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## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

GPOF

ON BEHALF OF

WILLMOTT DIXON

REFERENCE: ZLA\_1302

DATE: August 2023

V1

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 1

    The Proposed Development..... 1

    The Purpose of this Landscape Visual Appraisal..... 1

2.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL..... 3

    Site Selection ..... 3

3.0 LANDSCAPE MITIGATION MEASURES ..... 5

    Construction Phase ..... 6

    Construction Mitigation ..... 6

4.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE FIELD SURVEY7

    Definition of the Study Area ..... 7

    Viewpoint Selection ..... 10

    Special Landscape Areas (SLA’s) ..... 13

    Registered Historic Parks and Gardens ..... 14

    National Cycle Routes ..... 14

    Public Rights of Way..... 15

    Road Users..... 16

    Residential Dwellings ..... 16

5.0 THE PLANNING CONTEXT AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS ..... 20

    National and Local Landscape Designations..... 20

    National Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (February 2021) ..... 20

    Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan (to 2021), (adopted December 2013) ..... 21

    Policy S2 – Sustainable Development ..... 21

    Policy S4 Place Making/ Good Design ..... 21

    Policy S7 Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment ..... 21

    Policy BW1 – General Policy – Development Proposals..... 22

    Policy C2 - Special Landscape Areas (SLA’s)..... 22

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Arboriculture Matters .....	23
Ecology Matters .....	23
Heritage Matters.....	23
Summary to Section 5: .....	24
<b>6.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Existing Landscape Character Assessment .....	25
Background Published Evidence Base Documents .....	25
National Landscape Character Assessment.....	25
LANDMAP .....	27
Site Specific Appraisal .....	28
Landscape Sensitivity .....	30
Landscape and Value .....	31
Landscape Susceptibility .....	31
Landscape Capacity.....	31
<b>7.0 POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Predicted Direct Effect on the Landscape Resources .....	32
<b>8.0 POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Potential Effects of PRow users .....	39
Potential Effects on Road Users.....	41
Potential Effects on Residential Dwellings .....	44
<b>9.0 CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Effects on Landscape Character.....	46
Effects on Visual Amenity .....	46
Conclusion .....	47

## APPENDICES

- APPENDIX 1 - SITE CONTEXT PLAN (ref: ZLA\_1302-L-101)  
EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (ref: ZLA\_1302-L-102)  
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY (ref: ZLA\_1302-L-200)
- APPENDIX 2 - PROPOSED SITE PLAN (ref: GPOF-CWA-04-XX-DR-A-0300-P-02)
- APPENDIX 3 - THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ref: ZLA\_1302-L-103)  
REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS 1-12 (ref: ZLA\_1302-L-104)
- APPENDIX 4 - METHODOLOGY

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Zebra Landscape Architects Limited ('ZLA') was commissioned on behalf Willmott Dixon to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for a new Operational Facility for Gwent Police (the 'Applicant').
- 1.2 The proposed development would redevelop the existing Police facility at the site for a new Gwent Police Operational Facility (following demolition of existing buildings); the 'proposed development'. The site is situated within the County of Gwent, and wholly within the administrative authority of Torfaen County Borough Council, who are the Local Planning Authority ('LPA').
- 1.3 The site is located wholly within the administrative area of the Local Planning Authority of Torfaen County Borough Council (the 'LPA') area. The site is located at OS Grid Reference: ST 30813 95299, which is situated off Turnpike Road on the north eastern edge of Cwmbran (the 'application site'); see Appendix 1 of this LVA for a Site Context Plan.

### The Proposed Development

- 1.4 The proposed application site currently comprises 3 buildings (proposed to be demolished), associated carparking and soft landscaping featuring groups of mature trees and hedgerow.
- 1.5 The proposals seek to construct 3 buildings to house; a Police Hub (the Hub); a Vehicle Workshop (workshop) and a specialist Training Facility. The 2 existing vehicular access points will be retained and associated car parking reconfigured. The existing tree groups and soft landscaping will be retained where feasible and enhanced with additional planting to improve biodiversity on site where possible.
- 1.6 This LVA is part of a suite of documents accompanying a planning application for the proposed development. The site is briefly described in Section 2 of this LVA, with further site details given in the Planning Statement which accompanies the planning application.

### The Purpose of this Landscape Visual Appraisal

- 1.7 This report has been prepared by a Chartered Landscape Architect and a Professional Member of Landscape Institute with experience in landscape design and planning in the development sector. All drawings referenced within this assessment are in Appendices of the LVA.

1.8 The purpose of this LVA is to identify the baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area and to determine those landscape and visual characteristics that might inform the design of the development proposals, including recommendations for mitigation. It then provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual effects predicted to arise from the development of the site as follows:

- Landscape fabric, when there is physical change to components of the landscape; landform, land use or land cover;
- Landscape character, caused by changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape; and
- Visual amenity caused by changes in the appearance of the landscape as a result of Development.

1.9 This report is set out in the following sections:

- Project Description – This describes the elements of the proposed Development with the potential to cause effects on landscape fabric, landscape character and/or visual amenity. The site selection and design reiteration measures incorporated into the final design to help mitigate potential impacts are also outlined, this is contained in Section 2 and 3 of the LVA.
- Assessment Criteria – This section identifies the relevant guidance used to carry out the assessment, consultation to date, viewpoint selection and defines the study area; this is contained in Section 4. The detailed methodology can be found in Appendix 4.
- Relevant Landscape Related Planning Policy - The main planning policies, guidance, and background documents relevant to this appraisal; see Section 5.
- Baseline Conditions – The landscape and visual character of the site and its setting is provided, establishing receptors within the study area with theoretical visibility of the proposed Development; see Section 6.
- Potential Effects – An assessment of potential effects on the landscape and visual receptors identified in the baseline assessment, drawing upon a combination of representative and specific viewpoints to demonstrate the potential effects as a result of the proposed Development; see Section 7 and 8.
- Summary of Findings and Conclusion – This section provides an overview of the proposed Development in its landscape and visual context, drawing out the key findings of the assessment and concluding on the acceptability of the proposed development in landscape and visual terms; see Section 9.

## 2.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposed development is situated on land forming the grounds the old Gwent Police Headquarters site, Turnpike Road, Cwmbran, NP44 2XJ (the 'site'). The proposal is accessed from 2 egress points directly off Turnpike Road to the northwest and southwest. Currently, the application site houses 3 buildings (a mix of 1-3 storey) proposed for demolition, associated car parking and mature specimen tree groups and soft landscaping. For the most part, the site perimeter is lined with specimen tree groups and a hedgerow alongside the eastern perimeter neighbouring the A4042 (Croesyceiliog Bypass). In addition, there is a tree group to the frontage of the site with Turnpike Road situated amongst the existing carparking arrangement.
- 2.2 The Applicant is seeking detailed planning permission to erect 3 individual buildings - a Police Hub (the Hub); a Vehicle Workshop (workshop) and a specialist Training Facility. Where feasible, the proposed buildings are situated on the footprint of the existing buildings, (the proposed hub is proposed to be situated on the footprint of two of the existing footprints). The proposed buildings would be modern flat roof style, clad in a Welsh slate exterior with contemporary glazing.
- 2.3 The proposed development is shown in Appendix 2. A summary of the proposed development is detailed below:
- To demolish the 3 existing buildings on site (including the existing chimney stack) and regrade the site levels resulting in several retaining walls across the site.
  - To erect 3 modern buildings; the Vehicle Workshop (circa 9.6m high), Police Hub (15.9m high to top of stair core), Training building (circa 11.75m).
  - To erect site wide fencing to secure the site (1.8m site-wide with 3m high v-mesh fencing to the rear of the Police Hub).
  - To retain the existing 2 vehicle egress points with Turnpike Road.
  - Reconfigure the existing car parking on site.
  - Where feasible, to retain the existing specimen trees, hedges and soft landscaping. Extend street tree planting to the Turnpike Road frontage to the southern section of the site.
  - Relocate and redesign the existing memorial garden on site.
  - Mitigation measures are embedded into the landscape design to increase onsite biodiversity including bird boxes; additional native tree and shrub/ hedge planting.

### Site Selection

- 2.4 The site is one which has already been developed with an existing operational Police facility, car parking and external area, and is a recognised land use locally within its community. The existing key landscape features of the site form a vital contribution to the immediate streetscape and arrival into Torfaen on the corner adjacent to Turnpike Road and the



Croesycelliog Bypass. During the design reiteration process, a thorough site analysis was conducted to develop a site layout which kept the removal of existing areas of mature hedgerow, and existing trees to a minimum.

- 2.5 The physical constraints of the site, and as well as the location of nearby residential dwellings have been considered. There is a steep level change across the site has been taken advantage of when considering the scale and massing of the proposed buildings. The proposed Vehicle Workshop and Police Hub buildings have been designed into the slope at circa 1m below the existing AOD.
- 2.6 In addition, the proposed buildings have been grouped to the rear of the site, parallel with the A4042 perimeter to reduce the changes to the baseline condition and to the landscaped periphery alongside Turnpike Road. The design team has sought to retain as far as practicable, the wooded character of the site from the immediate surroundings.
- 2.7 The arrangement, massing and vertical scale of the proposed buildings alongside the reconfigured car parking, proposed materials palette and the proposed landscape enhancements; have considered the foregoing to minimise the potential for the proposed development to break skylines and represent prominent new features in views from the urban fringe and A4042 gateway.

### 3.0 LANDSCAPE MITIGATION MEASURES

- 3.1 Landscape mitigation measures have been developed through consideration of the host landscape character for the proposed development. These provide an appropriate solution for a development that offsets and / or reduces landscape and visual effects, and if practicable, enhances the local landscape fabric.
- 3.2 To guide the development proposals and the landscape and ecological enhancements at the site, we have considered the landscape management guidelines for the host landscape character area, which are published by the Local Planning Authority. In this occasion, the site falls within the built-up area, as such, ZLA has undertaken its own field-based assessment of the site and its context, which is included later in this section.
- 3.3 The proposals including specimen trees, species rich native hedgerow to the western and southern fringe, wildflower seeding and amenity shrub planting to the buildings aim to offset and reduce the effects on landscape character and visual amenity by the following methods:
- Where practicable to retain existing landscape fabric, including existing hedges, scrub and mature trees which enclose the site for visual mitigation, as well as the ecological amenity and habitat retention;
  - The retention and enhancement of the existing hedgerow, and new tree planting to afford enhancement to the existing landscape fabric, and arboricultural continuity for the long-term establishment of tree planting within the proposed development.
- 3.4 The unavoidable loss of modified grassland and specimen trees will be mitigated with new planting provided to enhance and bolster the existing landscaped setting. This new planting will be with native species of local importance, and where local provenance is possible, planting will be provided from suppliers locally within the county of Torfaen.
- 3.5 In combination, the establishment of these measures serves to reduce the potential for landscape and visual effects on the identified baseline receptors. These proposals however go further; through maturation, as they contribute to the protection and enhancement of typical features characteristic of the local landscape.
- 3.6 The focus of these measures is less about screening and filtering views, rather, it is about enhancing the landscape fabric and integrating the proposal well within its setting through the conservation of mature landscape fabric.
- 3.7 The recommendations within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by First Ecology (September 2022) have been embedded into the site design including low level lighting.

