



Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026

Landscape and Seascape Supplementary Planning Guidance (May 2018)



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Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape and Seascapes (May 2018)

Note to Reader

This document supplements and explains the policies in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP was adopted by the Council on 27th January 2016 and forms the basis for decisions on land use planning in the County Borough up to 2026.

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared following a public consultation exercise that was undertaken in the Spring of 2018 and the guidance was adopted by the Council's Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board on 18th May 2018.

While only policies in the LDP have special status in the determination of planning applications, the SPG will be taken into account as a material consideration in the decision making process.

This SPG is also available in Welsh, either to download or by request. Should you need this document in another format, then please contact the LDP team at ldp@npt.gov.uk or **[01639] 686821**.

1 Introduction

1.0.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides information and guidance setting out the expectations on all development proposals to protect and enhance all landscapes and seascapes.

1.0.2 The document outlines the variety of landscapes and seascapes relevant to Neath Port Talbot and sets out the measures that will be taken through the planning system to meet the objectives set out in the Local Development Plan (LDP).

1.0.3 The Council's planning policy is set out in the Neath Port Talbot LDP⁽¹⁾, namely Strategic Policy SP14 (The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast) and detailed policies EN1 (The Undeveloped Coast), EN2 (Special Landscape Areas) and EN3 (Green Wedges). This SPG should be read in the context of these policies and the associated explanatory text.

1.0.4 The planning system is an important means by which, in relation to land use, the conservation and enhancement of landscapes and seascapes of the County Borough and beyond can be achieved through managing the location and appearance of new development. This is fully supported by planning policy and legislative requirements.

1.0.5 It is therefore important to address such issues as part of the process of dealing with planning applications submitted to the Planning Authority, as failure to do so may result in applications being refused or delayed.

Purpose of the SPG

1.0.6 The purpose of the SPG therefore is to assist and guide those proposing and designing new developments and submitting a planning application, to ensure that landscape and seascape are appropriately considered, protected and where feasible enhanced within any development proposal. The document does so by supplementing the policies set out in the LDP, by providing more detailed guidance and by setting planning policy within the broader context of other environmental legislation and designations.

Structure and Content

1.0.7 The SPG addresses the following:

- An introduction to the landscapes and seascapes of the local area;
- Background information on relevant landscape and seascape related legislation, designations and guidance;

1. Introduction

- The role of the planning system, expanding on the detail of national and local planning policy;
- An explanation of how landscape and seascape considerations are dealt with in the planning process; and
- How the implementation and compliance with this SPG will be monitored.

2 The Landscapes and Seascapes of Neath Port Talbot

Landscape

2.0.1 The term *landscape* is applied to a range of different concepts, but in planning and land-use terms is generally understood to mean all the visible features of an area of land, often considered in terms of overall appearance, although other sensory aspects are also relevant.

2.0.2 The European Landscape Convention gives a definition of *landscape* as "...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors".



Rheola Estate

The Landscape of Neath Port Talbot

2.0.3 Neath Port Talbot has a wide range of landscape types, forms and features incorporating a number of entirely different character types. The area ranges in height from sea level at Swansea Bay to about 600m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) near Glynneath. From the coastal plain, the land rises dramatically to over 200m AOD along the scarp slope that provides the backdrop to the more densely developed coastal belt. Behind, the majority of the County Borough is between 250-600m AOD, giving it an upland or semi-upland character.

2. The Landscapes and Seascapes of Neath Port Talbot

2.0.4 The plateau areas are deeply incised by five main river valleys, formed as a result of geological faulting and glacial erosion, which drain in a generally south westerly direction towards the coast. Each valley has its own distinct character, varying from deep and steep sided to shallower and more meandering as they reach the coast, with estuaries associated with the rivers Neath, Afan and Kenfig. Much of the undeveloped coastline retains extensive dune systems, but these have been broken up by areas of development elsewhere.

2.0.5 Some 43% of the County Borough is forested, much of it extensive upland plantations, while the main agricultural activity is pasture, with extensive grazing on the upland commons, with limited arable production mostly confined to the extreme south of the area around Margam. Mining and heavy industry has had a major impact in the past, with steel making, opencast mining and quarrying still continuing. Canals, docks, railways and major road routes tend to be concentrated along the coastal belt. The settlement pattern reflects this historic emphasis, with major centres of population being concentrated along the coast.

2.0.6 The following resources and publications give more information and guidance about local landscape character.

LANDMAP

2.0.7 LANDMAP (Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process) is an all-Wales GIS-based landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated. LANDMAP is intended to help sustainable decision-making and natural resource planning at a range of levels from local to national while ensuring transparency in decision-making.

2.0.8 The process uses five nationally consistent, quality assured spatial dataset layers:

- Geological Landscape;
- Landscape Habitats;
- Visual and Sensory;
- Historic Landscape; and
- Cultural Landscape.

2.0.9 LANDMAP aims to map and classify landscapes from the unique perspective of each dataset, describing their key characteristics, qualities and components and evaluating their importance. The process also includes making recommendations for locally appropriate management guidelines and the identification of significant landscape change through monitoring of the baseline resource.

2.0.10 More information on LANDMAP, including updated datasets, guidance on use of the resource and a fully interactive map covering all of Wales is available on the NRW Website⁽²⁾.

Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (2004)⁽³⁾

2.0.11 The NPT LANDMAP Assessment was commissioned by NPTCBC and CCW (now NRW) and was completed and published in late 2004. The Assessment provided detailed analysis of the landscapes of all areas of the County Borough, generated evaluated aspect areas for the LANDMAP datasets and included contextual information on landscape form and function. Included within the Assessment were a public perception study and a full landscape assessment bringing together all the evaluated aspect information and derived landscape character areas.

2.0.12 Although there have been some changes affecting some of the aspect areas since the Assessment was completed (resulting from new developments and changes in forestry and agricultural land management practices etc.), these have had a relatively minor impact on the overall landscape character within the County Borough and the NPT LANDMAP Assessment remains a useful resource to help inform the evaluation of landscape impacts of proposals.

2.0.13 The first part of the final report outlines the main characteristics of the landscape within NPT under each aspect heading and contains summary maps for each aspect. The second part describes and evaluates each landscape character area in detail.

2.0.14 The NPT LANDMAP Landscape Assessment is available as a supporting document to this SPG⁽⁴⁾.

Natural Resources Wales National Landscape Character Areas

2.0.15 National Landscape Character Areas (NLCAs) have been defined at a broad landscape scale throughout Wales by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Using LANDMAP data, 48 NLCAs have been identified across Wales with descriptive profiles highlighting what distinguishes one landscape from another, with reference to their regionally distinct natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics.

2.0.16 Neath Port Talbot falls within two of the NLCAs, NLCA 37: South Wales Valleys and NLCA 38: Swansea Bay. The full landscape descriptions for these two NLCAs are available on the NRW website⁽⁵⁾.

NPT Landscape Advice Report (2011)⁽⁶⁾

2 <https://naturalresources.wales/LANDMAP>

3 Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (White Consultants - December 2004).

4 Available on the Council's website: www.npt.gov.uk

5 <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/maps/nlca/?lang=en>

6 Provision of Landscape Advice (TACP - June 2011).

2. The Landscapes and Seascapes of Neath Port Talbot

2.0.17 The Landscape Advice Report was commissioned by NPTCBC in order to provide background and evidence based information for the preparation of the LDP. The report covered four main issues:

1. The identification of areas of countryside where wind farms, coal, aggregates and stone extraction and waste landfill would not be acceptable;
2. The identification of areas of countryside as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), with justification;
3. The assessment of existing areas designated as Green Wedges in the former Unitary Development Plan (UDP), with recommendations for amendments and new areas as appropriate; and
4. The assessment of the appropriate distance for mineral buffer zones around settlements or designated landscape features that should be protected.

2.0.18 In relation to issue 1, the report recommended refinements to the TAN8⁽⁷⁾ Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) to define the areas considered most appropriate for wind farm developments. The refined SSAs were subsequently discussed and evaluated through the LDP Examination in Public process and finalised in the adopted LDP. Similarly, recommendations were made in relation to areas considered inappropriate for mineral extraction, which informed the LDP process.

2.0.19 The study also included detailed analysis using LANDMAP data in order to identify areas appropriate for designation as SLAs (issue 2) and set out the primary landscape qualities and features and key policy and management issues for each identified area. In relation to the Green Wedges (issue 3), the pre-existing UDP Green Wedges were taken as a starting point and recommendations for amendments made following detailed analysis and ground truthing, which informed the final boundaries adopted through the LDP process.

2.0.20 Mineral buffer zones (issue 4) were approached similarly, with recommendations made that were implemented through inclusion within the adopted LDP.

2.0.21 The Landscape Advice Report is available as a supporting document to this SPG⁽⁸⁾.

Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales

2.0.22 The most important and best-surviving historic landscapes in Wales are identified in the 'Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales'. There are two Registered Historic Landscapes within (or partly within) NPT: 'Merthyr Mawr, Kenfig and Margam Burrows' Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest [Cadw Ref HLW(MGI)1];

7 PPW Technical Advice Note 8: Planning for Renewable Energy (Welsh Government - July 2005).

8 Available on the Council's website: www.npt.gov.uk

and 'Mynydd Margam' Registered Landscape of Special Historic Interest [Cadw Ref HLW(WGI/MGI)2]⁽⁹⁾. Specific guidance on the management and conservation of these areas within the planning process has been published by Cadw⁽¹⁰⁾.

Seascape

2.0.23 Seascape is a less widely used term than landscape, but it embodies similar concepts of character and visual resource. Seascape is defined in the UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)⁽¹¹⁾ as "*Landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other.*" The definition put forward in the Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay Local Seascape Character Assessment follows the European Landscape Convention landscape definition more closely: "*an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land and sea, by natural and/or human factors*".

2.0.24 Proposals for developments below the mean low water mark are generally outside the control of the planning system, and a range of additional controls apply to land between high and low water mark. All developments in coastal areas however can have a significant effect on the wider seascape and all such effects will need to be fully taken into consideration.



Baglan Bay

The Seascape of Neath Port Talbot

2.0.25 The coastline of Neath Port Talbot stretches from the River Kenfig in the south to the administrative boundary with Swansea at the University Bay Campus. The coastline encompasses areas of beach, sand dunes, river estuaries and more formal promenades as

9 The extent of these areas is available via the Lle website: <http://lle.gov.wales>.

10 Guide to Good Practice on Using the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales in the Planning and Development Process (2nd Edition): <http://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/landscapesRegisterGoodPracticeEN.pdf>

11 UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)(HM Government 2011): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-marine-policy-statement>

2. The Landscapes and Seascapes of Neath Port Talbot

well as residential areas, dockland and industrial sites, most notably the Tata steelworks. The seascape when seen from the County Borough includes views across Swansea Bay to Mumbles Head, the Devon coastline and the Welsh coast to the south.

2.0.26 The dunes at Crymlyn Burrows and at Kenfig (adjacent to the County Borough boundary) are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), with Kenfig pool, dunes and beach to the south also being a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Kenfig and Margam Burrows is also a Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest included in the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw).

2.0.27 Significant coastal activities within the County Borough include commercial shipping using the wharfs on the River Neath, Port Talbot docks and the deep water harbour; sea fishing; and coastal recreation, especially at Aberafan Beach and some leisure boating from the River Afan and from Monkstone Marina on the River Neath.

Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay Local Seascape Character Assessment

2.0.28 The Local Seascape Character Assessment was commissioned by the Local Authorities in the study area, together with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The assessment is intended to form part of the national dataset in accordance with national seascape guidance. The study area stretches from Carmarthen Bay in the west through to Porthcawl in the south east, and seawards as far as the limit of territorial waters.

2.0.29 The study defines Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) within the structure of National Marine Character Areas (MCAs) established at the national level by the National Seascape Assessment for Wales. Full details of the methodology used is set out in the Local Seascape Character Assessment.

2.0.30 Each Seascape Character Area is described, with key characteristics, natural and cultural influences set out and aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities given.

3 Evaluating the Impacts of Change and Development



Vale of Neath

3.1 Impacts on Landscapes and Seascapes

3.1.1 Key impacts on landscape character include not only new development and its location, siting, design and construction impacts, but also changes in land and property management (e.g. tree felling or loss of traditional management practices such as the introduction of larger field sizes), and increasing recreational activity.

