr arolwg. Ymwelwyd â'r safleoedd wedyn ym mis Mawrth 2006, pan oedd y tywydd yn braf ac yn heulog.
- 2.1.2 Mae cyfanswm o 88 o Feysydd Agwedd Gweledol a Synhwyrdd wedi cael eu cloriannu (trowch at Ffigwr 1.0). Mae'r nifer yma'n cynnwys 30 Maes Agwedd arall a gafodd eu creu yn ystod y cyfnod diweddar ym Ionawr-Mawrth 2005. Cafodd 9 arall eu creu a chafodd 2 eu disodli yn ystod cyfnod diweddar 2006. Cyn cyfnod diweddar 2005 roedd cyfran arwyddocaol o'r ardaloedd oedd wedi'u digideiddio yn rhannu'r un profforma. Newidiwyd hyn yn bennaf i sicrhau bod yr astudiaeth yn gywir. Mae ardaloedd nad oedd yn ymarferol eu gwahaniaethu oddi wrth ei gilydd yn rhannu'r un profforma. Y rheswm dros greu'r Meysydd Agwedd newydd yn ystod 2006 oedd oherwydd bod nifer ohonyn nhw'n rhy fawr ac yn cynnwys cymysgedd o dirweddau a oedd angen eu gwahanu. O ganlyniad cafodd Maes Agwedd CynonVS145 ei rannu'n dri Maes Agwedd ar wahân (459, 825, 828) a ChynonVS428 yn chwe Maes Agwedd ar wahân (259, 260, 271, 668, 895 a 968).

Roedd yr ymarfer asesu'n nodi rhinweddau'r dirwedd y mae'r synhwyrddau'n eu canfod (gweld, arogl neu glywed, er enghraifft). Dyma'r rhinweddau tirwedd:

Nodweddion (*ffactorau ffisegol*)

- tirffurf
- morwedd
- gorchudd tir
- patrymau defnyddio tir

Canfod (*elfennau esthetig*)

- graddfa
- tir caeedig

- amrywiaeth
- lliw
- diddordeb tymhorol
- lefel y mynediad gan bobl
- llonyddwch
- symudiad
- golygfeydd a dylanwadau gweledol
- pwyntiau ffocal/pethau sy'n tynnu sylw'r llygaid

3.0 EVALUATED ASPECTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 A field survey was carried out during the winter months of 2003 to appraise the Aspect Areas using the current LANDMAP guidelines. The weather conditions varied on a daily/hourly basis, but consisted predominantly of overcast wet weather, additional site visits were made during 2005 when the weather was cold and dry but started to snow near to the end of the survey and March 2006 when the weather conditions were dry and bright.
- 3.1.2 A total of 88 Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas have been evaluated (refer to Figure 1.0), this number includes an additional 30 Aspect Areas that were created during the Jan/Feb/March 2005 updates and a further 9 created and 2 removed during the 2006 updates. Prior to the 2005 update a significant proportion of the areas digitised shared the same proforma, this was largely altered to increase the accuracy of the study. Where one area could still not practically be distinguished from another they have shared the same proforma. The new Aspect Areas created during 2006 were largely undertaken as it was felt that a number of the Aspect Areas were too large and contain a mix of different landscapes that should be separated, due to this Aspect Area CynonVS145 was divided into three separate Aspect Areas (459, 825, 828) and CynonVS428 was divided into six separate Aspect Areas (259, 260, 271, 668, 895 and 968).

The assessment exercise identified those landscape qualities that are perceived through the senses eg visual, smell and hearing, outlined below:

Contributors (*physical factors*)

- landform

- seascape
- land cover
- land use patterns

Perception (aesthetic elements)

- scale
- enclosure
- diversity
- colour
- seasonal interest
- level of human access
- tranquility
- movement
- views and visual influences
- focal points/visual detractors

3.2 Key Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas

3.2.1 Coastal Areas

A small part of the study area is flanked by coastline.

As a result of the current LANDMAP methodology additional Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas have been evaluated. These include the intertidal (Level 3) Aspect Areas adjacent to Porthcawl that comprise of beaches and rock platforms.

3.2.2 Valleys

The landform north of the “Lowland Hinterland” is dominated by north-west/south-east trending valleys, with a subsidiary network of side valleys. At Level 3 these valleys include “mosaic lowland valleys” and “open lowland valleys”. A large amount of urban developments are present in these valleys, which are consequently often linear in character.