### Construction Phase

3.8 It is envisaged that the development proposal would be delivered in one phase. Consequently, given the foregoing, the following activities and elements have the potential to cause a temporary direct effect on the landscape fabric of the application site, and an indirect effect, on the landscape and visual amenity of the study area:

- Temporary site welfare area, and vehicle parking area to be accommodated within the site.
- Demolishing works of the 3 existing buildings and breaking existing areas of carparking.
- Earthworks to adapt the existing site levels to lowered floor levels. (Circa 0.9m below the finished floor level for the Vehicle Workshop building and circa 1.04m below the existing floor level for the Hub building. While the Training building the finished floor level would be raised circa 0.045m.)
- Minor excavations for the construction of the proposed buildings, and the formation of a robust sub-base and overlaying with a loose aggregate running course; and
- HGV deliveries to site and movement of vehicles on site delivering materials.

3.9 All ground disturbances would be confined as far as practicable and working widths during construction operations would be restricted resulting in a minimal interference with existing soil structures and habitats.

### Construction Mitigation

3.10 Through the iterative development of the site's masterplan, the development proposals have been designed to optimise the retention of the existing mature trees and tree groups, and minimise the removal of any existing native hedgerow or grass sward. The building out of the proposed scheme would observe, and work within the guidance of the British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

3.11 The details of construction methods, timing and phasing are not known at this stage; however, this appraisal has assumed a reasonable worst-case scenario. If required, an approved Arboriculture Method Statement (AMS) incorporating best practice guidance set out in British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction could be adopted, which would ensure retained trees and hedgerow are not adversely affected during the construction process.

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE FIELD SURVEY

- 4.1 This LVA has involved desk study, field work, data processing and analysis as well as interpretation using professional judgement undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect in August 2023 and based on best practice guidance <sup>1</sup>.
- 4.2 Typically, a 15-year time horizon is used as the basis for conclusions about the residual levels of effect. Ten years is a well-established and accepted compromise between assessing the shorter-term effects (which may often be rather ‘raw’ before any proposed mitigation has had time to take effect) and an excessively long time period.
- 4.3 Representative viewpoints have been selected to reflect the principle that this appraisal is to examine the ‘worst case’ scenario. In selecting these viewpoints, ZLA has been conscious of appraising the site from all points of the compass, as well as within a range of distances to the site, as well as testing the development proposals from a range of receptor types.

### Definition of the Study Area

- 4.4 To establish the baseline context of the site and its surroundings, and to assess the potential limit of material effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:
- Initially, a broad ‘study area’ was adopted, the extent of which is illustrated on Plan ZLA\_1302-L-101, which is formed mainly on a desk-based study. This broad study area enabled the geographical scope of the appraisal to be defined based on the site’s environmental planning context and the extent of views to and from the site; and
  - After undertaking our field-based assessment, this broad study area was redefined to the land area most likely to experience landscape and visual effects. The extent of this detailed study area is situated west of the Croesyceilog Bypass, which runs along a predominant landform, below which the application site is situated; see the plotted ZTV\_1302\_L-103. Additionally, the general discernibility of the application site is influenced by the following:
  - Intervening built form locally to the site, and the typical hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland blocks and vegetated hillside/valley sides within the wider open countryside beyond the settled urban areas of the broader valley;

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<sup>1</sup> *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013)*

- Settlement is situated predominantly within lower lying landform along the settlement edges bordering agricultural fields, or is arranged in a relatively dense manner. In many situations, the combination of private amenity landscaping including trees, as well as street trees, and the vegetated and wooded edges of rising landform is sufficient to discernibility of the application site; and
  - The general discernibility of the application site is within rising or elevated landform along the valley sides, and where built up areas are located above the valley bottom.
- 4.5 Through on-site observations, we have observed the geographical area by which the site can be primarily seen from. This area has been identified through visiting publicly accessible locations, walking PRoW and driving the local road network. This is a geographical zone by which the site is discernible, and which would normally be close-ranging in distance from the site.
- 4.6 This primary zone of visibility is where representative viewpoints are assessed, and whilst there may be views from the wider area beyond the primary zone, views are less open, and likely to be filtered, or to an extent screened by existing landscape features, built development or landform.
- 4.7 During our field-based assessment, and with consideration of the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Appendix 3), ZLA notes the following:
- **North:**
    - Landform remains similar to that of the application site across an area of valley top/upland landform. This landform is for around 1.5km of the site, beyond which, landform falls away towards the outlying settlement of New Inn, and so screens direct views of the application site.
    - Within the initial 1km distance of the site, there is extensive residential development within this area i.e., Crosecyceiliog, beyond, which screens direct views of the application site.
    - There is an extensive woodland block situated around the Afon Lwyd watercourse (the Craig-y-felin Woods), which further filters views.
    - Within this area, there is a limited network of Public Rights of Way which pass through open countryside, and where there is lower lying landform, there is a more extensive PRoW network passing between Cwmbran and New Inn; however, the discernibility of the site is screened by intervening landform.
    - Given the foregoing, appraisal of the proposed scheme's impact on visual amenity (beyond the initial setting of the site) is scoped out of this assessment.

- **North East:**

- Similar to the above, landform falls away from the route of the Croesyceilog Bypass, with open countryside situated beyond. This countryside has a nucleated settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and farmstead. Within this area, there is an extensive PRow network. However, the effect of intervening landform is sufficient to screen the application site from view.
- Given the foregoing, appraisal of the proposed scheme's impact on visual amenity (beyond the initial setting of the site) is scoped out of this assessment.

- **East:**

- Similar to the north east, landform east of the Croesyceilog Bypass falls away to lower lying topography. This open countryside has a nucleated settlement pattern with land managed mainly for agriculture with some medium to large woodland blocks. However, the effect of intervening landform is sufficient to screen the application site from view.
- An area within 0.5km east of the site is highlighted by the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility as a location where the proposed scheme might be seen from. However, from our recent field based assessment, we note the effect of the tree belts along the route of the Croesyceilog Bypass, the extensive buildings at the Grange University Hospital (multiple storeys), earth work embankments and large woodland block situated east to south east of the hospital grounds is sufficient to screen direct views of the application site.
- Given the foregoing, appraisal of the proposed scheme's impact on visual amenity (beyond the initial setting of the site) is scoped out of this assessment.

- **South East to South:**

- Similar to the foregoing observations for land to the east of the application site, landform falls away west of Turnpike Road. The open countryside has a nucleated settlement pattern, although there are two outlying settlements to the south east (Ponthir and Carleon). There is an extensive networks of PRow routes within this open countryside to the south east. However, the combination of intervening landform and the extensive built form and surrounding woodland block which wraps around the hospital site, is sufficient to screen direct views of the application site.
- Landform to the south is similar sloped within the initial 2.5km distance of the application site (see Appendix 3), and direct views are screened by landform, whilst the settlement edges of outlying villages at Malpas and Betwss is extensively wooded, and with extensive tree belts running along the Cwmbrian canal further filtering, if not, screening direct views to the application site.
- Given the foregoing, appraisal of the proposed scheme's impact on visual amenity (beyond the initial setting of the site) is scoped out of this assessment.

- **South West:**

- An urban area extends across the initial 3km distance from the application site. Direct views in this area is influenced by the extent of urban built form, street trees, as well as tree belts and woodland blocks along the route of the railway line (Cwmbrian to Newport) and along the course of the Afon Lwyd watercourse.

- Landform is varied through this area, which further influences the discernibility of the application site. Landform along the south western edges of the settlement are rising and elevated (i.e. around Henllys, Ty Canol and Greenmeadow. There is scope to see the application site from these locations, however, the degree of intervening trees and built form, as well as the tree cover prevailing around the application site is influential in seeing the site.
  - Landform around the settlement edge of Henllys and Coed Eva falls away within a few fields of the settlement, this intervening landform screens direct views of the application site (see Appendix 3). There is an extensive network of PRow routes in this area which are not afforded views of the site.
  - **West to North West:**
    - An urban area extends across the initial 3.5 to 4km distance from the application site. Direct views in this area is influenced by the extent of urban built form, street trees, as well as tree belts and woodland blocks along the route of the railway line (Cwmbran to Newport) and along the course of the Afon Lwyd watercourse, and around Thornhill.
    - Landform is varied through this area, which further influences the discernibility of the application site. Landform along the south western edges of the settlement are rising and elevated (i.e. around Greenmeadow, Thornhill and Upper Cwmbran. There is scope to see the application site from these locations, however, the degree of intervening trees and built form, as well as the tree cover prevailing around the application site is influential in seeing the site.
    - Beyond the urban edge, landform rises to elevated hillsides. There is scope to see the application site from these location depending on the extend of wooded hillsides, and the degree of intervening trees and built form, as well as the tree cover prevailing around the application site is influential in seeing the site. There is an extensive network of PRow routes in this area including the Cambrian Way Long Distance Walking Route.
- 4.8 The combination of these physical features, landform, built form and landscape fabric determines the Zone of Primary Visibility for the application site. In turn this has determined the selection of representative viewpoints for the undertaking of this appraisal.

### Viewpoint Selection

- 4.9 Given the foregoing analysis, ZLA selected a number of representative viewpoints for examination as part of this LVA. In selecting these viewpoints, ZLA has been conscious of appraising the site from all points of the compass, as well as within a range of distances to the site, as well as testing the development proposals from a range of receptor types.
- 4.10 A list of the selected viewpoints and their reasons for selection is provided in Table ZLA 4.1 overleaf. The location of representative viewpoints is illustrated on plan ZLA\_1302-L-103 (Appendix 3).

**Table ZLA 4.1: Summary of Representative Viewpoints (August 2023)**

Vpt	Location	OS Grid Ref	Approx. Distance to the Site	Reason for Selection (Site Topography: 86m AOD to 73m AOD)
1.	Existing view from Turnpike Road, Cwmbran looking south east towards the application site	330635, 195580	0.2km N-NW/340 degrees	Viewpoint is situated within the existing urban area of Cwmbran with in close proximity of the application site. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site within its setting. The viewpoint is situated within a non-designated landscape and urban area (medium to low value) with a low visual sensitivity and a low susceptibility to change. Topo: 74m AOD
2.	Existing view from PRoW passing through a Special Landscape Area to the south-south west of the application site	328646, 192323	3.45km S-SW/220 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area of Cwmbran and the developed area. This viewpoint crosses elevation landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated, and PRoW users would have a high visual sensitivity and high susceptibility to change. Topo: 36m AOD
3.	Existing view from PRoW passing through a Special Landscape Area on the outskirts of Coed Eva (residential area) to the south west of the application site	327616, 193368	3.65km SW/230 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area. This viewpoint crosses elevation landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated, and PRoW users would have a high visual sensitivity and high susceptibility to change. Topo: 109m AOD
4.	Existing view from existing residential area at Dorallt Way, Henllys to the west-south west of the application site	326530, 193297	4.45km W-SW/255 degrees	Viewpoint is situated within the existing urban area of Henllys, which is a residential area to the south west of the application site. This area is situated on elevated landform, and affords views across the wide valley landform towards Cwmbran, and the location of the application site. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site from this location. The viewpoint is situated within a non-designated landscape and urban area (medium to low value) with a medium visual sensitivity and a medium susceptibility to change (panoramic view glimpsed through vegetation). Topo: 176m AOD
5.	Existing view from PRoW within open countryside beyond Ty Canol residential area within a Special Landscape Area	326431, 194360	4.45km W-SW/255 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area. This viewpoint crosses elevation landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated, and PRoW users would have a high visual sensitivity and high susceptibility to change. Topo: 220m AOD