3.1.2 Changes that can significantly affect the landscape include direct physical changes that are an immediate direct consequence of a development; indirect changes that may result from complex interactions that may be delayed or off-site (e.g. changes in drainage altering vegetation cover, new associated infrastructure such as gardens, car parks and access roads); or cumulative changes resulting from a new development combined with other developments, arising from intervisibility or other combined effects (e.g. erosion of a setting or urban encroachment).

3.1.3 The significance and acceptability of these impacts will vary according to landscape sensitivity and condition, and the nature of the development, including the scope for mitigation in character with the existing landscape. Sensitivity includes reference to the expectations and proximity of visual receptors including user groups such as walkers, cyclists, passengers on public transport, visitors and local residents, as well as existing land-use, the pattern and scale of the landscape and degree of openness.

3.1.4 Development may have positive as well as negative impacts. Indeed, an important part of landscape protection may be its enhancement where its character has been eroded or lost by existing development (including large scale pylons and overhead electricity

3. Evaluating the Impacts of Change and Development

distribution and transmission wires). Development brings regeneration opportunities of both landscape character restoration, including reinforcement of what is left, and creation of new character. It should be noted that even small enhancements may have a much bigger effect when considered cumulatively, beyond the individual development.

3.1.5 Opportunities to enhance landscape character and minimise negative impacts should be addressed through the development location and design process. They may be secured by planning conditions (e.g. maintenance and management) or obligations where necessary. Possible measures include:

- Re-use or use of traditional building forms, styles and materials;
- Rationalisation of signage and other intrusive ‘clutter’;
- Retention and restoration of key landscape features or details within the development (e.g. walls, hedgerows, trees etc.);
- Careful consideration given to fitting the development into the landscape including attention to contours, textures, variety and general visual impact (both during the day and at night) in the siting, scale and form of development; and
- Use of mitigation measures such as screening, and boundary/transition treatment to ensure integration with the existing landscape character.

3.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

3.2.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will often be required as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for many proposals, but should be undertaken in all cases where there is likely to be a significant landscape or seascape impact from a proposal. Impacts on skylines, views and panoramas will be important considerations and these impacts should be identified in relation to significant receptors (local residents or communities) as well as the wider landscape/seascape generally.

3.2.2 LVIA should include assessments of the effects of the changes brought about by the proposed development on the landscape (as a general resource) and its visual effects on specific views and visual amenity generally. The significance of the effects will also need to be assessed, together with cumulative impacts. The LVIA will need to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.

3.2.3 Landscape, seascape and townscape can have cultural and historic associations that are important for the local community, visitors and the wider national interest. Cultural associations could include art works or literature (in English or Welsh) relating to the landscape, while features of historic importance could include listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas and registered Historic Landscapes and Parks and Gardens.

Visualisation

3.2.4 'Visualisation' of the appearance of a proposal can help in the assessment of its landscape impact. This can include plans, elevations and sections; sketches; annotated photographs; wirelines; augmented reality; photomontages; or 3-D simulations etc. The type of visualisation that is appropriate will depend on its intended use, the anticipated users, the sensitivity of the visual receptors (including visual context) and the likely effect of the development in terms of its 'size and scale', 'geographic extent' and 'duration and reversibility' ('magnitude').

3.2.5 Further advice on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is available in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)⁽¹²⁾. More specific advice on the use of visualisation techniques is available from the Landscape Institute⁽¹³⁾.

12 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environment Management and Assessment April 2013).

13 [Technical Guidance Note 02/17 Visual Representation of Development Proposals \(Landscape Institute 2017\)](#)

4 Policy Context

4.0.1 The following legislation, policy and guidance documents set the key policy context for landscape and seascape issues in Neath Port Talbot.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

4.0.2 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies (including Welsh Ministers) that they must carry out sustainable development. In carrying out this duty, actions which public bodies must take include:

- Setting and publishing objectives ('well-being objectives') that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals; and
- Taking all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives.

4.0.3 The Act puts in place seven well-being goals to help ensure that public bodies are all working towards the same vision of a sustainable Wales. In relation to landscape and seascape matters, the most relevant well-being goal is the achievement of 'a resilient Wales', which would include the need to conserve and enhance statutorily designated areas, the countryside and the undeveloped coast and the conservation of biodiversity, habitats and landscapes.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 9)

4.0.4 PPW gives more detailed advice in relation to planning matters. In respect of landscape and seascape it stresses throughout that conservation of biodiversity and landscape should be promoted and taken into account in all development decisions and development plans and that the undeveloped coastline should be protected or enhanced.

4.0.5 It is stated that non-statutory designations such as Special Landscape Areas should be soundly based on a formal scientific assessment of the nature conservation, landscape or geological value of the site. Such designations should be applied to areas of substantive conservation value where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection.

4.0.6 The policy relating to green wedges is set out including the purposes of the designation (limited essentially to preventing coalescence and managing urban form and setting), the methods to be used in defining such areas and the definition of types of development that are inappropriate within them.

The Lavernock Point to St Ann's Head Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2)

4.0.7 SMP2 provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding along the coast and estuaries along the south coast of Wales. It defines high level policies to help manage these risks to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner.

4.0.8 The coastline is divided into policy units and appropriate ways of managing coastal protection are identified for each unit, for the short, medium and long term periods. Most of Neath Port Talbot's coastline is to be defended as at present ('hold the existing defence line') for all three time periods, with areas of dunes at Crymlyn Burrows and Baglan Bay being identified for 'managed realignment' (i.e. allowing the shoreline to move backwards or forwards, with management to control or limit movement) over all three time periods.

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) (2011 - 2026)

4.0.9 The LDP sets the local planning policy framework for landscape and seascape matters. Policy SP14 is the strategic policy setting the context for the detailed policies and seeks to protect and enhance the countryside and undeveloped coast, landscapes, seascapes and agricultural land. Detailed policies EN1, EN2 and EN3 are of particular relevance to landscape and seascape issues, while policies EN4 and EN5 deal with the management of development proposals in the countryside (and therefore also have a potential influence on landscape/seascape matters).

4.0.10 Other policies that may affect landscape and seascape issues include SC1 which restricts the types of developments allowed outside defined settlement limits, EN7 which seeks to protect important natural features including trees and hedgerows etc, RE1 which sets out policy for wind farms and other types of renewable and low carbon energy development including the approach within Strategic Search Areas (SSAs), and BE1 which sets out requirements for the design of developments, including effects on landscapes and arterial 'gateways' to the County Borough among other issues. Further information on these matters is available in the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPG and Design SPG.

4.0.11 The full NPT LDP and the adopted SPG documents are available online⁽¹⁴⁾ and the relevant policies are reproduced in Appendix A and are covered in detail in Section 5 below.

5 Landscape Policy Implementation

5.1 Landscape in the Design Process

5.1.1 Outside settlements, an understanding of landscape character should be a starting point in the design process for any development. The development layout, form and detailed design should respond to the landscape and should seek to enhance it where possible. Under most circumstances, proposals that would have a significant negative landscape impact will be resisted.

5.1.2 Detailed landscape character area assessments for all parts of the County Borough are provided in the NPT LANDMAP Landscape Assessment⁽¹⁵⁾. Developers should assess the impact of their development in relation to the attributes of the character area in which it is to be sited and in relation to any other character area bounding the site or from which it will be visible.

5.1.3 Sites that may be prominent from neighbouring authority areas should be assessed in relation to the equivalent appropriate landscape assessments. Views from within the Brecon Beacons National Park are likely to be particularly sensitive, and developments that would be visible from the national park will need to ensure that any adverse effects are avoided or minimised. In all cases it should be demonstrated how the relevant landscape considerations have been responded to and have informed the overall development design. Further advice on design matters is available from the Design SPG on the Council's website⁽¹⁶⁾.

5.1.4 Within designated SLAs (Policy EN2) and Green Wedges (Policy EN3), the special considerations applying to the designations will be applied in addition to the above matters. Further information is given below.

5.2 Policy Implementation

LDP Policy SC1: Settlement Limits

5.2.1 All proposed developments have the potential to have an impact on the wider landscape, although in practice the majority of smaller scale proposals within urban areas or existing settlements are likely to have a negligible effect. Development outside the settlement limits defined in the LDP and therefore in the open countryside is more strictly controlled than within settlements, but the types of development set out in **LDP Policy SC1** may be permitted, subject to the provision in the policy: *'Where development is permitted outside settlement limits, any new buildings must be located adjacent to existing buildings or settlements wherever possible and be of an appropriate scale and form'* (refer to Appendix A for relevant LDP policies).

5.2.2 The requirement to be *of an appropriate scale and form* relates to the visual impact of proposals in the countryside, including impacts on the wider landscape. In order to ensure that developments comply, it will be necessary to make an assessment of the local landscape character, the site and the proposed building design and to show that the new building(s)

15 Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (White Consultants - December 2004).

16 www.npt.gov.uk

have been sited in the most appropriate position and have been designed with their landscape impact in mind. LANDMAP information will be useful to define the local landscape character, together where appropriate with a design and access statement commensurate with the size and nature of the proposal. Further information and advice on these matters is available from Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Technical Advice Note 12 (Design) and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)⁽¹⁷⁾.

5.2.3 LDP policies that relate to specific types of development that are common in the open countryside / outside settlement limits are EN4 (Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside) and EN5 (Conversion and Extension of Existing Buildings in the Countryside). Both policies include criteria about the scale and appearance of development and require proposals to be of a scale and design that will not have adverse visual impacts. These policies are reproduced in Appendix A.

5.2.4 Many of the more significant types of development proposals affecting the landscape will require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and an important part of this will be the assessment of landscape impacts, usually using GLVIA methodology. Such developments include in particular mineral extraction and renewable energy proposals (including wind farms). These development types are special cases in respect of landscape impacts, in the case of mineral developments because the minerals have to be worked where they are located, and in the case of wind farms because of national policy and the identification of Strategic Search Areas within which landscape change is expected.

5.2.5 Further information on these topics is available in PPW, relevant TANs and the Council's Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPG.

LDP Policy EN1: The Undeveloped Coast

5.2.6 *LDP Policy EN1* concerns the undeveloped coast, the extent of which is defined on the LDP Proposals Map. Although this policy does have relevance in respect of the landscape, it relates more directly to seascape issues and is therefore covered in more detail in Section 6.