3.2.3 Lowland Hinterland

A broad belt of lowland, predominantly rolling farmland, stretches from the coast in the west through to Risca in the east. This agricultural landscape provides the setting for some large urban areas such as Bridgend (Cynon

VS 726). At Level 3 this area ranges from “open rolling lowland” to “mosaic rolling lowland”. The M4 corridor is a dominant linear element within this landscape.

3.2.4 Upland Areas

The upland areas form the northern backdrop for the study area, forming the high ground, not only at the heads of the major valleys, but also a series of north/south trending flanks, often covered with coniferous plantation. The more open “Upland Grazing” Aspect Areas are restricted to the extreme north of the study area, where they provide a strong visual link with the neighbouring Brecon Beacons. An exception to this is the outlier of “Upland Grazing” of Mynydd Maesteg.

3.3 Accuracy Of Aspect Area Boundaries

The LANDMAP methodology requires the Aspect Specialist to provide information about the accuracy of the line that defines the perimeter of a particular Aspect Area. The LANDMAP methodology asks the Aspect Specialist to detail how much of the boundary is “precise” on a scale of “All/Most/Some/None”. Precise is defined as “following specific landscape elements, eg hedgerows, tracks, buildings, which are recognisable at a scale of 1:10,000”. The Aspect Area boundary information is contained in the Data Capture Forms.

3.4 Evaluation of Aspect Areas

The LANDMAP methodology requires the Aspect Specialist to report on the overall method for arriving at a final evaluation for Aspect Areas.

The evaluation process adopts a standardised approach which allows for comparison between different areas across Wales. The evaluation criteria are as follows:-

- Outstanding - areas or sites of international and/or national importance
- High - areas or sites of regional and/or county importance

Moderate	-	areas or sites of local importance
Low	-	areas or sites of low value
Unknown	-	where insufficient information currently exists to allow for a proper evaluation

The evaluation of the Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas follows the guidance given in the LANDMAP manual involving evaluation criteria (ie rarity, scenic quality, integrity, unity and sense of place). The general evaluation is a measure of how these criteria are evaluated by the Aspect specialist (ie outstanding, high, moderate, low). The Data Capture Form for each Aspect Area details the justification of the overall evaluation.

Using the above methodology, the evaluations for the 88 Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas are as follows (expressed as an approximate percentage of the total number of Aspect Areas):

-	Outstanding	-	0%
-	High	-	15%
-	Moderate	-	55%
-	Low	-	30%

The relatively large percentage of low evaluations is attributable to the number of “Urban” Aspect Areas, with accordingly lower values.

The evaluations of each of the Aspect Areas are illustrated in Figure 1.0.

3.5 Visual & Sensory Aspect Classification System

The Visual & Sensory Aspect is organised according to the “hierarchical classification system”, as detailed in the LANDMAP methodology. The hierarchy of four levels are broadly based on the following criteria:

- Level 1 - Broad landform and land cover
- Level 2 - Land form
- Level 3 - Land cover
- Level 4 - Detail/location/scale/settlement

3.6 Justifications and Judgements

The evaluation of the Aspect Areas, as detailed in the Classification Table (refer 2.7), has been carried out using the prescribed methodology. However, in approximately 20% of the Aspect Areas-notably those Aspect Areas with “low” evaluations- the number of words in the summary is often less than might be expected. In these cases, the criteria details contain the data, generally 25 words or more.

The distribution and patterns of aspect areas represents the mixture of landscape types found at Level 3 LANDMAP classification for the landscape of the study area. As a consequence there are a number of larger aspect areas, particularly relating to the uplands and urban areas which dominate the landscape character of the area.

3.7 Classification Table

Aspect Area CynonVS/	Name	Level 3 Classification	Evaluation
004	M4 Motorway	Road Corridor	Low
113	Cwm Dar	Open Upland Valley	Moderate
114	Blackwood	Urban	Low
129	Mynydd Y Grug	Upland Grazing	Moderate
140	Cefnpennar	Hillside/Scarp Slope Mosaic	Moderate
141	Ynysbwl	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Mosaic	Moderate
142	Mynydd y Glyn	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Mosaic	Moderate
143	Llanfabon	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Mosaic	Moderate
144	Pentrapeod	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Mosaic	Moderate
148	Cwm Ogwr	Mosaic Low Valley	Moderate
151	Ffordd-y-Gyfraith	Mosaic Rolling	Moderate