Vpt	Location	OS Grid Ref	Approx. Distance to the Site	Reason for Selection (Site Topography: 86m AOD to 73m AOD)
6.	Existing view from Ty Canol Road looking east across the existing residential streets of Oakford to the west-south west of the application site	326756, 194634	4.05km west/260 degrees	Viewpoint is situated within the existing urban area which is located on an elevated landform affording glimpsed views across the wider valley landform. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site within its setting. The viewpoint is situated within a non-designated landscape and urban area (medium to low value) with a low visual sensitivity and a low susceptibility to change. Topo: 183m AOD
7.	Existing view from existing residential area situated off Ty Gwyn Way looking east towards the application site	327261, 195003	3.45km west/260 degrees	Viewpoint is situated within the existing urban area which is located on rising landform affording glimpsed views across the wider valley landform. This viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site within its setting. The viewpoint is situated within a non-designated landscape and urban area (medium to low value) with a low visual sensitivity and a low susceptibility to change. Topo: 150m AOD
8.	Existing view from PRoW situated on the edge of the existing residential area of Greenmeadow to the west of the application site	327126, 195904	3.55km west/270 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area. This viewpoint crosses rising landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated, and PRoW users would have a high visual sensitivity and high susceptibility to change. Topo: 231m AOD
9	Existing view from Cumbrian Way Long Distance Walking Route passing across elevated landform within a Special Landscape Area north west of the application site	326555, 196810	4.35km north west/300 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area. This viewpoint crosses elevated landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated. The route is a promoted Long Distance Walking Route, and PRoW users would have a very high visual sensitivity and very high susceptibility to change. Topo: 391m AOD
10.	Existing view from Cumbrian Way Long Distance Walking Route passing across elevated landform within a Special Landscape Area north west of the application site	327586, 197981	3.9km north west/315 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area. This viewpoint crosses elevated landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated. The route is a promoted Long Distance Walking Route, and PRoW users would have a very high visual sensitivity and very high susceptibility to change. Topo: 322m AOD

Vpt	Location	OS Grid Ref	Approx. Distance to the Site	Reason for Selection (Site Topography: 86m AOD to 73m AOD)
11.	Existing view from PRoW situated above Upper Cwmbrian passing through open countryside to the north west of the application site	328222, 198721	3.65km north west/310 degrees	Viewpoint is representative of views from the open countryside outside of the built up settled area. This viewpoint crosses rising landform within a Special Landscape Area, which is locally designated, and PRoW users would have a high visual sensitivity and high susceptibility to change. Topo: 284m AOD
12.	Existing view from PRoW passing along Cwmbrian Canal within the existing residential area of Lowlands, off Five Locks lane to the north west of the application site	328773. 196916	2.45km north-north west/325 degrees	Viewpoint is situated within the existing urban area, with the PRoW passing along the Cwmbrian Canal, and this viewpoint demonstrates the discernibility of the site within its setting. The viewpoint is situated within a non-designated landscape and urban area (medium to low value) with a medium visual sensitivity and a medium susceptibility to change (as a PRoW). Topo: 113m AOD

### Special Landscape Areas (SLA's)

- 4.11 The Site Context drawing in Appendix 1 illustrates the relationship of the SLA's (shown in a green hatch) with the site. The report published by Torfaen County Borough Council; Designation of Special Landscape Areas (2011) outlines the primary landscape qualities and features and pressures regarding the ongoing management and conservation of the landscape qualities.
- 4.12 Special Landscape Areas are areas of high landscape importance and value within the contemporary landscape.
- 4.13 The closest SLA to the application site is the South Eastern Lowlands which at its closest lies within 240m due east of the Application Site and extends in a north/ south orientation encompassing an extensive area of open, rolling lowland agricultural land. This SLA is cited as a 'quiet, secluded area to the east of Cwmbrian with scattered settlements pattern Development pressures surrounding the Llanfrechfa Hospital (situated south east of the Application Site) are cited as impinging on the landscape qualities.
- 4.14 The plotted Theoretical Visibility of the proposals (refer to Appendix 3) indicates visibility of the proposed buildings are limited to the northern extent of this SLA, east of Croesyceiliog at distances of 800m to 1.7km from the nearest site boundary and a limited area due east, north of the Hospital, under 500m from the site.

- 4.15 The South West Uplands SLA is an area of upland hillside and scarp slopes west of Cwmbran comprised of extensive woodland to the south and rough pasture land, forming an important backdrop in local views. Pressures cited on this SLA include the management of increasing recreation use, maintaining field boundaries and small woodlands.
- 4.16 Theoretical visibility mapping illustrates continuous and widespread long distance visibility of the proposals across much of this SLA at distances in excess of 4.5km west.
- 4.17 The Southern Lowlands SLA is situated in excess of 2.3km south west of the site, encompassing the rolling agricultural lowland landscape between Cwmbran and the northern outskirts of Newport. This SLA is noted for its 'distinct sense of enclosure and isolation.' Pressures on the special qualities include the development pressures on the northern and eastern fringe as it meet Cwmbran and the frequency of overhead powerline corridors.
- 4.18 Theoretical visibility of the proposals in this SLA is contained to the upper slopes of Henllys Vale and along the Cwmbran Drive road corridor.

#### Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

- 4.19 Situated in excess of 1.5km due south of the nearest site boundary, Llantarnam Abbey designated parkland lies on the low lying banks of the Afon Llwyd river on the north and Pen-y-Parc road to the south, south of the Dowlais Brook; see Appendix 1 and 3. The designation protects the formal and informal gardens and parkland which combine to form the setting of the Abbey and various 19<sup>th</sup> century estate buildings and structures.
- 4.20 With consideration of the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility, there is limited opportunity to see the application site due to the effect of intervening landform (see Appendix 3). There is scope to see the application site from the south western periphery of this Registered Park and Garden; however, given our field based assessment, there was no scope to see the site due to the effect of extensive tree belts and woodland within the wider park area.
- 4.21 Given the foregoing, appraisal of the proposed scheme's impact on this Registered Park and Garden is scoped out of this assessment.

#### National Cycle Routes

- 4.22 With consideration of the on-line map for National Cycle Route (by Sustrans), there are no National Cycle Routes passing through, adjoining, or within relative distance of the Application Site. The closest National Cycle Route (NCR 49) is situated in excess of 4.6km southwest of the site. This 32.5km route travels in a north/ south orientation in excess of 1.6km due west of the Application site.

- 4.23 Connecting to this route is Route 423 which travels in an east/ west orientation in excess of 1.7km due north of the Application Site before continuing in a north east orientation past Llandegfedd Reservoir.
- 4.24 From our field-based assessment, it is considered very unlikely, that the site for the proposed development is discernible. Consequently, ZLA has scoped out the effect of the scheme on users of the National Cycle Route.

#### Public Rights of Way

- 4.25 With consideration of the plotted Zone of Theoretical Visibility utilised during our field-based assessment, ZLA scopes out PRoW situated to the north east to south-south east of the application site. This is due to the influence of intervening landform screening sight of the application site.
- 4.26 Further to this, from our field-based assessment, ZLA has also scoped out the route of the Cwmbran Canal between Pentre Lane and Ty Coach (circa 2.4 to 3.25km south west of the application site). This route is extensively enclosed by tree belts, and no direct view of the application site was observed.
- 4.27 Given our field-based observations (see paragraph 4.7 above), our selection of Public Rights of Way for appraisal on those routes passing along elevated and rising landform to the hillsides to the south west to north west of the application site. In particular, the Cambrian Way Long Distance Walking Route. This is a promoted route whereby its user would have a very high expectation of visual amenity (visual sensitivity and susceptibility to change). This route passes through the Special Landscape Areas.
- 4.28 Additionally, through our field-based assessment, we have appraised the effects of the scheme on PRoW which link the urban areas with the wider hillside, providing access to and from the wider open, hillside landscape. ZLA has been conscious to appraise routes situated at the south west, west, as well as those to the north west, which essentially connect with the Cambrian Way Long Distance Walking Route. Users of these routes would be doing so for recreation and would have a high expectation of visual amenity (visual sensitivity and susceptibility to change). A number of these routes pass through the Special Landscape Areas too, so have local value.
- 4.29 Further to the above, we have also selected a number of PRoW routes which are situated in the lower lying, open countryside landscape, which is typically found around the south and south west of the urban edge, including routes south of Coed Eva and around Pentre. Users of these routes would be doing so for recreation and would have a high expectation of visual amenity (visual sensitivity and susceptibility to change). A number of these routes pass through the Special Landscape Areas too, so have local value and provide a link to the wider open countryside, so user would be passing to and from the urban setting.

4.30 These routes have been selected to enable a representation of the varied countryside surrounding the area of Cwmbran.

#### Road Users

4.31 For the undertaking of this appraisal, ZLA travelled along the vehicle routes within the assessment area, including the immediate setting of the application site, as well as wider urban areas, outlying countryside and the elevated hillsides which are predominantly to the south west to north west of the site's location.

4.32 Given the analysis of our field based assessment in paragraph 4.7 above, we have scoped out vehicle routes to the north east to south-south east of the application site, which include a significant number of B roads and narrow, minor vehicle routes; see Appendix 3.

4.33 The routes with theoretical visibility have been reviewed in the field and those concluded to have predicted visibility are as follows. Given the density of the surrounding residential pattern and the secluded site location, routes in the medium to long distance are scoped out of the appraisal.

- A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass: There is direct continuous visibility of the site within 500m of the application site in both directions north and south. Given the proximity and alignment of the application site with the A4042 north of the Turnpike Road roundabout, road users have close range visibility of the site buildings amongst the trees.
- Turnpike Road (A4173): Road users travelling in either direction would have close range visibility of the proposals situated amongst the trees observed both direct and perpendicular to the direction of travel north of south. A distance of approximately 600m affected.

#### Residential Dwellings

4.34 Views from residential dwellings, although likely to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, are not protected by National planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application. However, they remain relevant to this review of the predicted extent and nature of visual change, so are reviewed briefly below.

4.35 Given our field based assessment, and as noted in paragraph 4.7 above, we note the following:

***North:***

- Within the initial 1km distance of the site, there is extensive residential development within this area i.e., Crosecyceillog, beyond, which screens direct views of the application site. Landform remains similar to that of the application site across an area of valley top/upland landform. This landform is for around 1.5km of the site, beyond which, landform falls away towards the outlying settlement of New Inn, and so screens direct views of the application site. There is an extensive woodland block situated around the Afon Lwyd watercourse (the Craig-y-felin Woods), which further filters views beyond.
- Given this, ZLA scopes out settlements to the north-north east beyond Crosecyceillog to include Lower New Inn, New Inn and Lower Cwm, circa 3.3km, 4.5km and 5km north of the application site.

***North East:***

- Landform falls away from the route of the Croesyceilog Bypass, the effect of intervening landform is sufficient to screen the application site from view. There is a nucleated settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and farmstead to the north east, which are scoped out of this appraisal i.e., Coed-y-Pan circa 4km north east of the application site.