LDP Policy EN2: Special Landscape Areas

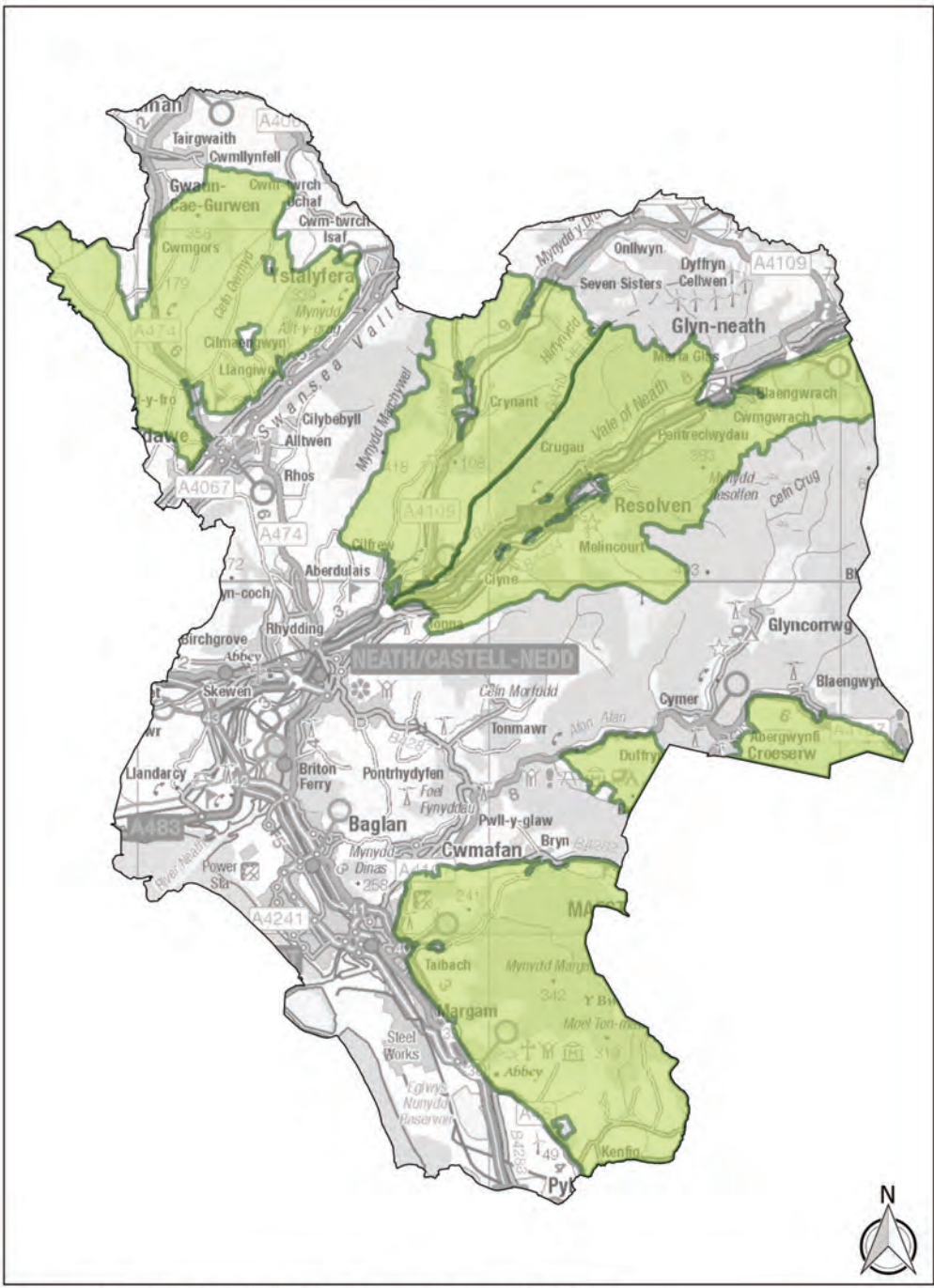
5.2.7 *LDP Policy EN2* concerns Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). These are areas of high landscape quality, identified using criteria set out in the Countryside Council for Wales Guidance Note 1 (2008) (now superseded by NRW LANDMAP Guidance Note 1⁽¹⁸⁾).

17 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environment Management and Assessment April 2013).

18 LANDMAP Guidance Note 1 (2017)

5. Landscape Policy Implementation

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape and Seascape (May 2018)



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Special Landscape Areas in Neath Port Talbot

5.2.8 The extent of the six designated SLAs is illustrated above. The NPT Landscape Advice Report⁽¹⁹⁾ explains in detail the approach and methodology used to identify the SLAs and gives full details of each one.

19 Provision of Landscape Advice (TACP June 2011).

5.2.9 Policy EN2 sets out the approach to be taken to proposed developments within SLAs, and is specifically focused on the protection of landscape quality. Since all the SLAs are located outside settlement limit boundaries, any proposals here will need to meet the requirements set out in Policy SC1 for developments in the open countryside (including the need for new buildings to be located adjacent to existing buildings or settlements and to be of an appropriate scale and form) as well as also complying with the terms of Policy EN2.

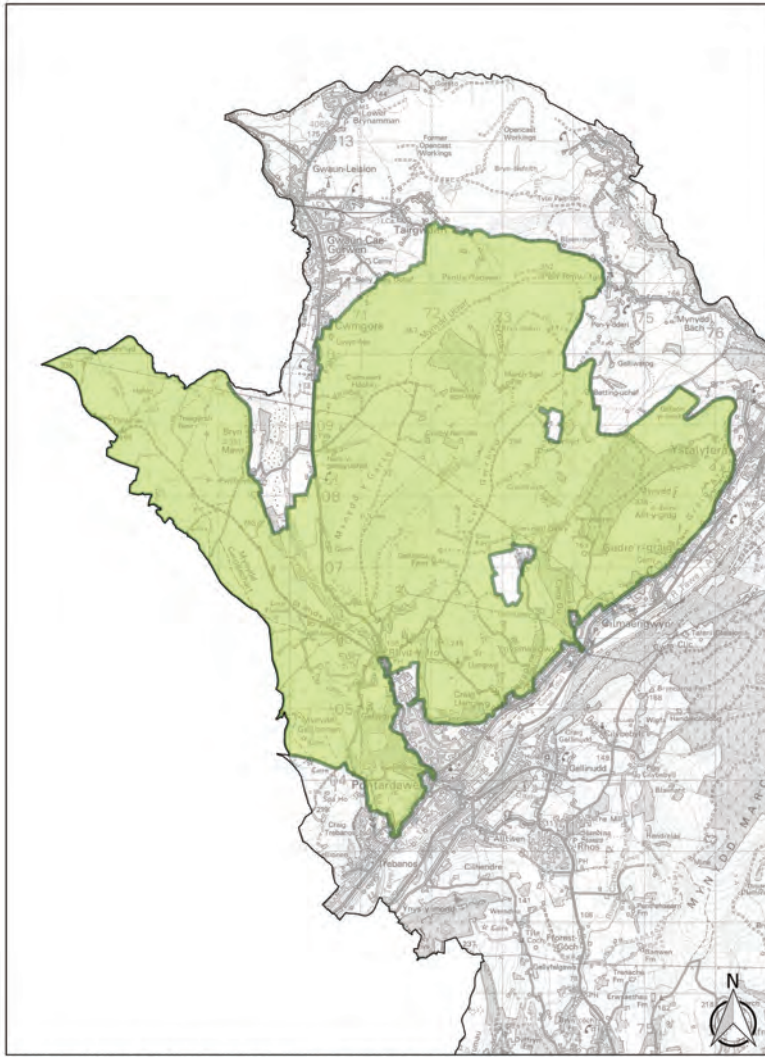
5.2.10 Policy EN2 states that developments within SLAs will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be *no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the SLA has been designated*. This is the main issue in respect of the landscape that will need to be addressed in any application, EIA or design statement for proposals within any SLA.

5.2.11 The features and characteristics of each SLA, set out in the Landscape Advice Report, are reproduced below.

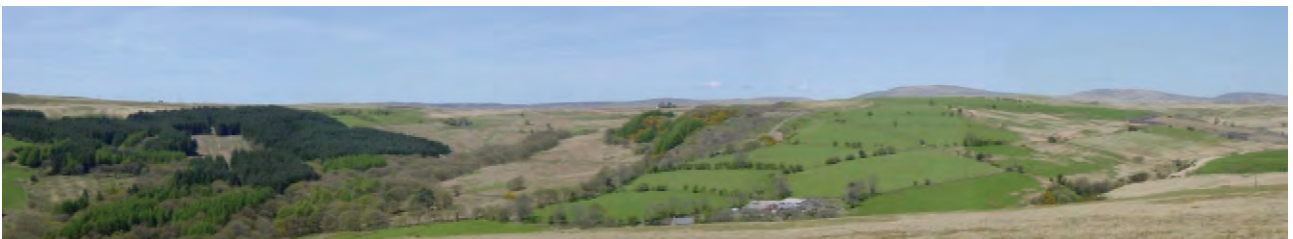
5. Landscape Policy Implementation

SLA Features and Characteristics

SLA1 (EN2/1) Mynydd y Garth



SLA 1 Mynydd y Garth

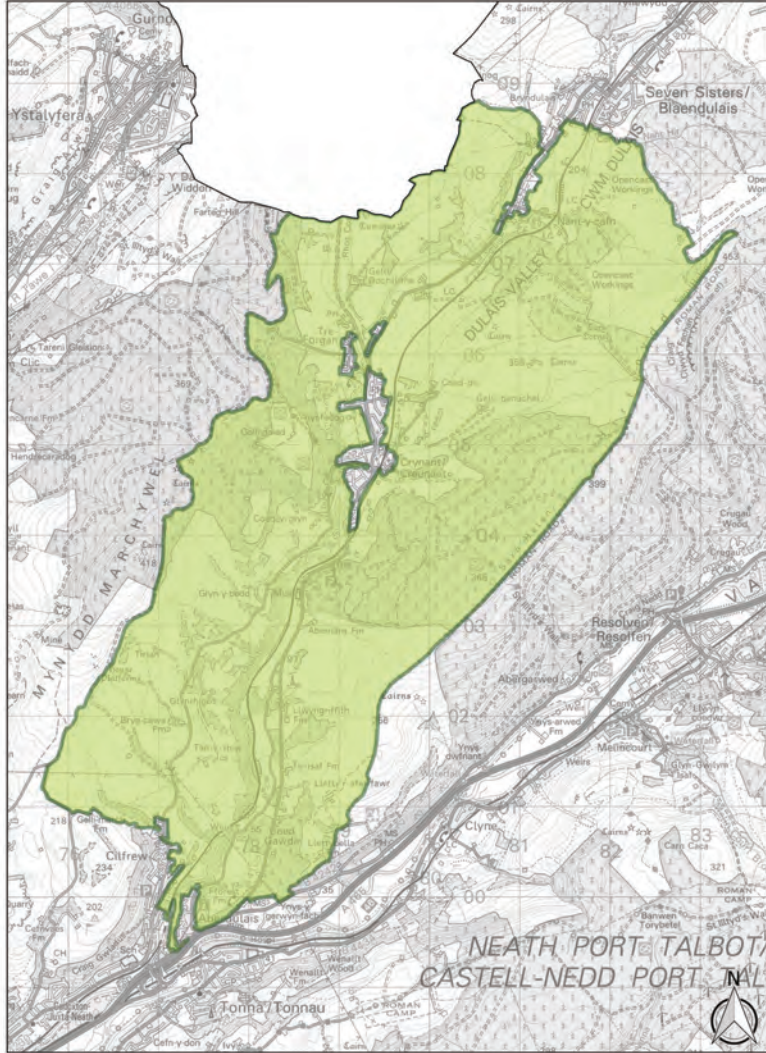


SLA1 Mynydd y Garth Features and Characteristics

- SLA1 includes the upland moorland plateau of Mynydd y Garth, Cefn Gwrhyd and Mynydd Carnllechart.
- The upland plateau is dominated by pennant sandstone and underlying Productive Coal Formation, up to 357m AOD.
- The land cover is predominantly grazed pasture with deciduous tree cover especially along riparian corridors.
- Restricted access to the area provides a remote, exposed yet settled and tranquil feel.
- It has a high scenic upland mosaic landscape quality with panoramic views out from higher elevations. It is relatively unspoilt with a strong sense of place which adds to the integrity and coherence of the landscape.
- The landscape bears evidence of evolution over millennia to include: prehistoric cairns, ancient field systems, trackways, industrial spoil heaps and small pockets of afforestation which combine to evoke a timeless quality of great scenic, cultural value and strong cultural identity. Gwrhyd road has a local dialect meaning the Long Man which is a possible reference to a prehistoric burial site.
- The post medieval boundary stones and sheep folds are features of the upland which is one of the three most important and significant funerary and ritual landscapes in south Wales.
- It is one of the key non forested areas within the County Borough that is classified as “tranquil” but which has seen considerable erosion in area of tranquillity since 1997.