		Lowland	
190	Risca	Urban	Low
193	Rhymney	Village	Low
198	Llanharry	Village	Low
207	Penmoelallt	Upland	Moderate
209	West of Rhymney	Hillside/Scarp Slope Mosaic	Moderate
214	Mynydd Llugh	Mosaic Upland and Plateaux	Moderate
259	NW of Mynydd y Lan	Hills & Lower Plateau Grazing	Moderate
260	Valley Slopes Machen – Ystrad Mynach	Hills & Lower Plateau Grazing	Moderate
271	Rhymney Valley south of Caerphilly	Hills & Lower Plateau Mosaic	Moderate
304	Newtown Point	Intertidal	High
308	North of Bargoed	Hillside/Scarp Slope Grazing	Moderate
317	Mynydd Eglwysilon Mynydd Meio	Upland Grazing	High
320	Tonyrefail	Village	Low
337	Treherbert	Urban	Low
349	Mynydd Llangelnwyr	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Grazing	Moderate
351	Maesteg	Urban	Low
352	Bryn-oer Patch	Upland Grazing	Moderate
357	Mynydd Ton, Bwlfa, William Meyrick	Upland	Moderate
361	Rhoslas	Upland Grazing	Moderate
368	Opencast	Excavation	Low
372	Mynydd Maen	Upland Mosaic	Moderate
384	Nelson	Village	Low
404	Gelligaer Common	Upland Grazing	High
430	Hirwaun Common	Upland Grazing	High
436	Mynydd y Gaer	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Mosaic	High
459	Porthcawl	Flat Open Lowland	Moderate

	Hinterland	Faemland	
473	Mynydd Baedan	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Mosaic	High
496	Mynydd Maesteg	Upland Grazing	High
522	Hirwaun	Urban	Low
544	Abertridwr	Village	Low
550	Mynydd Y Aber	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Grazing	Moderate
572	Hendre	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	Moderate
580	St.Gwynno Forest	Wooded Upland	Moderate
596	A470 (T)	Road Corridor	Low
605	Cefn Y Brithdir	Upland Grazing	High
618	Caerphilly	Urban	Low
622	Mynydd Llangeinwyr	Upland Grazing	High
630	Kenfig Burrows	Dunes & Dune Slack	High
633	Nant Mychudd	Mosaic Lowland Valley	Low
649	Ogmore Forest	Upland	Moderate
660	Aberpennar	Urban	Low
668	Sirhowy Valley Slopes	Wooded Hillside & Scarp Slopes	Moderate
709	Pontypridd	Urban	Low
716	East of Rhymney	Hillside and Scarp Slopes Grazing	Moderate
726	Bridgend	Urban	Low
731	Conifers on west side	Hillside/Scarp Slope Grazing	Moderate
735	Cadair Fawr	Upland Grazing	High
738	Cefn y Rhondda	Hillside & Scarp Slope Mosaic	Moderate
740	Area surrounding Cefn Mably Lakes	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	Moderate
766	Machen	Village	Low
785	Parc Cwm Darren	Mosaic Upland Valley	Moderate
790	Cefn Hirgoed	Open Rolling Lowland	Moderate
797	Dere Valley	Upland Mosaic Valley	Moderate
811	Garth Hill	Hillside/Scarp Slopes Grazing	Moderate

813	Garw & Caerau Forest	Upland	Moderate
825	Newton Down	Open Rolling Lowland	Moderate
828	Between Bridgend & Merthyr Mawr	Open Rolling Lowland	Moderate
833	Penderyn	Hillside/Scarp Slope Mosaic	Moderate
842	Porthcawl	Urban	Low
847	Pyle	Urban	Low
854	Mynydd Y Lan	Upland Grazing	High
861	Abernant and surroundings	Hillside/Scarp Slope Mosaic	Moderate
864	New Tredegar	Village	Low
876	Rhos-Gwanor	Hillside/Scarp Slope Grazing	Moderate
884	Llynfi Valley	Mosaic Lowland Valley	Moderate
890	Craig Nantmelyn	Hillside/Scarp Slope Grazing	Moderate
895	Wooded Slopes Cwmcarn	Wooded Hillside & Scarp Slopes	Moderate
903	West of Mountain Ash	Hillside/Scarp Slope Grazing	Moderate
920	Kenfig Sands	Intertidal	High
950	St. Tydfil Forest	Upland	Moderate
955	Cribwr	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	Moderate
966	Bettws	Open Rolling Lowland	Moderate
968	Wooded Slopes west of Mynydd y Lan	Wooded Hillside & Scarp Slopes	Moderate
971	Valley north of Blackwood	Mosaic Upland Valley	Moderate
982	Pencoed	Urban	Low
987	Merthyr Mawr Warren	Dunes & Dune Slack	High
999	Llantrisant	Urban	Low