***East:***

- Similar to the north east, landform east of the Croesyceilog Bypass falls away to lower lying topography. The effect of intervening landform is sufficient to screen the application site from view. There is a nucleated settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and farmstead to the north east, which are scoped out of this appraisal i.e., Llandegveth circa 3.3km east of the application site.

***South East to South:***

- Similar to the foregoing observations for land to the east of the application site, landform falls away west of Turnpike Road. The open countryside has a nucleated settlement pattern, although there are two outlying settlements to the south east (Ponthir and Carleon). The combination of intervening landform and the extensive built form and surrounding woodland block which wraps around the hospital site, is sufficient to screen direct views of the application site.
- The settlement edges of outlying villages at Malpas and Betwss is extensively wooded, and with extensive tree belts running along the Cwmbrian canal further filtering, if not, screening direct views to the application site. These settlements are scoped out of this appraisal.

***South West:***

- An urban area extends across the initial 3km distance from the application site. Landform along the south western edges of the settlement are rising and elevated (i.e. around Henllys, Ty Canol and Greenmeadow. There is scope to see the application site from these locations. In these instances, the proposed development may be discernible to the casual observer, but direct views may be filtered by intervening tree cover, with the site being seen as an element of the broader, open views from the higher ground around these settled locations.

***West to North West:***

- An urban area extends across the initial 3.5 to 4km distance from the application site. Direct views in this area is influenced by the extent of urban built form, street trees, as well as tree belts and woodland blocks along the route of the railway line (Cwmbran to Newport) and along the course of the Afon Lwyd watercourse, and around Thornhill.
  - Landform along the south western edges of the settlement are rising and elevated (i.e. around Greenmeadow, Thornhill and Upper Cwmbran. There is scope to see the application site from these locations, and representative viewpoints have been selected as part of the field-based assessment.
- 4.36 Consequently, given the foregoing, ZLA has scoped out residential properties within medium to long range distance of the site across all compass directions, and where there is scope to see the application site, these locations have been noted. In these instances, the proposed development may be discernible to the casual observer, but direct vies may be filtered by intervening tree cover, with the site being seen as an element of the broader, open views from the higher ground around these settled locations.
- 4.37 Those within the immediate short-range distance which are scoped out of the appraisal are as follows:
- **North:**
    - Nearest dwellings are situated 0.25km north of the application site. These dwellings are oriented north to south predominantly i.e. Plantation Drive. However, to the south of Plantation Drive, there is an extensive woodland block which substantially filters, if not screens direct views of the application site (especially, given the existing tree groups enclosing the site, and tree situated within its interior).
    - Beyond Plantation Drive, there is no notable topographical rise, which would otherwise provide the opportunity for direct view of the application site due to the combined effect of intervening built form and the aforementioned woodland.
    - Given the foregoing, there is unlikely to be any substantive direct views of the application site.
  - **North East to East:**
    - Dwellings to the east are nucleated across the wider open countryside. There are no dwellings aligning the Croesyceilog Bypass, and the bypass is extensively tree'd. Beyond the bypass, land is predominantly managed for agriculture. Given, ZLA has scoped out dwellings situated to the north east to east of the application site.
  - **East to South East:**
    - Similar to the above, ZLA has scoped out dwellings situated to the east to south east of the application site. Additionally, the built form of the Grange University Hospital (multiple floors), the wider landscaping and earthworks of its grounds, and extensive woodland beyond the hospital further screens or substantially filters views of the application site.
    - Given the foregoing, ZLA has scoped out dwellings across this distance to the east to south east from this appraisal.

- **South:**
  - There is a residential area situated off Carleon way to the south of the application site i.e., Carleon Way, Selby Close, Bath Gardens and Crown Rise. Whilst this area is predominantly two storeys in scale, the area is enclosed by extensive tree groups, with further tree belts along the route of the Croesyceilog Bypass.
  - Given the foregoing, ZLA has scoped out dwellings across this distance to the south from this appraisal.
- **South to South West:**
  - Oakfield is situated to the south west. Whilst this area is predominantly two storeys in scale, the area is enclosed by extensive tree groups, with further tree belts along the route of the Croesyceilog Bypass, and extensive tree'd around the area of the golf course. Given the foregoing, and the extensive tree groups enclosing the application site, there is unlikely to be any substantive direct views of the application site.
- **West:**
  - Nearest dwellings are situated on the opposite side of Turnpike Road. The wider residential area extends below to the west on sloped landform much lower than that of the application site. The discernibility of the application is influenced by the two storey dwellings situated along Turnpike Road, whilst views are also substantially filtered given the existing tree groups enclosing the site, and tree situated within its interior.
  - Given the foregoing, there is unlikely to be any substantive direct views of the application site.
- **North West to North:**
  - Along Turnpike Road within 0.5km distance of the application site. N.B. Dwellings along this route are oriented oblique to the location of the application site.
  - Given the foregoing, there is unlikely to be any substantive direct views of the application site.



## 5.0 THE PLANNING CONTEXT AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The findings of the relevant environmental and planning designations are illustrated in the Site Context Plan in Appendix 1 and summarised in this section. The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate later in this LVA:

- National Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (February 2021) and
- Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan (to 2021), (adopted December 2013).

### National and Local Landscape Designations

5.2 Landscape related designations and policy considerations within 5km of the application site are shown in the Site Context drawing (ZLA-1302-L-101, Appendix 1). In summary:

- National Designations: The site is not situated within, or adjoining, any National designations; and
- Local Designations: The site does not lie within or close to a locally designated landscape.

5.3 Given the foregoing, the site area is not afforded elevated protection under Local planning policy.

### National Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (February 2021)

5.4 Section 6; Distinctive and Natural Places sets out a theme which has been considered from the outset of this redevelopment; whereby design team meetings have considered the potential for environmental improvements and benefits to be intrinsic to the success of this scheme. The design team has been fully engaged in creating a solution which respects the surrounding special qualities and safeguards improvements in biodiversity for the future generations.

5.5 *‘Considering landscape at the outset of formulating strategies and policies in development plans and when proposing development is key to sustaining and enhancing their special qualities...as well as helping to deliver an effective and integrated approach to natural resource management over the long term.’*

5.6 *‘It is important that biodiversity and resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage in both development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals.’*

5.7 The site wide environmental benefits include supplementary soft landscaping in accordance with the recommendations from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The upgrade works to the seek to enhance linkages with the surrounding landscape fabric and broaden habitat diversity on site.

Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan (to 2021), (adopted December 2013)

- 5.8 The purpose of the Local Development Plan is to set out the long-term spatial vision for how the towns, villages and countryside in the district will develop and change and how this vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development. Policies pertinent to appraising this site are as follows:

Policy S2 – Sustainable Development

- 5.9 This policy seeks to ensure a positive contribution to; *‘Conserve and enhance the natural and built environment.’*

Policy S4 Place Making/ Good Design

- 5.10 Strategic guidance for *‘Proposals for all new development must have full regard to the context of the local natural and built environment and its special features through:*

*a) Promotion of local distinctiveness by sympathetic design, material selection and layout including public art;*

*b) Delivering a mix of uses to complement existing facilities and aim to address local deficiencies; and*

*c) Ensuring that location and layout integrates and contributes to local accessibility.’*

Policy S7 Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment

- 5.11 This strategic policy encompasses policy to support a positive contribution for; *‘Development proposals should seek to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the Natural, Built & Historic Environment of Torfaen, in particular:*

*a) Biodiversity resources;*

*b) Geodiversity resources;*

*c) Water environment;*

*d) Landscape setting;*

*e) Character of the built environment; and*

*f) Historic assets.’*

### Policy BW1 – General Policy – Development Proposals

- 5.12 This policy sets out general guidance for designing the site layout and landscape within developments to adhere to:

*‘All development proposals will be considered favourably providing they comply with the following criteria where they are applicable: -*

#### *A - Amenity and Design*

*i) The proposal does not constitute over development of the site in terms of the scale, density, massing and form of the development;*

*ii) The design and visual appearance of the proposal takes account of the local context in terms of siting, appearance, elevation treatment, materials and detailing;*

*iii) The proposal respects the urban fabric of the area in terms of pattern of development, the space around and between buildings and the setting of the site;*

*iv) The proposal includes a landscaping and planting scheme, which enhances the site and the wider context including green infrastructure and biodiversity networks and allows it to adapt to climate change;....*

#### *B – Natural Environment*

*...iv) The proposal contributes to the conservation and/ or enhancement of the strategic biodiversity network of Torfaen and does not result in a significant adverse effect on the network;*

*v) The proposal does not result in the unacceptable loss or harm to features of landscape importance including trees and woodland that have natural heritage or amenity value;’*

### Policy C2 - Special Landscape Areas (SLA’s)

- 5.13 This policy seeks; *‘...applicants will need to demonstrate that any development proposal will not have an adverse impact on the unique characteristics associated with the specific SLA.’*

*‘...In order to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the defined SLA’s development proposals that could impact on these designations will be expected to conform to high standards of design and environmental protection which is appropriate to the LANDMAP character of the area.’*

### Arboriculture Matters

- 5.14 The Arboriculture Impact Assessment comprising of a survey and report prepared by ArbTS (ref: ArbTS\_1333.2\_Gwent Police Operational Facility). This report supports the proposed development. The Arborist confirmed, that there are no TPO's across the application site, nor does the site fall within a local Conservation Area'.
- 5.15 The Arboriculturist concluded:
- 'Several trees are identified to be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed development design (9 individual trees, 8 tree groups (Total of 27 trees) and part of 1 tree group (2 Trees). Giving a total of 38 trees to be removed. Of the 38 trees, 14 are assessed as C low quality. These trees should not present a constraint on developing the site.'
- 5.16 The removal of the moderate to high-quality trees (24 Trees = 1 A (High) and 23 B (Moderate) quality) will require mitigation by suitable proportional compensatory tree planting and surrounding practical woodland management (i.e. invasive species removal etc.). 5.5.2 The proposal will not cause a long-term adverse impact on the local amenity of the area through tree loss.
- 5.17 The Arboriculturalist noted that 'mitigative tree, hedgerow and shrub planting will be required for the loss of the trees on this site through a combination of different diverse tree/shrub species and varied nursery-aged stock.'
- 5.18 The construction of the proposed development, whilst complying with the tree protection scheme as detailed in section 6 (of the prepared Arboricultural Impact Assessment), will ensure that no significant long-term adverse Arboricultural impact occurs on the health of any retained trees on or adjacent to this site or the long-term amenity of the area.
- 5.19 Given the foregoing, ZLA consider that the development of the site has no substantive arboriculture constraints to development, and the bringing forward development of the site provides an opportunity for not just arboricultural continuity for the future, but further tree and woodland planting to accord with the aspirations of the Local Plan policies.

### Ecology Matters

- 5.20 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (ref: AA565), which is submitted with this application, supports the proposed development, and concluded there were substantial constraints to development (as proposed), and that then application site was not of ecological importance.

### Heritage Matters

- 5.21 The visual character of the landscape can be influenced by Heritage assets, which may enrich its historic value. This LVA does not address the significance and value of heritage assets but considers heritage assets only insofar as they are components of the wider contemporary landscape.
- 5.22 The application site is situated outside of any National or local Heritage designations, and contains no Listed Buildings within its quantum, or adjoining its boundaries.