5. Landscape Policy Implementation

SLA2 (EN2/2) Dulais Valley



SLA2 Dulais Valley

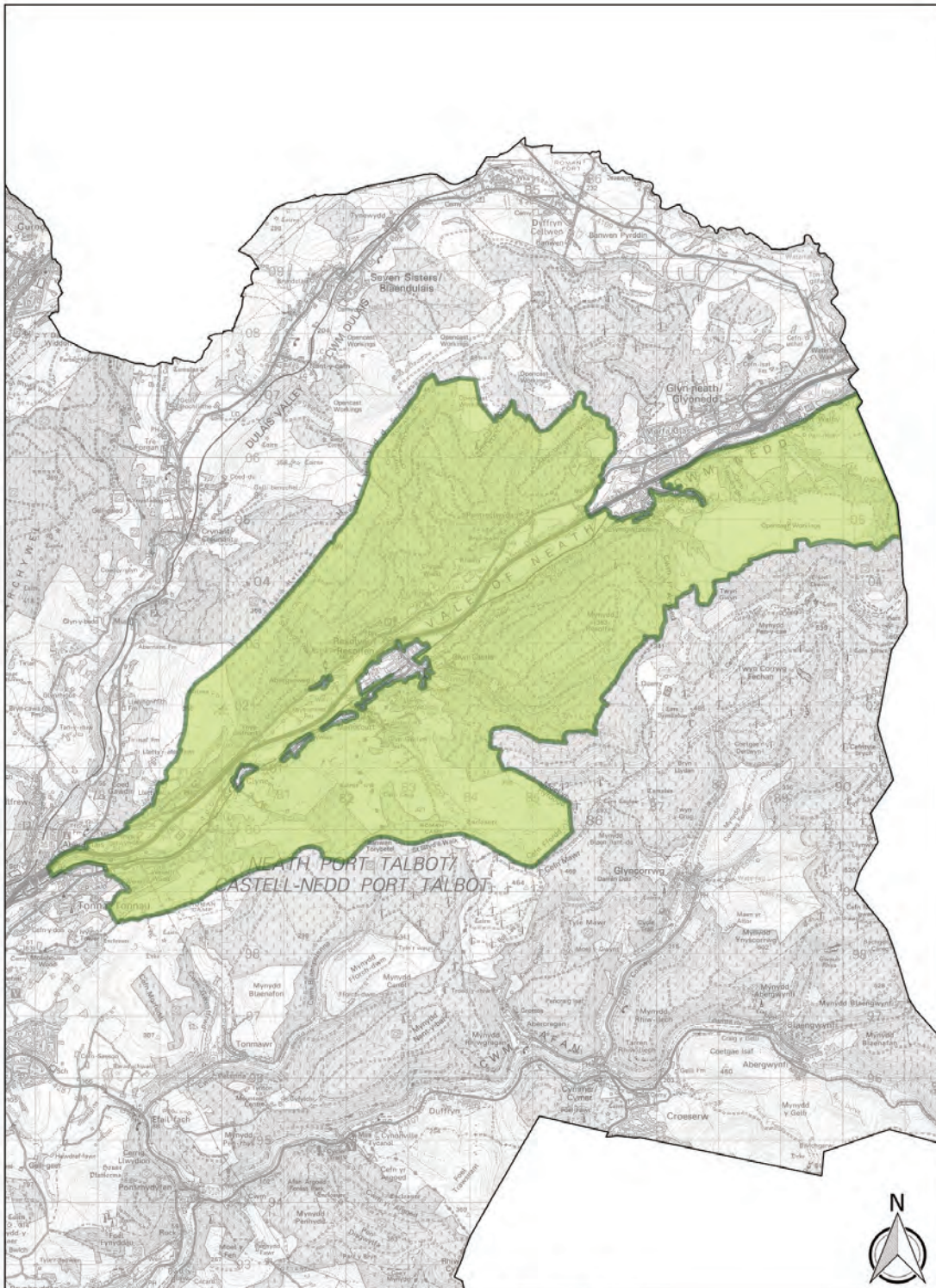


SLA2 Dulais Valley Features and Characteristics

- SLA2 stretches from the outskirts of Aberdulais in the south to Seven Sisters in the north. The SLA covers the valley sides to reinforce its visual context and therefore includes the unforested uplands of Mynydd Hirfynydd and Mynydd Marchywel as the backdrop to the valley. Areas of forestry plantation are included on both valley sides for coherence as it forms the same land mass and recognising that the appearance and biodiversity of this landcover can be enhanced through management. To the south-east the SLA links to the Vale of Neath SLA via a contiguous boundary (refer to SLA 3 below).
- The Dulais is a typical upland u-shaped glacial river valley creating a wide valley floor and predominantly open landscape on the valley sides. The north east – south west running ridge along the Dulais valley is important for its Pennant sandstones and coal measures.
- It is a wide, rolling, pastoral valley with significantly treed field boundaries, many of these contain grown out hedges which are a strong element in this landscape on the lower ground whereas drystone walls are a landscape feature of the upper reaches of the valley sides.
- Tranquillity is a key feature of the upper ridge areas supported by lack of development. It should be noted that whilst the tranquillity indices for the upper slopes indicate that they are “undisturbed” there has been a degrading of the valley floor from zone C to Zone B.
- It is an evolved landscape containing evidence from prehistory, important Roman remains, open cast and forestry. The edges of the woodland are often regular and geometric, forming an abrupt edge to the surrounding open areas, which reduces the sense of place in the upper valley sides.
- Although the historic context is mostly Roman, the landscape contains many examples of prehistoric land uses and the presence of sheepfolds indicates the importance of animal husbandry, in this area, in the post-medieval period.
- The ridge of Mynydd Hirfynydd has been a significant route through the landscape from the prehistoric period through into the medieval period, which is now used as an historic walk (Sarn Helen). It is also crossed by the long distance footpath St Illtyd’s Way.
- The Cefn Coed Colliery Museum, located to the south of Crynant, is an example of the mining industry which until the 1980s visually dominated the visual and social landscape of the S Wales Valleys and provided a strong sense of place and cohesion to the valley.

5. Landscape Policy Implementation

SLA3 (EN2/3) Vale of Neath



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SLA3 Vale of Neath



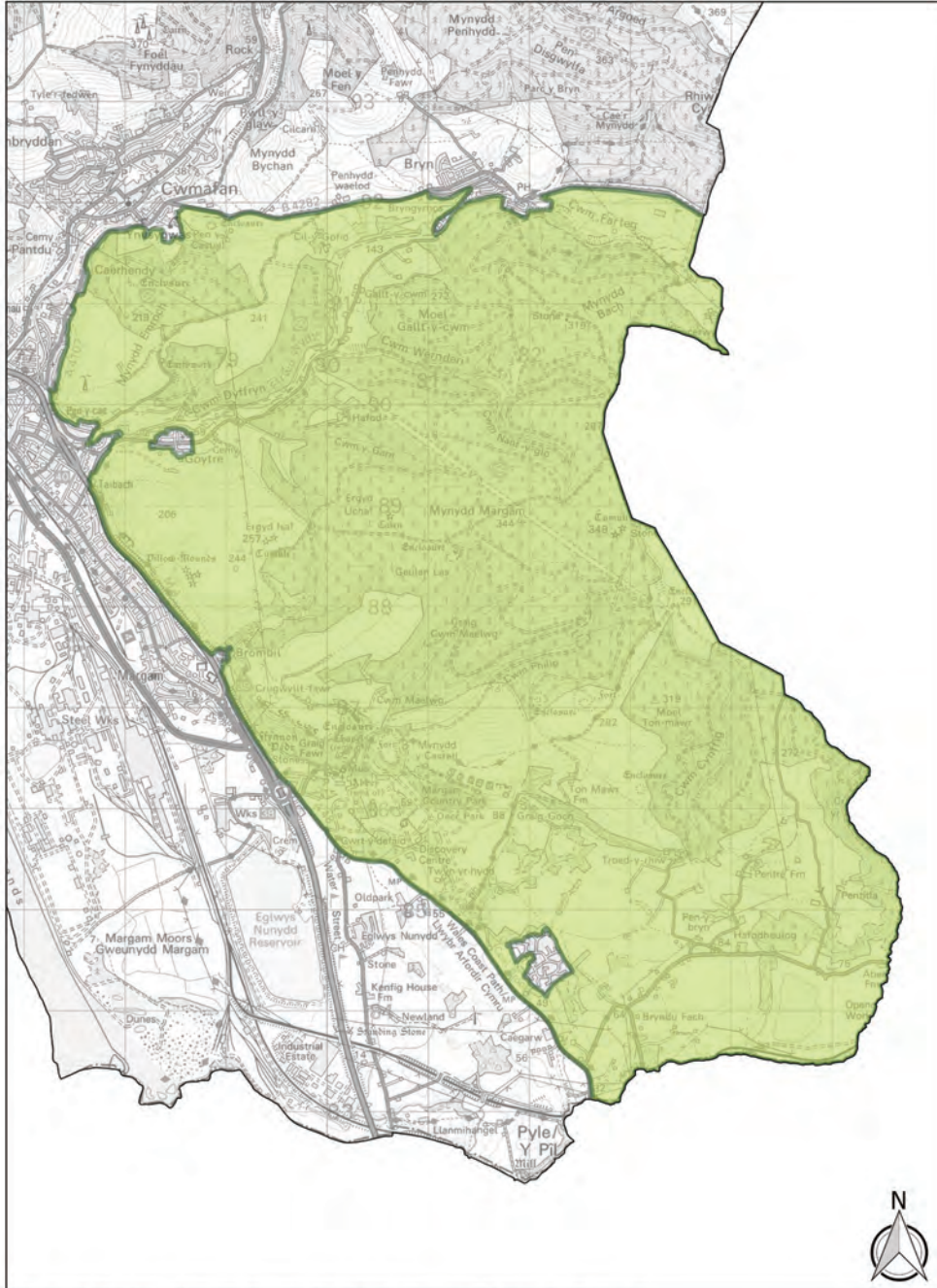
SLA3 Vale of Neath Features and Characteristics

- The Vale of Neath is similar to the south east valley side of the Dulais valley with its NE-SW fault controlled U-shaped broad glacial valley floodplain and channel, flanked by steep valley slopes. The area is a pastoral and deciduous mosaic providing diversity within the valley and contrasting with the heavily coniferous wooded nature of the upper slopes.
- The broad floodplain makes the Neath valley distinctive from the Tawe or the Dulais. The topography and woodland cover on the northern and southern slopes of the Neath valley is a significant and dominant feature and provides coherence and integrity to the SLA.
- The landscape contains many examples of prehistoric land use alongside the Roman camps and fortlets. The high ridge conveys the sense of the terrain having formed the ancient tribal frontier between the Silures and Demetae. Although now heavily forested in the east, open cast mining in the north demonstrates a geological "frontier" between surface outcrops and the deep mines of the Tawe, Dulais and Neath Valleys. To the north-east of the SLA it is geologically and topographically dominated by sundry small rivers and waterfalls, suggesting a natural boundary between the County Borough and the high moorland of the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- The SLA includes Cwm Gwrelych and Nant Llyn Fach SSSI and to the south east of the Selar opencast is the Graig-y-Llyn geological SSSI.

5 . Landscape Policy Implementation

- A strong sense of place, coherence, local distinctiveness and cultural identity combine to contribute to the special qualities of the Vale of Neath. From Aberdulais to Glynneath the Vale of Neath's topographical beauties have attracted painters including Turner, poets, photographers in large numbers over several centuries.
- The upper reaches of the valley have a tranquil and remote feeling, removed from settlements and dwellings although this contrasts significantly with the valley floor which is an important communications corridor.
- The unforested areas of the valley sides are primarily sheep grazed, and there is evidence of relict post-medieval fieldscapes within the forested areas. Footpaths, long distance paths to include St Illtyds Way and bridleways facilitate views across the valley.
- Cut into the hillslopes of the valley, on both the north and south sides, are many small collieries, levels and quarries and Fynnon Oer windfarm lies to the south east of the SLA.
- The settlements of Resolven, Blaengwrach and Glynneath are not included in the SLA.