#### Summary to Section 5:

- 5.23 ZLA summaries the planning policy background for this site as follows:
- *The Site does not fall within any National or Local landscape designation, and consequently, is not afforded elevated protection under National planning policy; and*
  - *The National Planning Policy Wales shows a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development.*
- 5.24 In summary, the Local Planning Policies contain a number of overarching policies of relevance to this study. The main themes of these policies, against which the proposed development could be tested, have been summarised here for convenience:
- *Development proposals should consider the latest Landscape Character Assessment and its guidelines to retain and manage landscape features that contribute to wider landscape character and the setting of development;*
  - *New development should seek to protect and restore the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the host landscape character area;*
  - *The location, materials, scale and use of any proposed development should be sympathetic to and complement local landscape character/ urban fabric;*
  - *New development should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity by making a positive contribution to the site and its immediate vicinity; and*
  - *An assessment of landscape and visual effects is required to support a planning application where there is possibly a detrimental effect on landscape as a resource.*

## 6.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

### Existing Landscape Character Assessment

6.1 This section appraises the existing, or baseline conditions of the character of the site, and its landscape context through consideration of published landscape assessments.

6.2 Such an assessment is worthwhile enabling a better understanding of the site, and its context, but rarely delivers sufficiently site-specific or contemporary information to enable robust conclusions about the significance of any change through the proposed development. As such, ZLA has also undertaken its own field-based assessment of the site and its context, which is included later in this section.

### Background Published Evidence Base Documents

6.3 The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate later in this LVA:

- National Landscape Character Assessment (March 2014); and
- LANDMAP (2016).

### National Landscape Character Assessment

6.4 The National Landscape Character Assessment finds the site to be situated within the Newport, Cardiff and Barry Character Area. This assessment covers the whole of Wales and is intended to identify landscape character in a way that ‘gives a distinctive sense of place that enables us to recognise it as a single area’ according to their culture, geology, historic landscape, landscape habitats and visual and sensory characteristics.

6.5 A summary description the host National Landscape Character Area is as follows:

*‘Two cities and associated suburbs and satellite towns dominate this part of south-east Wales. They include Wales’ capital and largest settlement, Cardiff, as well as Newport, Cwmbran, Pontypool, Penarth and Barry. The area forms a busy transport and development corridor.....These urban landscapes have expanded across formerly open countryside over the last.....’*

6.6 Under the sub-heading ‘Key Characteristics’, the following is noted:

*‘Busy, heavily urbanised areas - containing Cardiff, and other large settlements including Penarth and Barry to the south to the west and the city of Newport and new town of Cwmbran to the east.’*

6.7 Under the sub-heading ‘Visual and Sensory Profile’, ZLA has underlined those features found to be typical of the site’s location:

- ‘This is one of the most urbanised and busy landscape character areas in Wales. The cities of Cardiff and Newport are linked by the M4 corridor with the new town of Cwmbran to the north of Newport and the towns of Barry and Penarth to the west of Cardiff. These urban areas are separated by gentle rolling pastoral landscapes with a medium scale field pattern generally but with some arable land lying just north of the M4 corridor. Woodland tends to be in small blocks and deciduous or mixed in character;

6.8 With consideration of the wider setting to the location of the application site, the following is noted, and , ZLA has underlined those features found to be typical of the site’s wider setting within open countryside and upland areas outside of the main urban areas:

- ‘A strong sense of the proximity to upland landscapes, which stand dramatically above the gently rolling and often heavily settled landscapes that lie below;
- ‘The open rural land between the urban areas is under pressure but is surprisingly tranquil in parts away from the transport corridors. It provides a welcome relief from the bustle of a dynamic part of Wales.’

6.9 Under the sub-heading ‘Landscape Habitats influences’, ZLA finds very limited, if any typical features at the application site, or within its immediate urban setting. However, ZLA has underlined those features found to be typical of the site’s wider setting within open countryside and upland areas outside of the main urban areas:

- ‘Generally medium sized regular fields are enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees.....a number of linear woodlands penetrating into the built up area along the main river corridors.’

6.10 Under the sub-heading ‘Historic Landscape influences’, ZLA finds the following typical features at the application site, or within its immediate urban setting:

- ‘This is a vibrant, diverse, densely-populated area, reflecting not only the area’s long history of travel along and on the Severn, and with Bristol and North Devon, but also its links with a much wider world, and Cardiff’s claims to be regarded as a capital;

6.11 This National Character Areas has been sub-divided into the five aspects by LANDMAP – the Welsh landscape baseline study - ‘an all-Wales landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated’. These five aspects are: cultural, geological, historic, habitat and visual & sensory.

- 6.12 Given these are broad scale character areas providing a contextual appreciation for the study area, the more detailed areas classified within LANDMAP are more relevant for this appraisal going forwards.
- 6.13 These are subdivided into smaller parcels of land in the LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas as illustrated in ZLA\_1302-L-102 Existing Landscape Character, Appendix 1. These aspects may be drawn upon when undertaking landscape character assessment. The site falls within the following categories:

### LANDMAP

#### LANDMAP Cultural Landscape – Aspect Area TRFNCL039

- 6.14 The LANDMAP data analysis notes, that this aspect area has a low sense of place, as well as low visual and sensory perceptual qualities, low scenic quality and character. Overall, ZLA finds a low sensitivity to accommodating new development.

#### LANDMAP Historic Landscape – Aspect Area TRFNHL001

- 6.15 The LANDMAP data analysis describes this aspect area as ‘ New town of Cwmbran; modern expansion of urban settlement over medieval/post-medieval open fields. Scattered post-medieval coal, iron, steel and tinplate industries and lines of communication (road, rail and canal). Post medieval industrial settlement. Partly former monastic grange land.’
- 6.16 This aspect area has been judged to have a high value, for the following reasons:

*‘The high value assigned to this area reflects the fact that, although much of the pre-1950s landscape of Cwmbran has been destroyed or obscured by the development of the ‘New Town’ between c.....1950 and 1980, significant evidence of medieval/post-medieval settlement activity nevertheless remains, while the most substantial survival of the industrial landscape of Cwmbran consists of a well-preserved section of the late 18th century Monmouthshire Canal, which extends through the W side of the town..... The rarity value of the area is also enhanced by the fact that Cwmbran represents the only major town established under the New Towns Act of 1946, which is of importance in architectural and planning terms.’* This is reflective of the aspect area’s moderate condition and moderate rarity, and a moderate sensitivity to accommodating new development.

#### LANDMAP Geological Landscape – Aspect Area 2023-08-18

- 6.17 The LANDMAP data analysis defines the topography as ‘undulating terrain with gentle slopes formed by gently to moderately west-dipping sandstones....No mineral extraction...’ giving the area an ‘undulating lowland hill terrain’ characteristic, which has a relatively moderate rarity locally’. The published study finds no threats to the long term management of the



aspect area. Overall, ZLA finds this this aspect area has a moderate sensitivity to accommodating new development.

LANDMAP Landscape Habitats – Aspect Area TRFNLH003

- 6.18 The LANDMAP data analysis finds that the aspect area is a *‘large urban area, with limited green space.....a common, low value habitat’, with low sensitivity and very few native habitats and is a ‘low ecological value man-made habitat.’* Overall, ZLA finds this aspect area to have a low sensitivity to accommodating new development.

LANDMAP Visual and Sensory – Aspect Area TRFNVS045

- 6.19 This aspect area is described as a *‘dense urban centre with close relationship between industrial, commercial and residential... Busy, noisy, hard , to eastern edge more open space with river/woods and suburban feel.’* With consideration of our field-based assessment, ZLA finds that the site and its immediate location is typical of this environment.
- 6.20 The LANDMAP data analysis finds attractive views are *‘neither in or out of this area’*, and assigned a low value to this aspect area, which is considered to be only within fair condition.
- 6.21 Management guidelines for this aspect area include the protection of open space, as well as the management of trees and woodland clumps, and does not identify any significant landscape detractors or threats to condition of the visual & sensory features of the area, such as that which might be proposed by the Applicant.
- 6.22 Overall LANDMAP finds that this aspect area has a low scenic quality, has a low rarity, and low to weak character. Given the foregoing, ZLA considers the aspect area has a low sensitivity to accommodating change through new development.

**Site Specific Appraisal**

- 6.23 Given the foregoing ZLA finds that the aspect areas of the site’s *‘host landscape area’* to have predominantly low sensitivity to accommodating new development.
- 6.24 To independently assess the likely level of landscape and visual effects which the development proposals might incur will require an appropriately detailed assessment of the site itself and its immediate surroundings.
- 6.25 Recognising that *‘landscape’* is a multi-dimensional concept embracing *‘what we see’*, its time-depth and physical attributes, this LVA reviews and assesses change to landscape character in terms of the physical landscape, the site’s visual and sensory character, landscape fabric and habitats and cultural connections; see Table 6.1:

**Table 6.1: Site Specific Landscape Appraisal by ZLA (August 2023)**

Landscape and Visual Character Observations from Field Based Assessment	
Landscape Fabric:	<p>Given the current land use of the site, the core of the site is largely comprised of buildings, hard landscaping and car parking. Long established mature tree groups feature to the perimeters and to the heart of the site combining to form a green frontage to Turnpike Road.</p> <p>The western site perimeter is fringed by roadside trees which are characteristic with this section of Turnpike Road. Whilst alongside the eastern perimeter a broadly continuous length of hedgerow and accompanying trees encloses the site alongside the A4042. Further pockets of landscaping and roadside mature tree groups contribute to the value of the broader urban edge and wooded character of the site.</p> <p>Limited. The application site is a developed site with existing built form located within an urban setting.</p>
Rarity:	None. The application site is a developed site with existing built form located within an urban setting.
Topography:	The landform within the site is at its highest to the north east alongside the A4042 (87m AOD) and gradually descends to the west to 75m AOD. ZLA considers that the landform within the site is that typically found within the host landscape area.
Built Form:	Existing developed site. The site is currently within use by the Gwent Police and hosts three linear 1-3 storey buildings aligned with the A4042. And associated car parking and landscaping. The scale and land use of the buildings are not consistent with the immediate neighbouring residential pattern to the south and west, however building scales are more in keeping with Crownbridge School to the north west and the nearby Llanfrechfa Grange Hospital to the south east.
Recreational Value:	The site contains no Public Right or Way.
Cultural Connection:	<p>There is a footpath aligned with the northern perimeter which links Turnpike Road with land east of the A4042 via a passage beneath the road.</p> <p>The site is outside of a National landscape designation and the nearest Registered Park and Garden is situated in excess of 1.5km due south. within the study area. At a local level, the South Eastern Lowlands SLA lies within 240m east.</p>
Tranquillity:	Limited. The application site is a developed site with existing built form located within an urban setting. There are frequent vehicle trips to and from the application site.
Scenic Quality:	This is neither a wild, remote, romantic or tranquil parcel of land of the kind that stirs emotions. Given the current land use, the site is already urbanised.

Sensory and Perceptual:	Some perceptual value could be argued to accrue by virtue of the site's location at the edge of the settlement, where development may have an influence on the perceptions of the settlement. However, the sensory character of the site is low, being eroded by the noise and movement of significant traffic along the Croesyceilog Bypass, and local traffic to the western site boundary. This is neither a wild, remote, romantic or tranquil parcel of land of the kind that stirs emotions. Given the current land use, the site is already urbanised and a low value of tranquillity.
Visual Prominence:	Despite the relatively low lying nature of the site area, the site is raised above the immediate residential fringe, with the west facing slopes overlooking Llanyafon below. The presence of the perimeter trees form partial enclosure creating a sense of partial seclusion however, in local terms, ZLA considers the site to be relatively visually prominent. The existing buildings can be readily observed from the Croesyceiliog bypass as is the chimney stack. Due to the vertical nature of the chimney stack, this presents an avoidable visually prominent landmark on site.
Skyline Character:	Given the gradual sloping nature of the site's topography, for the most part, the site sits on higher ground than Llanyafon. Views of the site's interior are for the most part filtered by the vegetated perimeters and the tree groups which surround the site. The tree canopies of tree groups on site and the existing buildings rise above roof tops to contribute to the skyline in views from the neighbouring residential fringe.

### Landscape Sensitivity

- 6.26 Landscape sensitivity, the susceptibility of the landscape to change, is defined as the ability of the receptor (whether the overall character, individual fabric elements or perceptual aspects) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
  
- 6.27 The application site has been previously developed and contains multiple buildings which are overlooked from the west by existing residential development. The site is situated sandwiched between existing roadways, including an A-road to the east, and is located within the urban area of Cwmbran.
  
- 6.28 There is a degree of tree cover and vegetation, which itself is not uncommon or rare, even within an urban setting. There is extensive built form and multiple urban land uses locally to the site. Given this, ZLA concludes, that the site area has a low landscape sensitivity.

### Landscape and Value

- 6.29 Landscape value is limited. The application site is a developed site with existing built form located within an urban setting. The site is not found within a National or local landscape designation i.e., not within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and is not found within a locally designated Special Landscape Area. Given the foregoing the application site has a low landscape value.
- 6.30 Beyond the site's boundary is an urban setting, which has a similar low landscape value. However, beyond this, the settlement of Cwmbran is surrounded by locally designation Special Landscape Areas, which are found to the east to south, south west to north west. These areas have a high landscape value.
- 6.31 The interlying open countryside between these Special landscape Areas, which forms the majority of the assessment area is undesignated open countryside, and is considered to have a medium landscape sensitivity.

### Landscape Susceptibility

- 6.32 Having assessed the site within table 6.1 above, there is no reason to conclude that the site has any elevated landscape value or importance above the rest of the urban area. The site's susceptibility is reduced to low when considered alongside its current land uses (as a developed site with multiple built form, and the adjacent residential land uses and vehicle routes.
- 6.33 The wider landscape surrounding the site (and outside of the wider settled, urban area) has a medium to high landscape sensitivity to change, in particular, the Special landscape Area has a high susceptibility to change i.e., many distinctive landscape elements and perceptual aspects with very few landscape detractors. The landscape receptor in good condition, and has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.

### Landscape Capacity

- 6.34 Given the foregoing, it is considered that this developed site has capacity to accommodate a similar land use as that already being undertaken.

## 7.0 POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

### Predicted Direct Effect on the Landscape Resources

Table 7.1: LANDMAP Cultural Landscape – Aspect Area TRFNCLS039

<p><b>Summary:</b> The LANDMAP data analysis notes, that this aspect area has a low sense of place, as well as low visual and sensory perceptual qualities, low scenic quality and character.</p>		
<p><b>Value:</b> Low</p>	<p><b>Susceptibility:</b> Low</p>	<p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b> Low</p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Change:</b> The site is already development and contains multiple buildings and extensive all weather surfacing. The Applicant proposes to replace this land use with a similar one which would be accommodated in a new building structure which would be marginally taller with a larger building footprint. The Proposed Development would not affect the VSAA’s backdrop to settlements. and indirect visual changes would be greatly limited to perimeter areas only due to its tree’d character. The site would still have restricted access and would not have public open access or any public rights of way running through – no change. The scheme would not extend into any existing areas of public open access or divert existing public rights of way – no change.</p>		
<p><b>Overall Effect:</b> Low Sensitivity/Low Value x Negligible Magnitude of Change (residually) result in a Negligible, adverse effect.</p>		

**Table 7.2: LANDMAP Historic Landscape – Aspect Area TRFNHL001**

<p><b>Summary:</b>          The LANDMAP data analysis describes this aspect area as ‘ New town of Cwmbran; modern expansion of urban settlement over medieval/post-medieval open fields. Scattered post-medieval coal, iron, steel and tinsplate industries and lines of communication (road, rail and canal). Post medieval industrial settlement. Partly former monastic grange land.’</p>		
<p><b>Value:</b>          High</p>	<p><b>Susceptibility:</b>          Moderate</p>	<p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b>          Moderate</p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Change:</b>          Considering the historic landscape context and extent of influence of historic features and patterns within this HLAA the number of designations present is limited, with the significance of the HLAA associated predominantly with its former industrial work activities, and built form, whereas the ‘rarity value of the area is also enhanced by the fact that Cwmbran represents the only major town established under the New Towns Act of 1946, which is of importance in architectural and planning terms.’ There would be a direct landscape effect on the site area, which I already developed and contains multiple buildings and all-weather surfaced areas. The proposed scheme would not extend beyond the current site’s boundary, and so not overlap with a wider area of the HLAA. The direct effect on the area would result in a very low magnitude of change. Consequently, the nature of the change would be permanent and adverse. The visual/perceptual change on the aspect area would be minimal as it is extensively urbanised and the land use is existing. The addition of the proposal would introduce a new phase of development to the rich multi-period landscape and the proposal would be perceived as a change to the HLAA</p>		
<p><b>Overall Effect:</b>          High Sensitivity/Low Value x Low Magnitude of Change (residually) result in a Moderate/-minor, adverse effect, which through the maturation of new tree planting and the utility of local stone material for facades and visually recessive materials would enable the proposed buildings to weather in, leading to beneficial effects.</p>		

**Table 7.3: LANDMAP Geological Landscape – Aspect Area TRFNHL001**

<p><b>Summary:</b>  The LANDMAP data analysis defines the topography as ‘undulating terrain with gentle slopes formed by gently to moderately west-dipping sandstones....No mineral extraction...’ giving the area an ‘undulating lowland hill terrain’ characteristic, which has a relatively moderate rarity locally’.</p>		
<p><b>Value:</b>  Low</p>	<p><b>Susceptibility:</b>  Low</p>	<p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b>  Low</p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Change:</b>  The site is already development and contains multiple buildings and extensive all weather surfacing. The Applicant proposes to replace this land use with a similar one which would be accommodated in a new building structure which would be marginally taller with a larger building footprint, but would utilise local stone materials for building facades, and visually recessive material on the wider built form. There would be direct effects on the GLAA through demolition of the existing building and the construction of the new facilities, requiring some minor earthworks. The magnitude of change on the aspect area would be medium. This change will be perceived as a localised change within a broader, unaltered context as the GLAA would continue to have a perceptual connection through the site’s prevailing landform and its setting within the wider GLAA, which is typically sloped and undulating within the wider valley landform, in this sense there would be no perceived change for the scheme.</p>		
<p><b>Overall Effect:</b>  Low Sensitivity/Low Value x Medium Magnitude of Change (residually) result in a Minor, adverse effect.</p>		

Table 7.4: LANDMAP Landscape Habitats – Aspect Area TRFNLH003

<p><b>Summary:</b> The LANDMAP data analysis finds that the aspect area is a ‘large urban area, with limited green space.....a common, low value habitat’, with low sensitivity and very few native habitats and is a ‘low ecological value man-made habitat.’.</p>		
<p><b>Value:</b> Low</p>	<p><b>Susceptibility:</b> Low</p>	<p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b> Low</p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Change:</b> The site is already development and contains multiple buildings and extensive all weather surfacing. The Applicant proposes to replace this land use with a similar one which would be accommodated in a new building structure. Tree stock would require removal to permit this, but the majority of trees would be retained and new tree planting undertake to bolster the tree stock, and afford arboriculture continuity for the long term. The proposed scheme would not develop land outside its existing perimeter, and so would not direct impact the wider LHAA. The LHAA is an urban area with limited rarity of landscape habitat. The magnitude of change at the site would be negligible.</p>		
<p><b>Overall Effect:</b> Low Sensitivity/Low Value x Negligible Magnitude of Change (residually) result in a Negligible, adverse effect, which through the maturation of new tree planting would lead to beneficial effects.</p>		



**Table 7.5: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory – Aspect Area TRFNVS045**

<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>This aspect area is described as a ‘dense urban centre with close relationship between industrial, commercial and residential... Busy, noisy, hard , to eastern edge more open space with river/woods and suburban feel.’ With consideration of our field-based assessment, ZLA finds that the site and its immediate location is typical of this environment.</p>		
<p><b>Value:</b></p> <p>Low</p>	<p><b>Susceptibility:</b></p> <p>Low</p>	<p><b>Overall Sensitivity:</b></p> <p>Low</p>
<p><b>Magnitude of Change:</b></p> <p>The site is already development and contains multiple buildings and extensive all weather surfacing. The Applicant proposes to replace this land use with a similar one which would be accommodated in a new building structure which would be marginally taller with a larger building footprint, but would utilise local stone materials for building facades, and visually recessive material on the wider built form. There would be direct effects on the VSAA through demolition of the existing building and the construction of the new facilities. The existing tree stock would be reduced, but the majority of the existing stick would remain an afford the site a prevailing tree’d character. The proposal does not fundamentally later the landscape baseline (visual and sensory) as the landscape use is existing. The proposal would not alter the character of the site (in the way developing an existing open green field would substantially later its sensory and perceptual qualities). The Proposed Development would not affect the VSAA’s backdrop to settlements. and indirect visual changes would be greatly limited to perimeter areas only due to its tree’d character. The magnitude of change on the aspect area would be medium as the VSAA would continue to have a perceptual connection through the site’s prevailing tree’d character. The character of this VSAA would alter, but this change would be localised to the application site area, replacing the existing similar land use. This change will be perceived as a localised change within a broader, unaltered context. Resulting in a medium magnitude f change.</p>		
<p><b>Overall Effect:</b></p> <p>Low Sensitivity/Low Value x Medium Magnitude of Change (residually) result in a Minor, adverse effect, which through the maturation of new tree planting and the utility of local stone material for facades and visually recessive materials would enable the proposed buildings to weather in, leading to beneficial effects.</p>		

## 8.0 POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

8.1 An assessment of effects on each representative viewpoint has been undertaken, and a summary of the result contained in Table 8.1:

8.2 Table 8.1: Summary of Visual Effects on Representative Viewpoints (August 2023)

Viewpoint	Location	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
1.	Existing view from Turnpike Road, Cwmbran looking south east towards the application site	Low	Very High (construction) High (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate, adverse Moderate/-minor, adverse Negligible, adverse
2.	Existing view from PRoW passing through a Special Landscape Area to the south-south west of the application site	High	Low (construction) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr 15)	Minor/-negligible, adverse Imperceptible Imperceptible
3.	Existing view from PRoW passing through a Special Landscape Area on the outskirts of Coed Eva (residential area) to the south west of the application site	High	Low (construction) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr 15)	Minor/-negligible, adverse Imperceptible Imperceptible
4.	Existing view from existing residential area at Dorallt Way, Henllys to the west-south west of the application site	Medium	Medium (construction) Low (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate/-minor, adverse Minor, adverse Minor/-Negligible, beneficial