SLA4 (EN2/4) Margam



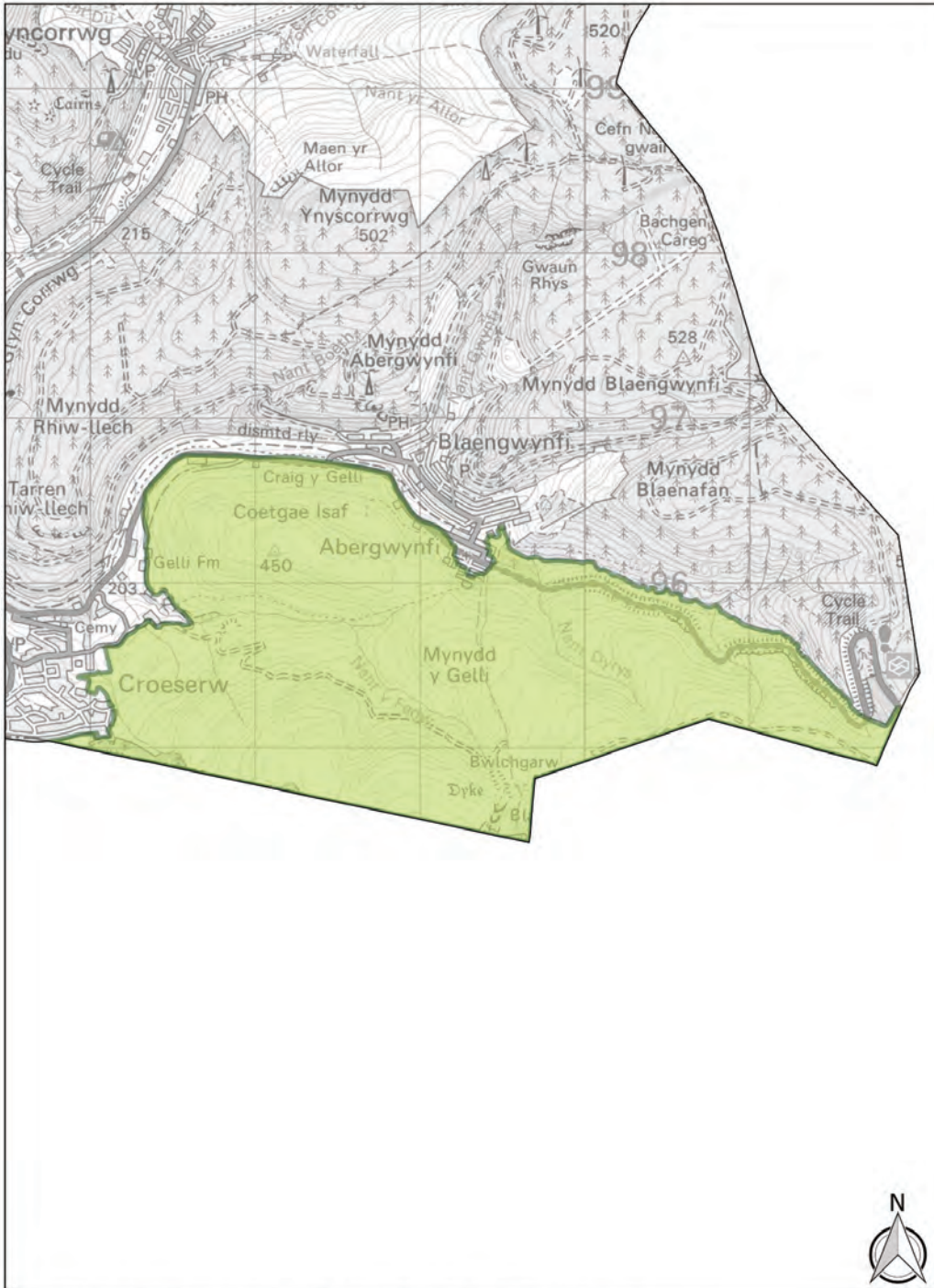
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SLA4 Margam Features and Characteristics

- Mynydd Margam is a broad, low lying plateau of NE dipping Productive Coal Formation mudstones and coals between South Wales Pennant Formation escarpment and E-W Millstone Grit ridge to the South, dissected by shallow, alluvium filled valleys of tributaries and the main Cynfig valley. It includes mine workings and the proposed deep mine.
- Cultural features in the landscape include evidence of prehistoric and later agricultural practices, rural settlements and contemporary forestry activities.
- It is an evolved landscape containing multi-period cultural expressions untrammelled by industrial exploitation - extensive archaeological evidence of land husbandry, now given over to forestry interspersed with some small farms and thus is a comparatively rare example of a surviving relict landscape.
- The SLA, which contains Margam Park, with its exceptional examples of architecture; its history as a major Cistercian Abbey and the wider monastic landholdings, provides a combination of high grade historic visitor attraction and a variety of multi-period pleasure grounds. It contains cultural elements dating from pre-history through every period up to the 21st century.
- Whilst the SLA contains areas of forested upland these are important to the overall historical context of the area and could be managed to enhance the landscape quality of the wider area.
- The scenic quality of the area is enhanced by the historic buildings of the Park and the backdrop of scarp creating a sheltered setting which link visually and provide the integrity of the whole. The sense of place for the park is initially prompted with boundary walls and entrance gates. The historic core and deer park make this area unique within the County.

SLA5 (EN2/5) Mynydd y Gelli



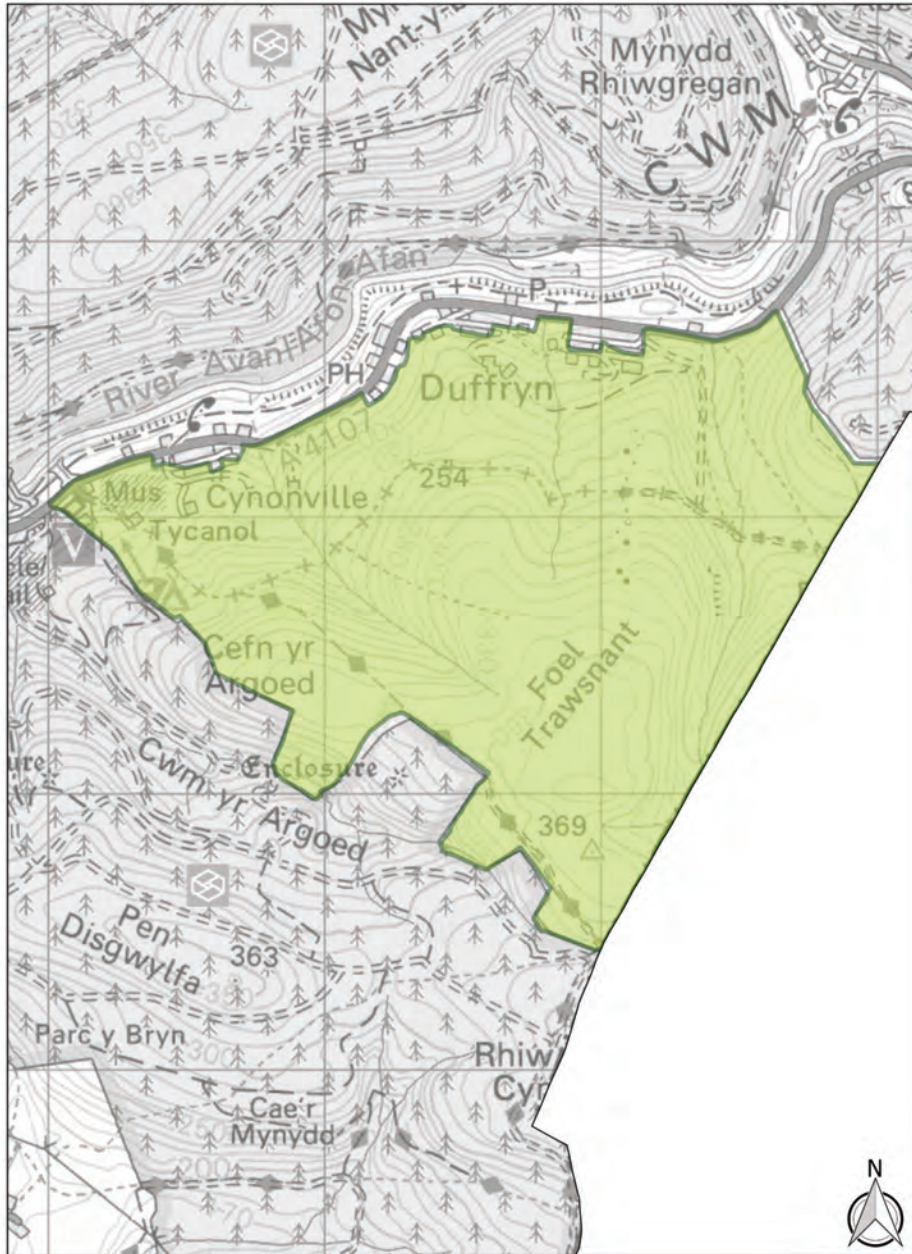
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SLA5 Mynydd y Gelli Features and Characteristics

- The landform of Mynydd y Gelli is a coherent landscape element and relates to the Western Uplands Bridgend SLA which includes the adjacent Mynydd Llangeinwyr.
- Similar to Foel Trawsnant it forms an open exposed plateau area within the eastern highlands complex.
- The landform and topography creates an imposing presence and with its simple land cover provides a contrast to the more complex landscapes of surrounding areas
- The open remote plateau has a sense of exposure and wilderness in contrast with the adjacent Afan valley.
- It is unspoilt by development or land use and has a coherent distinct character, with topographical and visual unity, high scenic quality and strong sense of place

SLA6 (EN2/6) Foel Trawsnant



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SLA6 Foel Trawsnant



SLA6 Foel Trawsant Features and Characteristics

- SLA 6 covers the steep, exposed, upland slopes in NE-SW striking N and NE dipping sandstones and coals of the South Wales Pennant Formation Llynfi-Britthdir Beds (Lower Pennant Measures).
- It forms part of the eastern highlands complex and is one location within the relict landscape of mixed periods which is not covered in conifer plantations.
- There is no development and the area feels exposed and bleak, access is via foot and bridle paths.
- The simple landscape features and pattern, upland grazing to 271m AOD creates a local sense of place and distinctiveness.

LDP Policy EN3: Green Wedges

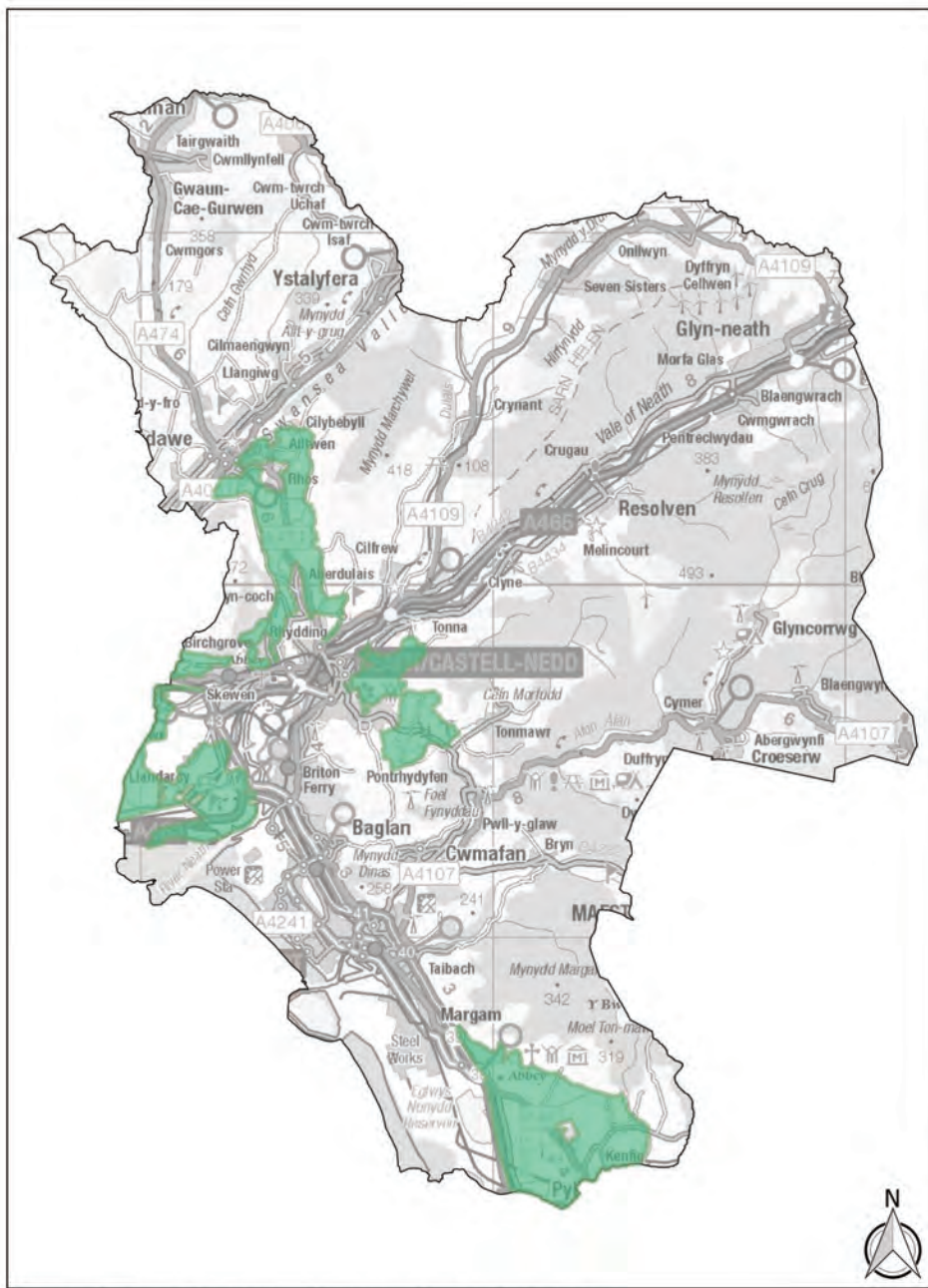
5.2.12 Green Wedges are designated areas of countryside where development is more strictly controlled in order to maintain openness and prevent the coalescence of settlements. PPW sets out the purpose of green wedges as being to:

- Prevent the coalescence of large towns and cities with other settlements;
- Manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas;
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- Protect the setting of an urban area; and
- Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

5.2.13 Green wedges are therefore not primarily a landscape designation, but they can have an impact on the wider landscape due to their impacts on the form and setting of urban areas. The NPT Landscape Advice Report⁽²⁰⁾ includes a full assessment of the green wedges in NPT. The study took the pre-existing green wedge designations in the former UDP (2008) as a starting point and recommended changes and refinements where necessary. The revised green wedges were adopted through the adoption of the LDP.

5.2.14 There are five designated green wedges within Neath Port Talbot. These are illustrated on the plan below, with further details for each green wedge in the subsequent sections. The green wedges are also shown in more detail on the LDP Proposals Map.

5. Landscape Policy Implementation



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EN3 Green Wedges in Neath Port Talbot

5.2.15 Policy EN3 states that within green wedge areas *'there is a presumption against inappropriate development'*. The supporting text to the policy states that *'inappropriate development'* in this context is as defined in PPW. This definition is given in Section 4.8 of PPW and states as follows:

The construction of new buildings in a Green Belt or in a locally designated green wedge is inappropriate development unless it is for the following purposes:

- Justified rural enterprise needs;
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries, and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the Green Belt or green wedge and which do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it;
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- Limited infilling (in those settlements and other development sites which have been identified for limited infilling in the development plan) and affordable housing for local needs under development plan policies; or
- Small scale diversification within farm complexes where this is run as part of the farm business.

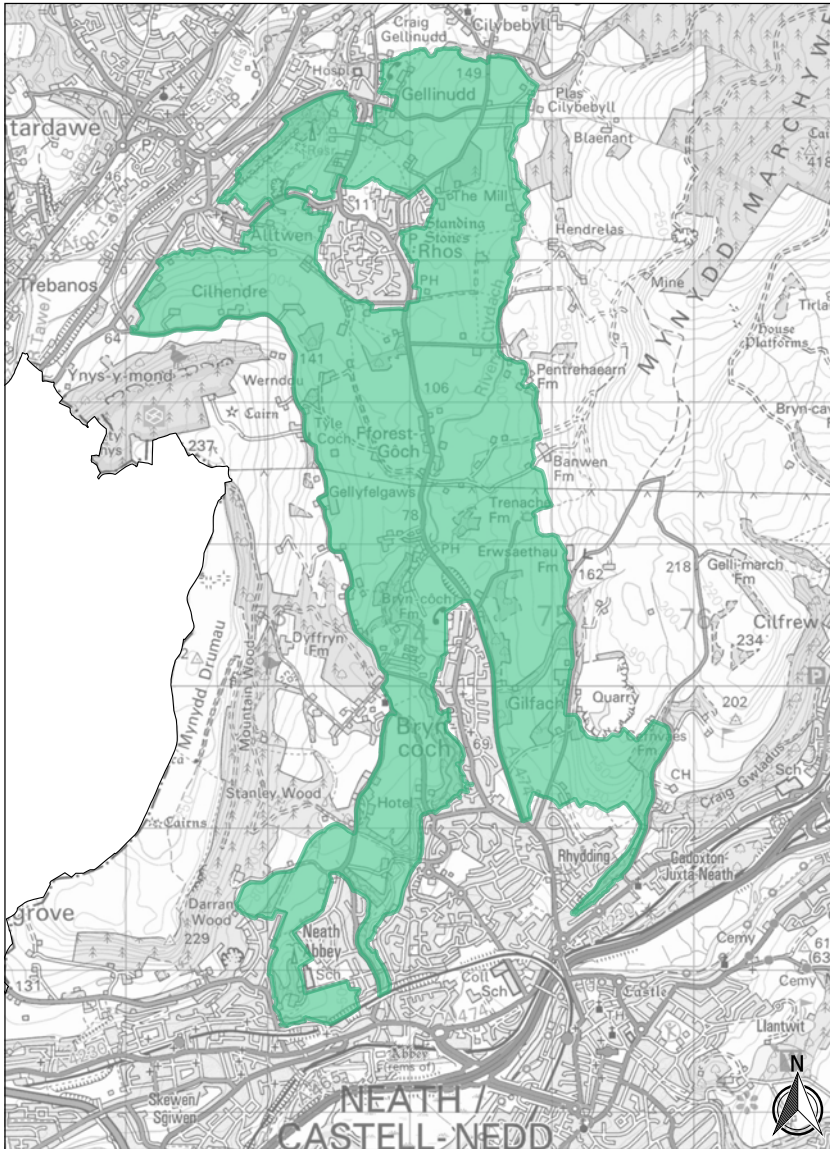
5.2.16 It is further clarified that the re-use of buildings in a green wedge is not inappropriate development provided that:

- The original building is substantial, permanent and capable of conversion without major reconstruction;
- The new use will not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt or green wedge and the purposes of including land within it. Strict control will need to be exercised over the extension, alteration or any associated use of land for re-used buildings; and
- The building is in keeping with its surroundings.

5.2.17 Other forms of development would be inappropriate development and therefore contrary to EN3 unless they maintain the openness of the green belt or green wedge and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (as listed in para 5.2.12 above).

5. Landscape Policy Implementation

Green Wedge 1 (EN3/1): Alltwen / Rhos / Bryncoch / Neath Abbey / Leiros Park



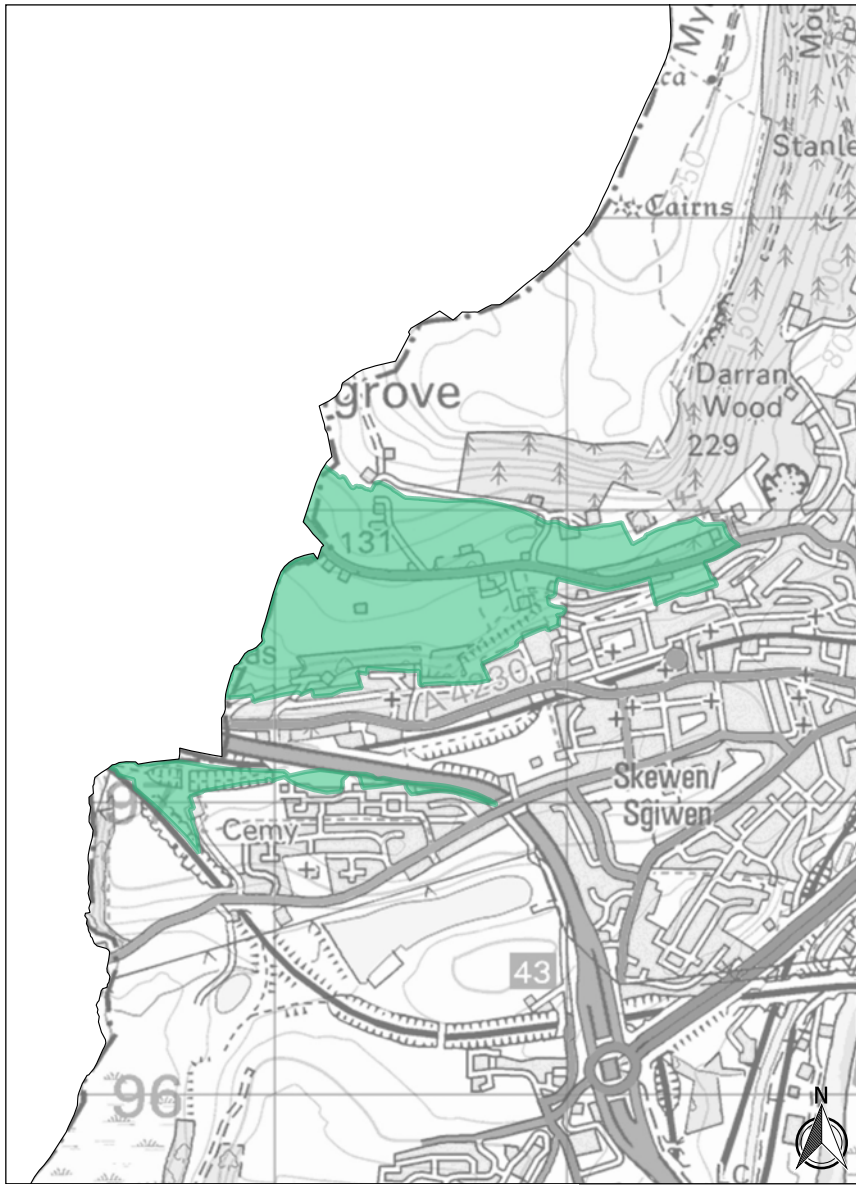
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EN3/1 Alltwen/Rhos/Bryncoch/Neath Abbey/Leiros Park Green Wedge

5.2.18 The Alltwen / Rhos / Bryncoch / Neath Abbey / Leiros Park Green Wedge covers an area of some 943 hectares and has an important function of preventing any further expansion of the urban area of Neath northwards. It is also intended to restrict the further southward expansion of Pontardawe and associated settlements

5.2.19 As illustrated above, the Alltwen / Rhos / Bryncoch / Neath Abbey / Leiros Park Green Wedge stretches from Neath to Pontardawe and includes the small settlement of Fforest Goch which has a sporadic linear form along the main A474 that links Neath and Pontardawe and lies within the green wedge designation.

Green Wedge 2 (EN3/2): Skewen / Birchgrove



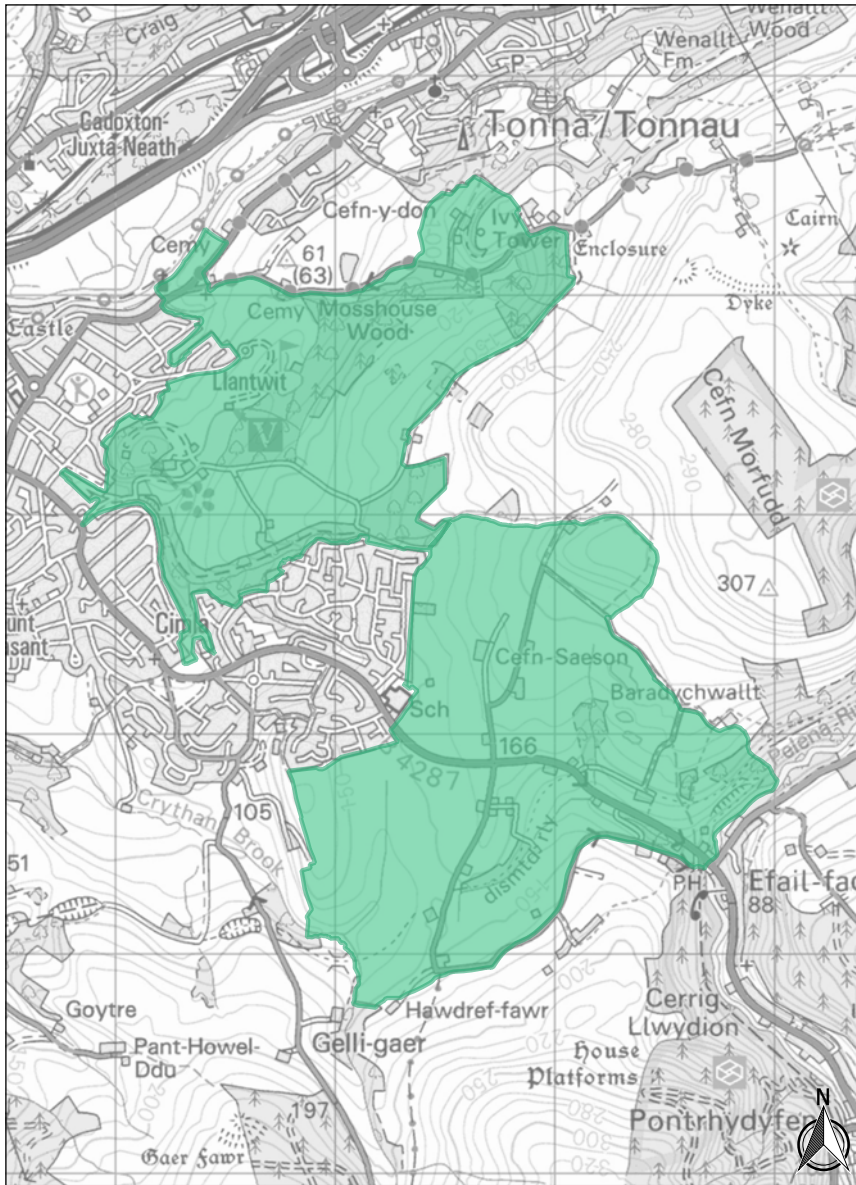
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EN3/2 Skewen/Birchgrove Green Wedge

5.2.20 The Skewen / Birchgrove Green Wedge covers an area of some 82 hectares and has the important function of preventing the coalescence of the built up areas of Skewen and Birchgrove. It is situated north of the A4230 to the north west of Skewen up to the administrative boundary with Swansea. It falls within a high value landscape and Special Landscape Area broad search area, although it is not within a designated SLA.