Viewpoint	Location	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
5.	Existing view from PRoW within open countryside beyond Ty Canol residential area within a Special Landscape Area	High	Medium (construction) Low (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate, adverse Moderate/-minor, adverse Minor/-Negligible, beneficial
6.	Existing view from Ty Canol Road looking east across the existing residential streets of Oakford to the west-south west of the application site	Low	Low (construction) Negligible (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Minor/-negligible, adverse Negligible, adverse Negligible, beneficial
7.	Existing view from existing residential area situated off Ty Gwyn Way looking east towards the application site	Low	Low (construction) Negligible (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Minor/-negligible, adverse Negligible, adverse Negligible, beneficial
8.	Existing view from PRoW situated on the edge of the existing residential area of Greenmeadow to the west of the application site	High	Medium (construction) Low (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate, adverse Moderate/-minor, adverse Minor/-Negligible, beneficial
9.	Existing view from Cumbrian Way Long Distance Walking Route passing across elevated landform within a Special Landscape Area north west of the application site	Very High	Low (construction) Negligible (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate, adverse Moderate/-minor, adverse Moderate/-minor, beneficial

Viewpoint	Location	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effect
10.	Existing view from Cambrian Way Long Distance Walking Route passing across elevated landform within a Special Landscape Area north west of the application site	Very High	Low (construction) Negligible (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate, adverse Moderate/-minor, adverse Moderate/-minor, beneficial
11.	Existing view from PRow situated above Upper Cwmbran passing through open countryside to the north west of the application site	High	Low (construction) Negligible (Yr1) Negligible (Yr 15)	Moderate/-minor, adverse Minor, adverse Minor, beneficial
12.	Existing view from PRow passing along Cwmbran Canal within the existing residential area of Lowlands, off Five Locks lane to the north west of the application site	Medium	Indiscernible (construction) Indiscernible (Yr1) Indiscernible (Yr15)	Imperceptible Imperceptible Imperceptible

### Potential Effects of PRow users

8.3 As summarised within Section 4.7 of this LVA, a significant number of PRow have been scoped out of this assessment. These PRow route are situated north east, east and south east of the A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass. In these situations, there is no discernibility of the scheme due to the effect of intervening landform; see Appendix 3.

8.4 Given the foregoing, ZLA appraised the following representative viewpoints situated on Public Rights of Way:

#### Cambrian Way Long Distance Walking Route

8.5 This promoted Long Distance Walking Route is situated to the west of the application site, beyond the existing urban edge, and passes through the Special Landscape Area across rising an elevated landform. The likely views of the application site are demonstrated by Viewpoint 9 and 10, to the west and north west respectively; see Appendix 3.

- 8.6 During the construction stage, the effect of noise, dust and vibration would not be experienced due to the effect of intervening distance. The movement of tall machinery, the general process of erecting new buildings, cranes if utilised and temporary construction lighting (in autumn and winter months) would be seen. The resulting level of effect would be moderate, adverse. This is not due to the extensiveness of the proposed scheme, but the high visual sensitivity and susceptibility to change the likely PRoW users would have at this location.
- 8.7 This level of effect would diminish on the cessation of the construction stage. The character of the site would be that of a new development, and the new tree planting would be too juvenile to offset and reduce the effects of the scheme at Year 1, resulting in a moderate/-minor, adverse effect.
- 8.8 Through the combined effect of material selection, in terms of colours and finishes, and the utility of stone materials for facades, and the maturation of new tree planting would have an overall beneficial effect in reducing the discernibility of the proposed scheme to PRoW users. The resulting level of effect would be moderate/-minor, beneficial. This is the residual, long term effect and not significant.

*PRoW situated within open countryside*

- 8.9 There is an extensive PRoW network passing through the varied open countryside which surrounds the settled area around Cwmbran. These routes pass through a mixed landform, with more elevated, rising landform to the west and north west (hillside grazing land); see Viewpoint 11, and lowland agriculture of arable and pastoral fields to the south west; see Viewpoint 2 (Appendix 3).
- 8.10 From the elevated landform on rising slopes side to the open upland areas, the application site is seen, and generally looked down on, and experienced against the wider urban setting to the east with its built form and urban features. In many instances, the University Hospital is a dominant feature within views.
- 8.11 To the lower lying open agricultural fields to the south and south west of the application site, there is limited, if any discernibility of the application site, as it is seen nestled within the tree'd setting of the site, or views are filtered by intervening woodland and tree components, if not screened by intervening residential development. Consequently, in many situations, the application site is not seen wholesale.
- 8.12 As demonstrated by Viewpoint 2, the construction stage may be experienced by the PRoW users, depending on whether the construction would employ tall machinery, or a crane and need temporary construction lighting in autumn and winter months. The level of effect would be minor/-negligible, adverse in the worst case. At Year 1, the likely effect of the

scheme would be imperceptible due to the proposed scheme utilising more visually recessive material and local stone materials.

- 8.13 Additionally, the majority of the existing trees would be retained and bolstered within new tree planting, which would mature, and the overall discernibility of the scheme would be imperceptible.
- 8.14 As demonstrated by Viewpoint 11 from the open, upland countryside north west of the application site, there is a general potential for PRoW users of seeing the site during its demolition and then construction of the new buildings and external spaces.
- 8.15 Given the intervening distance, the effect of noise, dust and vibration would not be experienced, but the movement of tall machinery, the general process of erecting new buildings, and cranes if utilised and temporary construction lighting (in autumn and winter months) would be seen. The resulting level of effect would be less than significant at this temporary stage at moderate/-minor, adverse.
- 8.16 This level of effect would diminish on the cessation of the construction stage. The character of the site would be that of a new development, and the new tree planting would be too juvenile to offset and reduce the effects of the scheme at Year 1, resulting in a minor, adverse effect.
- 8.17 Through the combined effect of material selection, in terms of colours and finishes, and the utility of stone materials for facades, and the maturation of new tree planting would have an overall beneficial effect in reducing the discernibility of the proposed scheme to PRoW users. The resulting level of effect would be minor, beneficial. This is the residual, long term effect.
- 8.18 A similar scenario occurs on PRoW passing through open countryside on the settlement edge; see Viewpoint 3,5 and 8 (Appendix 3), where the residual effects of the scheme are not significant and permanent.

#### Potential Effects on Road Users

- 8.19 As summarised within Section 4 of this LVA, a significant number of vehicle routes have been scoped out of this assessment. The likely effect of the proposed scheme is unlikely to fundamentally alter the character of the baseline views experienced by road users, which would lead to an imperceptible level of change residually by the scheme i.e., lower than negligible and changes to the existing baseline of the view.
- 8.20 From our field-based analysis, ZLA highlighted the two following routes, along which road users are likely to experience the effects of the proposed scheme:

A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass

- 8.21 Users of A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass which pass within 0.5km of the application site, are likely to experience the proposed scheme. Users of this bypass will be travelling from one destination to another (perhaps one town to another, or a place of work). The route is situated outside of a National or local landscape, and the route is not promoted for its scenic views.
- 8.22 Generally, users of this route would not be travelling along the bypass for visual amenity; consequently, they would have a low visual sensitivity and low susceptibility to change.
- 8.23 The proposed scheme would demolish the existing building. Construction activities would be seen by road users, and the effect of increased traffic flow associated with the construction workforce, delivery of plant and machinery likely to be experienced along this route. Additionally, the effect of noise, dust and vibration is likely to be experienced, especially during the demolition of the existing buildings, whereby tall machinery and construction vehicles would be experienced.
- 8.24 However, from this route, the application site is not seen wholesale. The proposed scheme would be set within the existing tree belt along its eastern site edge (bounding the A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass). Therefore, the discernible of the construction effects would be limited, and its effects reduced and mitigated in part by the tree'd landscape surrounding the site.
- 8.25 The magnitude of change at the construction stage is considered to be high with the demolition and construction activities discernible by road users. The resulting level of effect would be less than significant at moderate/-minor, adverse.
- 8.26 At Year 1, the marginally taller buildings would be seen, and new landscaping yet to mature to filter views. The removal of existing landscaping and the selective reduction of tree cover would be noticeable. This would lead to a minor, adverse level of effect.
- 8.27 By year 15, new landscaping and tree planting would have matured forming a boundary around the scheme, and filtering views. The combination of this enhanced landscape setting for the scheme, as well as the better use of visual recessive materials and local stone material for the façade of the buildings would break down the mass of the new development. This would potentially lead to a beneficial effect over and above the existing development and built form at the site. The resulting level of effect for road users would be minor/-negligible, beneficial. This is the residual, long term effect of the proposed scheme.

Turnpike Road (A4173)

- 8.28 Users of Turnpike Road (A4173) will directly pass the site from the A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass, and enter the urban area surrounding the application site from the arterial A-road of the bypass route.

- 8.29 At this point, road users would experience the greatest effect travelling passed the site (i.e. north west to south east), with the existing built form and all weather car parking areas experienced from along this route (filtered by the existing tree cover along the site's south western and western boundary with Turnpike Road, and within the sit's interior.
- 8.30 Construction activities would be seen by road users, and the effect of increased traffic flow associated with the construction workforce, delivery of plant and machinery likely to be experienced along this route. Additionally, the effect of noise, dust and vibration is likely to be experienced, especially during the demolition of the existing buildings, whereby tall machinery and construction vehicles would be experienced. The removal of existing landscaping and the selective duction of tree cover would be noticeable.
- 8.31 Users of this route would be travelling to and from the settled, urban area of Cwmbran, but are unlikely to be using Turnpike Road for its visual amenity, or scenic value. This route is situated outside of a designed landscape area. Given this, users of Turnpike Road would have a low visual sensitivity and low susceptibility to change.
- 8.32 At the construction stage, the magnitude of change is predicted to be very high i.e., a substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view as road users pass along Turnpike Road in both directions. This would result in a moderate, averse level of effect. This level of effect is temporary, not being permanent, ceasing on completion of the construction stage.
- 8.33 It is anticipated, that Year1, the character of the scheme is likely to be experienced as new buildings, all weather car parking within a mature tree'd setting. However, new landscaping would be juvenile, and not effective in reducing and offsetting the visual effects of the scheme locally until establishment. The magnitude of change would be medium, leading to a less than significant effect at Year 1.
- 8.34 By year 15, the built form would have been softened and the visual recessive material in combination with the established, mature new landscaping within the tree'd setting of the site, effective in mitigating the level of effects locally to road users. The resulting magnitude of change would be low with a perceived minor alteration to the baseline view.
- 8.35 The combination of an enhanced landscape setting for the scheme, as well as the better use of visual recessive materials and local stone material for the façade of the buildings would break down the mass of the new development, which potentially could lead to a beneficial effect over and above the existing development and built form at the site. The resulting level of effect for road users would be minor/-negligible, beneficial. This is the residual, long term effect of the proposed scheme.



- 8.36 In the wider area, road users passing through the urban area, will have a low overall sensitivity and it is expected that users could potential experience the scheme during its construction. The use of tall machinery and construction vehicles, as well as any temporary construction lighting (during the autumn-winter months), is likely to be lead a degree of adverse effects.
- 8.37 However, given the application site would be seen against the wider urban land use, and would be replacing the existing buildings at the site (rather than an open greenfield site), the characteristics of the site would be less influenced. Consequently, it is unlikely there would be significant residual long term effects.
- 8.38 The combination of an enhanced landscape setting for the scheme, as well as the better use of visual recessive materials and local stone material for the façade of the buildings would break down the mass of the new development, which potentially could lead to negligible, or imperceptible effect on wider road users.