5. Landscape Policy Implementation

Green Wedge 3 (EN3/3): Neath / Tonna / Cimla / Efail Fach

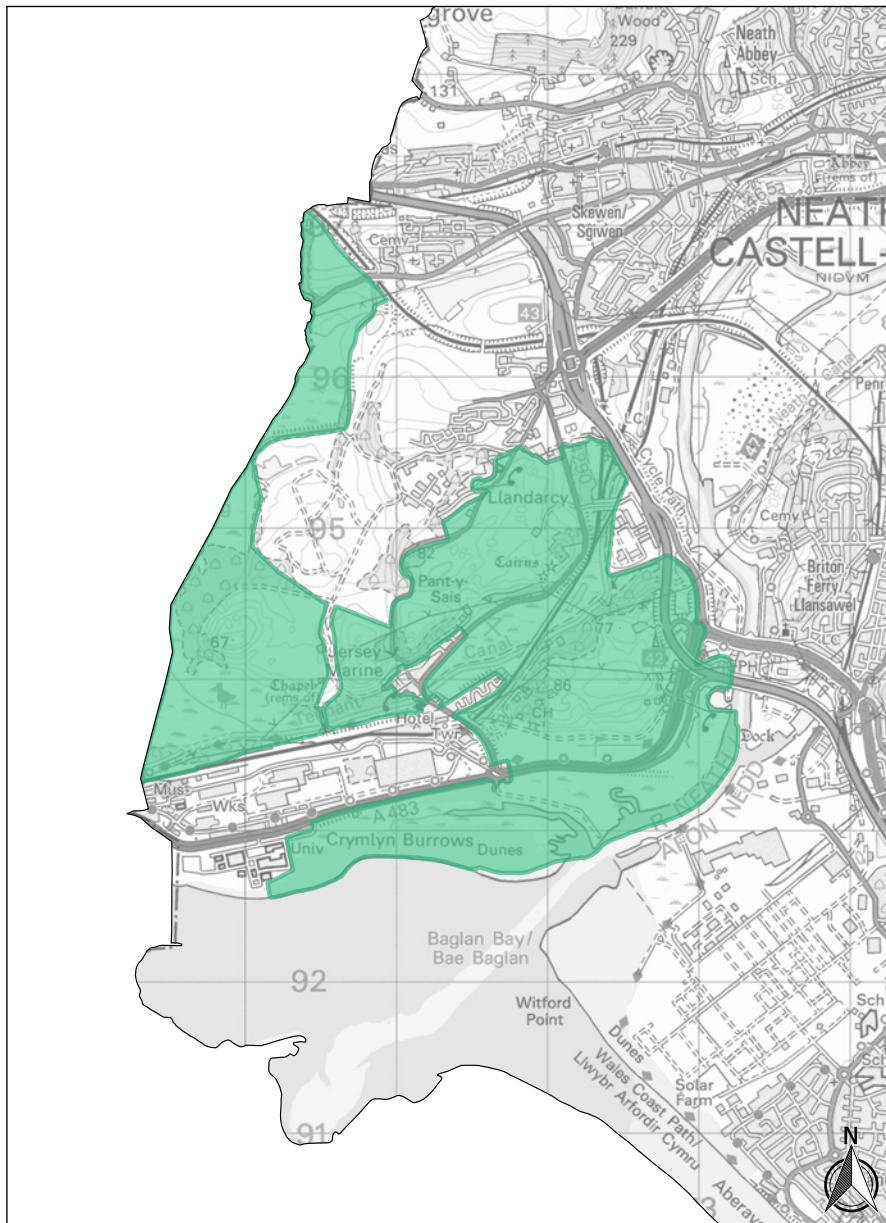


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EN3/3 Neath/Tonna/Cimla/Efail FachGreen Wedge

5.2.21 The Neath / Tonna / Cimla / Efail Fach Green Wedge covers an area of some 482 hectares and is intended to prevent the coalescence of Neath and Tonna and prevent expansion of Neath (Cimla) towards Efail Fach. Significant parts of the green wedge are situated within SLA search areas and display some of the criteria necessary for SLA designation indicating that they are areas of high landscape value, although they are not within any designated SLA.

Green Wedge 4 (EN3/4): Crymlyn Bog / Crymlyn Burrows / Llandarcy



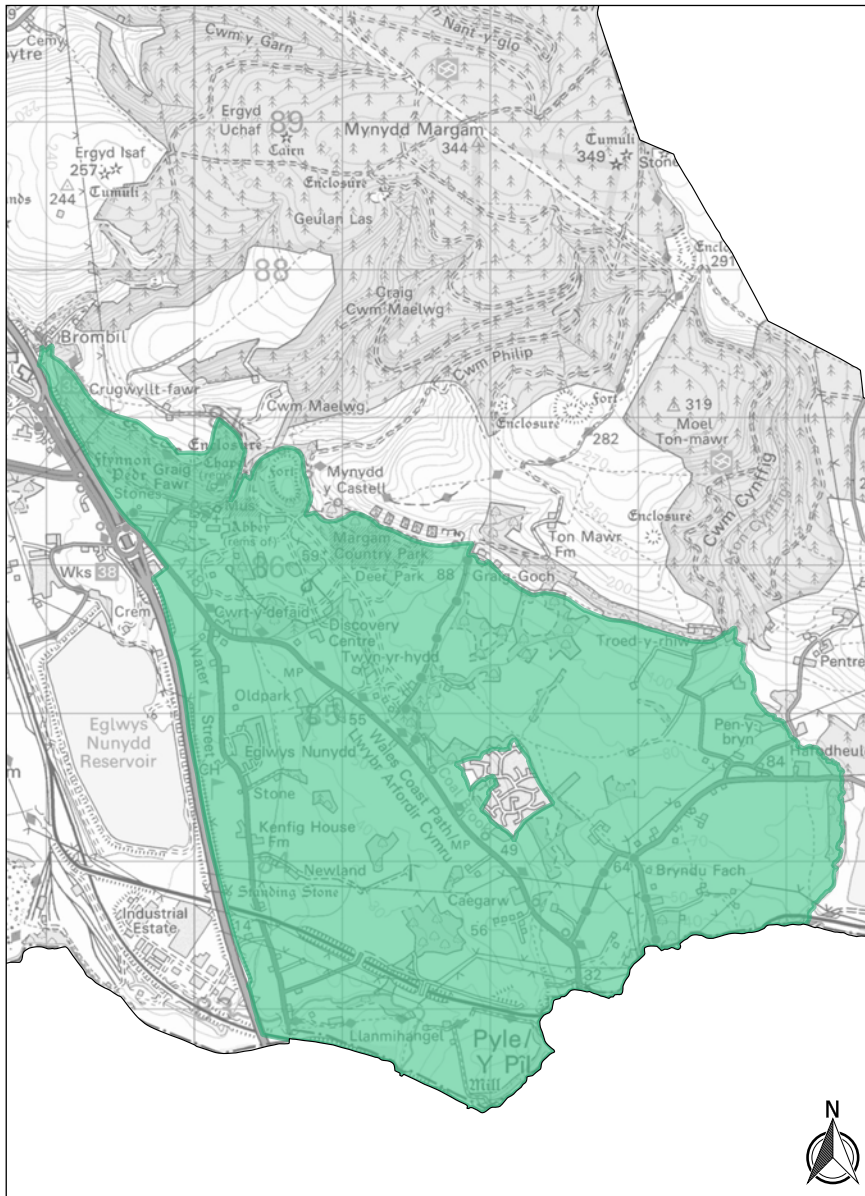
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EN3/4 Crymlyn Bog/Crymlyn Burrows/Llandarcy Green Wedge

5.2.22 The Crymlyn Bog / Crymlyn Burrows / Llandarcy Green Wedge has an area of some 704 hectares and is intended to prevent the coalescence of Skewen, Briton Ferry and the east side of Swansea. It includes Crymlyn Bog, Crymlyn Burrows and extensive areas of land between the M4 and the administrative boundary with Swansea. Crymlyn Burrows and the water frontage to Baglan Bay are within an SLA broad search area and display some of the criteria necessary for SLA designation indicating that it is within a high value landscape, but no part of the green wedge is within a designated SLA.

5. Landscape Policy Implementation

Green Wedge 5 (EN3/5): Margam



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EN3/5 Margam Green Wedge

5.2.23 The Margam Green Wedge has an area of some 1,280 hectares and is intended to protect the setting of Margam Park and prevent the expansion of the built up areas of Pyle and North Cornelly north into Neath Port Talbot. The green wedge is bounded by the M4 to the west and the main railway line and County Borough boundary to the south and extends as far as the base of the escarpment of Margam Mountain in the east. The part of the green wedge east of the A48 is also designated as part of the Margam SLA (SLA4), indicating that this is an area of high landscape value (refer above).

6 Seascape Policy Implementation

6.0.1 Developments affecting the seascape can include proposals on shore, those within the inter-tidal zone and those in the marine environment.

6.0.2 This SPG (and the terrestrial planning system generally) covers proposals above the mean low water mark (LWM). Seaward of the mean LWM the local planning authority has no planning controls (except where a Harbour Revision Order has included such provision) and proposals are subject to licensing regimes dealt with by the UK Government.



Crymlyn Burrows

6.1 Seascape in the Design Process

6.1.1 Any development near to the coast could potentially impact on the local seascape. If a proposed building or structure would be visible in a coastal context (i.e. visible from coastal locations) or would have a coastal setting, the local seascape character should be taken into account in the design, layout and form of the development from the outset. The development design should respond to the identified seascape character and should seek to enhance it where possible. Proposals that would have a negative seascape impact will be resisted.

6.1.2 Detailed seascape character area assessments relevant to all coastal parts of the County Borough are provided in the **Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay Local Seascape Character Assessment** (refer to Section 6.2 below). Developers should assess the impact of their development in relation to the attributes of the *seascape character areas* (SCAs) within which or from which it would be seen. In all cases it should be demonstrated how the relevant seascape considerations have been responded to and how they have informed the overall development design (refer below).

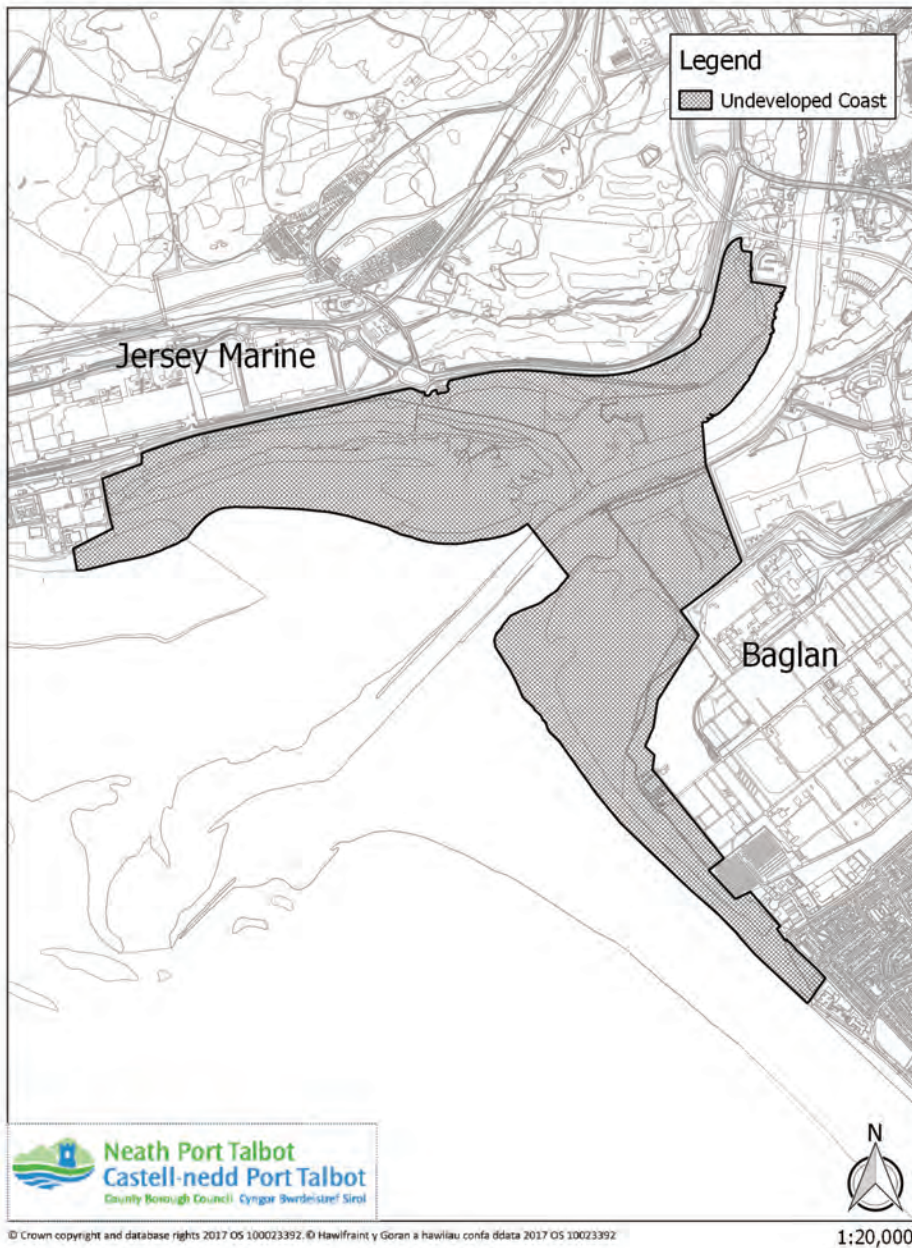
6. Seascape Policy Implementation

6.2 Policy Implementation

LDP Policy EN1: The Undeveloped Coast

6.2.1 The extent of undeveloped coast to which Policy EN1 applies is defined on the LDP Proposals Map and is also illustrated below.

ENV1 - Undeveloped Coast



ENV1 - Undeveloped Coast

6.2.2 The policy indicates that within the defined undeveloped coast, any development will be strictly controlled and that proposals will have to demonstrate firstly that a coastal location is necessary and secondly that the proposal could not be located elsewhere, on a part of the coast that is already developed. Only if these conditions are met would the limited types of development listed in the policy criteria be acceptable.

6.2.3 This policy follows on from national policy outlined in PPW which indicates that the undeveloped coast will rarely be the most appropriate location for development. It also gives protection to areas that are important for biodiversity reasons and helps to allow flexibility for adaptation to climate change and to implement the provisions of the Shoreline Management Plan. It will also help to maintain important natural parts of the coast and therefore benefit the wider seascape.

Other Coastal Developments

6.2.4 Elsewhere, coastal developments will still need to demonstrate that a coastal location is required and to show that the development will be resilient to the effects of climate change, as set out in PPW (Section 5.8). Any coastal proposals or other proposals that could have an impact on the wider seascape will also need to take into account the **Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay Local Seascape Character Assessment**.

Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay Local Seascape Character Assessment (LSCA)

6.2.5 The Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay LSCA was published in 2017 and covers east Carmarthen Bay, the Burry Inlet / Loughor Estuary, Gower and all of Swansea Bay including territorial waters up to 12nm offshore. The study divides the marine and coastal parts of the study area into *seascape character areas* (SCAs) and seeks to define the distinctive character of each area. This was done by identifying sea areas of shallow depths (0-30m), moderate depths (30-60m), and deeper waters (>60m). Also assessed were sea floor topography and bedrock type and wave climate (relating to wind exposure, tidal and current conditions).

6.2.6 The wider setting of the SCAs is also taken into consideration and is described within each SCA profile. The SCA profiles are contained within the LSCA. The profiles contain descriptions of the key characteristics, natural and cultural influences, aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities, cultural benefits and services, forces for change and key sensitivities of each of the SCAs.

6.2.7 The LSCA provides a list of factors that contribute to or detract from sensitivity. These should be taken into consideration when defining a level of sensitivity for a given seascape character area in relation to a specific type of development. Overall, the LSCA provides baseline evidence which can inform where and what type of development would be likely to be acceptable in terms of seascape, landscape and visual impact.

6.2.8 The method that should be used to assess the effects of a proposal on seascape character is similar to that for assessing effects on landscape character which are set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) published by the

6. Seascape Policy Implementation

Landscape Institute (refer to Section 3.2). The effects on individual seascape character areas should be assessed in the same way as the effects on landscape character areas or LANDMAP aspect areas.

6.2.9 Development on areas of coast or hinterland exposed to views from the sea has the potential for significant effects on character and users of the sea, even if outside an SCA. The effects not only include visual impact but also the effects on coastal processes which could more fundamentally change the character of an area.

6.2.10 Further detailed advice on the use of the LSCA in the development process is given within Chapter 3 of the LSCA document.

7 Monitoring and Review

7.0.1 The implementation of LDP landscape and seascape policies will be monitored annually and will be reported in the LDP Annual Monitoring Report. The effectiveness of the policies in implementing the LDP strategy and objectives in relation to landscape and seascape issues will be evaluated as part of this procedure.

7.0.2 This SPG may be updated over the Plan period to reflect any significant issues or changes that may arise, and any such findings may be taken into account in future reviews of the LDP.

A Relevant LDP Policies

A.0.1 Policy SC1 Settlement Limits

Policy SC1

Settlement Limits

Development within settlement limits that is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy will be acceptable in principle.

Outside settlement limits, development will only be permitted under the following circumstances:

1. It constitutes a sustainable small scale employment use adjacent to a settlement limit; or
2. It constitutes live-work unit(s) immediately adjacent to a settlement limit in the Valleys Strategy Area only; or
3. It constitutes the small-scale expansion of an existing business or the suitable conversion of an existing building; or
4. It constitutes the appropriate replacement of an existing dwelling; or
5. It is an affordable housing exception site; or
6. It is an appropriate rural enterprise dwelling; or
7. It is an appropriate 'One Planet Development'; or
8. It is a sustainable tourism or farm diversification proposal that is suitable in a countryside location; or
9. It is associated with the provision of public utilities, infrastructure and waste management facilities that cannot reasonably be located elsewhere; or
10. It is associated with either agriculture, forestry, minerals or energy generation; or
11. It relates to the appropriate provision of accommodation for Gypsies / Travellers; or
12. It constitutes the provision of open space and small scale ancillary facilities adjoining the settlement limit.

Where development is permitted outside settlement limits, any new buildings must be located adjacent to existing buildings or settlements wherever possible and be of an appropriate scale and form.

A.0.2 Strategic Policy SP14 The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast

Policy SP14

The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast

The countryside and undeveloped coast, including landscapes, seascapes and agricultural land, will be protected and where feasible enhanced through the following measures:

1. The protection of the open countryside through the control of inappropriate development outside settlement limits;
2. The protection of the undeveloped coast through the control of inappropriate development;
3. The designation and protection of Special Landscape Areas;
4. The designation and protection of Green Wedges.

LDP Objective: OB 15

A.0.3 Policy EN1 The Undeveloped Coast

Policy EN1

The Undeveloped Coast

Development proposals within the undeveloped coast will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that a coastal location is necessary, the development cannot be accommodated on the developed coast and the proposal relates to:

1. The management and/or maintenance of coastal or flood defences or coastal processes; or
2. The management and/or maintenance of shipping channels / port access and other associated infrastructure; or
3. The provision of appropriate recreational, leisure, access or other necessary infrastructure.

A.0.4 Policy EN2 Special Landscape Areas

Policy EN2

Special Landscape Areas

In order to protect areas of high landscape quality, the following Special Landscape Areas are designated:

Reference	Special Landscape Area
EN2/1	Mynydd y Garth
EN2/2	Dulais Valley
EN2/3	Vale of Neath
EN2/4	Margam
EN2/5	Mynydd y Gelli
EN2/6	Foel Trawsnant

Development within the designated Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the Special Landscape Area has been designated.

A.0.5 Policy EN3 Green Wedges

Policy EN3

Green Wedges

In order to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to protect the setting of urban areas, Green Wedges have been designated in the following locations:

Reference	Green Wedge
EN3/1	Alltwn / Rhos / Bryncoch / Neath Abbey / Leiros Park
EN3/2	Skewen / Birchgrove
EN3/3	Neath / Tonna / Cimla / Efail Fach
EN3/4	Crymlyn Bog / Crymlyn Burrows / Llandarcy
EN3/5	Margam

Within these areas there is a presumption against inappropriate development.

A.0.6 Policy EN4 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**Policy EN4****Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

The replacement of a dwelling outside settlement limits will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. It is demonstrated that the building has a current lawful use as a permanent dwelling;
2. The replacement dwelling, its means of enclosure, garden, parking space and other associated features, are sited within the curtilage of the building to be replaced;
3. The proposed scale, form, siting, design, materials and landscaping are suitable within its context and/or the context of the building to be replaced and would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the character of the area;
4. The conservation of existing buildings which are of architectural or historic interest would not be prejudiced;
5. The original dwelling is removed and the land suitably reinstated prior to the occupation of the new dwelling.

A.0.7 Policy EN5 Conversion and Extension of Existing Buildings in the Countryside**Policy EN5****Conversion and Extension of Existing Buildings in the Countryside**

The alteration, extension or conversion of existing suitable buildings outside the defined settlement limits for residential, employment, or tourism uses will only be permitted where:

1. The existing building is structurally sound and is capable of conversion without substantial major external alteration or reconstruction.
2. In the case of changes of use to residential purposes alone:
 - (a) It can be demonstrated that there are no viable alternative uses to secure the retention of the building; and
 - (b) That the building is of architectural and/or historic merit.
3. In the case of residential extensions, the extension does not result in a disproportionate increase in the size, scale and massing of the building.

A.0.8 Policy EN7 Important Natural Features

Policy EN7

Important Natural Features

Development proposals that would adversely affect ecologically or visually important natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows / field boundaries, watercourses or ponds will only be permitted where:

1. Full account has been taken of the relevant features in the design of the development, with measures put in place to ensure that they are retained and protected wherever possible; or
2. The biodiversity value and role of the relevant feature has been taken into account and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation measures are agreed.

A.0.9 Policy RE1 Criteria for the Assessment of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

Policy RE1

Criteria for the Assessment of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will only be permitted subject to the following criteria:

1. Large scale wind farm developments (>25MW) will be expected to be located within the boundaries of the refined Strategic Search Areas.
2. Proposals for wind farms of any size outside the SSAs will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact on visual amenity or landscape character through the number, scale, size, design and siting of turbines and associated infrastructure.
3. Small scale wind farm developments (<5MW) will be required to demonstrate that impacts are confined to the local scale.
4. All renewable energy or low carbon energy development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:
 - (a) Measures have been taken to minimise impacts on visual amenity and the natural environment;

- (b) There will be no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity;
- (c) The development will not compromise highway safety;
- (d) The development would not interfere with radar, air traffic control systems, telecommunications links, television reception, radio communication and emergency services communications; and
- (e) There are satisfactory proposals in place for site restoration as appropriate.

A.0.10 Policy BE1 Design

Policy BE1

Design

All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places.

Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

1. It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment;
2. It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges;
3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;
4. It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community;
5. Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;
6. It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement);

7. It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community;
8. It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through:
 - (a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area;
 - (b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land;
 - (c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible;
 - (d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain.
9. Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-off and flood risk and prevent pollution;
10. The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.



Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



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Local Development Plan
Cynllun Datblygu Lleol