#### Potential Effects on Residential Dwellings

- 8.39 Given our summary of our field-based assessment contained in Section paragraph 4.34 to 4.37, a significant geographical area was scoped out of this assessment, which included settlements to the north, villages, hamlets and farmstead to the north east, east and south east.
- 8.40 A number of residential areas were identified by ZLA as having the potential experience the proposed development, and influence the visual amenity of residents; these include:
- Dwellings situated on and situated off Turnpike Road (within 0.5km distance of the application site)*
- 8.41 For the number of dwellings situated on Turnpike Road, compared to the whole settled area, the magnitude of change would be very high which when combined with a high sensitivity, would yield a major adverse level of effect.
- 8.42 In the longer term, the combination of an enhanced landscape setting for the scheme, as well as the better use of visual recessive materials and local stone material for the façade of the buildings would break down the mass of the new development, which potentially could lead to a beneficial effect over and above the existing development and built form at the site.
- 8.43 The residual, long term effect of the scheme is not predicted to be significant. This is demonstrated by Viewpoint 1, see Appendix 3.
- 8.44 The wider area of Llanyravon is situated at lower landform than Turnpike Road, and dwellings are arranged to appreciate the wider view to the south west, west and north west.

Given the effect of intervening residential built form, the discernibility of the site is substantially filtered, if not screened.

*Dwellings situated at Oakfield (circa 2km south west of the application site)*

- 8.45 The perception of development mass will be broken down through use of visual recessive materials and local stone for facades, as well as the enhancement of the tree components at the site to bolster the prevailing tree character at the site, and its context, could lead to a marginal beneficial effect over and above the existing land use and its buildings.
- 8.46 This is demonstrated by Viewpoint 6 (within the area of Oaksford to the west-south west), whereby there would be no significant adverse effect from the scheme residually in the long term.

*Dwellings situated in the wider area of the application site*

- 8.47 Within the wider area, residential receptors will experience construction effects over this temporary timescale, which will likely be similar in the first year following completion, awaiting for new landscaping and tree planting to establish and mature.
- 8.48 The level of effect during this time is anticipated to less than significant in the construction stage, and negligible at Year 1. The residual effect of the scheme would be that of an imperceptible effects, or a negligible, beneficial effect through the utility of visually recessive materials, including local stone material for facades and enhancing tree cover at the site. To the south-south west, this is demonstrated by Viewpoint 3 on the outskirts of Coed Eva, as well as Viewpoint 4 (at Henllys to the south west), Viewpoint 7 (at Greensmeadow to the west) as well as Viewpoint 12 situated between Lowlands and Five Locks.

### Potential Effects on Sustrans National Cycle Route 49 and 423

- 8.49 As discussed in Section 4, paragraph 4.22-4.24 of this LVA, these routes have been scoped out of this assessment. From our field-based assessment, it is considered very unlikely, that the site for the proposed development is discernible.
- 8.50 For the casual observer, the proposed scheme would result in less than a negligible change to the visual amenity of these cycle route users, leading to an imperceptible change to the current views.
- 8.51 Consequently, the proposed scheme would be imperceptible to users of Sustrans Cycle Route 49 and 423.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Zebra Landscape Architects Limited ('ZLA') was commissioned on behalf Willmott Dixon to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for a new Police operational facility for Gwent Police (the 'Applicant').
- 9.2 The proposed development would redevelop the existing Police facility at the site for a new Gwent Police Operational Facility (following demolition of existing buildings); the 'proposed development'. The site is situated within the County of Gwent, and wholly within the administrative authority of Torfaen County Borough Council, who are the Local Planning Authority ('LPA').
- 9.3 The site is located wholly within the administrative area of the Local Planning Authority of Torfaen County Borough Council (the 'LPA') area. The site is located at OS Grid Reference: ST 30813 95299.

### Effects on Landscape Character

- 9.4 The direct effects of the proposed scheme have been assessed utilising site specific LANDMAP data analysis. The study finds that there would be less than significant effects residually from the proposed scheme. A similar land use is undertaken at the site, for which, there are multiple buildings, with external all-weather surfaced areas and landscape areas including extensive tree cover.
- 9.5 Consequently, the proposed scheme does not look to fundamentally alter the baseline character of the existing site, and whilst there would be a change experienced in the site, Change perceived as a partial or localised change within a broader, unaltered context which may be noticed, but this would be localised in its level of effects.

### Effects on Visual Amenity

- 9.6 As demonstrated in Section 4 of this appraisal, and through the analysis of the plotted zone of Theoretical Visibility, a significant area around the site's location has been scoped out. The effect of intervening landform, as well as the typical field hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland and the prevailing tree character around Cwmbran and the A4042, Coesyceiliog bypass, is sufficient to influence the discernibility of the site, and would either screen, or substantially filter direct views of the proposed scheme.
- 9.7 This has been tested through our field based assessment as the proposed scheme is only marginally taller than the existing buildings at the site. Additionally, the proposed scheme would continue the same land use.

- 9.8 Additionally, as demonstrated by the number of PRoW passing across the elevated, open upland hillsides beyond the urban settlement, the residual effect of the proposed scheme would be less than significant, and has the potential to be a beneficial change rather than an adverse impact.
- 9.9 Although, existing trees at the site are required to be removed, those retained will be bolstered for the long term arboricultural continuity of the site. Additionally, unlike the current buildings, the proposed scheme would utilise visually recessive material and local stone material. The combined effect has the potential for the development to better integrated into its setting than the baseline situation.
- 9.10 For PRoW users crossing the varied open countryside around the Cwmbran area, with its elevated, open uplands and lowland farmed countryside, a similar scenario is possible. However, in many situation, the existing situation is not dominant within views, if seen at all. Through its material choice, building mass and new landscaping, the proposed scheme would be experienced as a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component. The resulting level of effect would be barely discernible, and its presence in the view is not uncharacteristic of the urban setting when seen from these locations.

### Conclusion

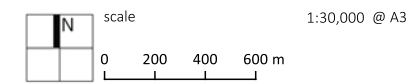
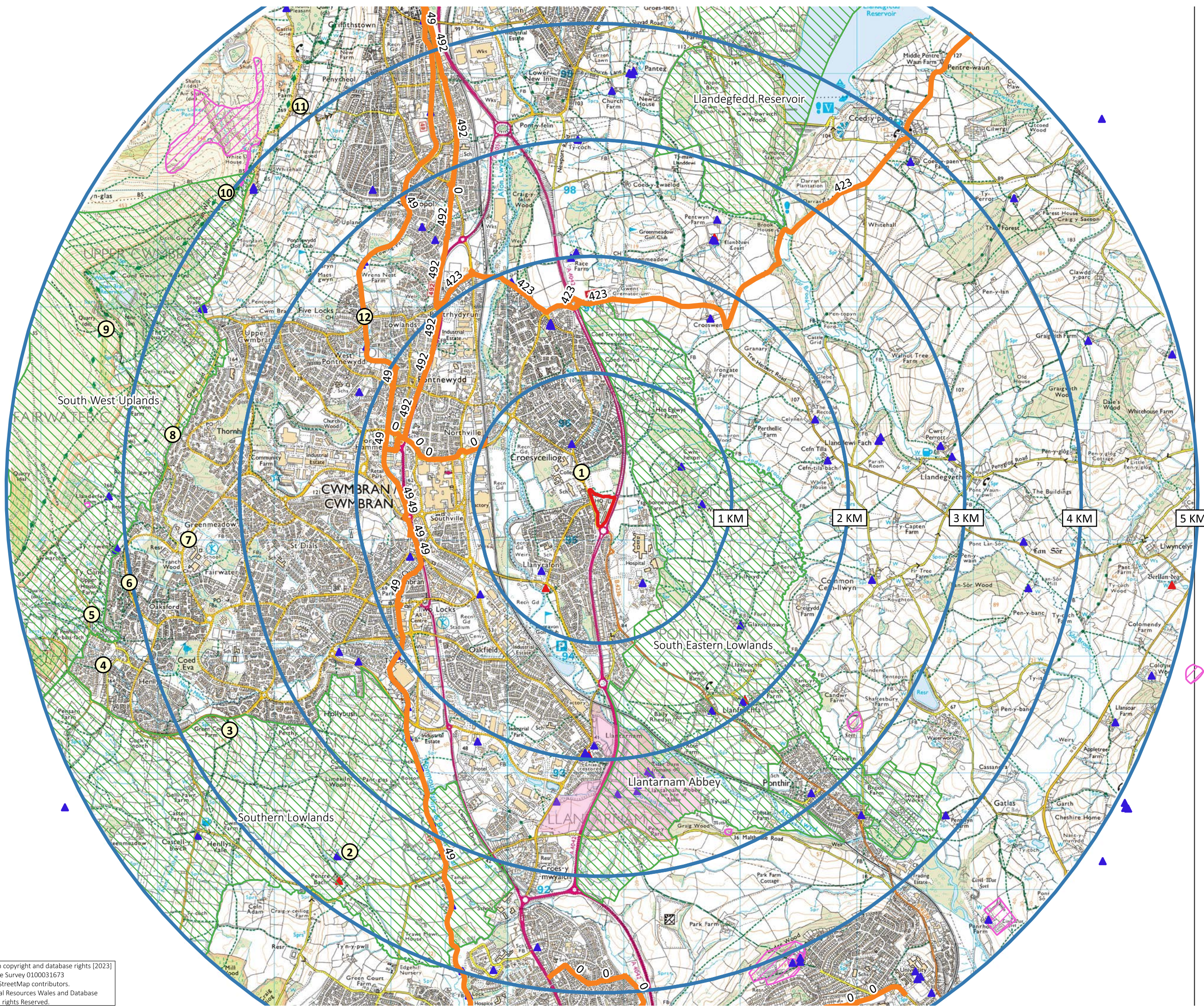
- 9.11 In overall conclusion, having regard to all the above matters, I find that the proposed scheme would have only a relatively benign effect locally to the site. The proposed scheme would replace similar land use at the site, and would not fundamentally alter the character of the baseline.
- 9.12 Whilst the buildings would be marginally taller than the existing, and the overall footprint grater, the bolstering of the existing tree'd character at the site, and material selection would in combination make the scheme integrate well within its setting and become visually recessive.
- 9.13 Additionally, I find no substantive basis to conclude that the appeal proposals are materially in conflict with national guidance, or the adopted local planning policies, including Policy BW1
- 9.14 For Policy BW1, I find no reason to believe that the proposal constitute over development of the site in terms of the scale, density, massing and form of the development, and the design and visual appearance of the proposal takes account of the local context in terms of siting, appearance, elevation treatment, materials and detailing.

- 9.15 Whilst through our field based assessment, we have demonstrated that there would be no significant impact on the Special landscape Areas, the wider upland hillsides or lowland agricultural landscape which forms the setting for Cwmbran and its wider urban area. Consequently, the scheme does not conflict with Policy C2, whilst supporting Policy S4 for placemaking.
- 9.16 Given our undertaking of this appraisal, we find no reason that the proposed redevelopment of the existing built facility at the application site, should, as proposed, warrant refusal of planning permission on landscape grounds.

## APPENDIX 1

**Key**

- Application Site
- Distance Intervals (1km)
- Viewpoints (1-12)
- National Cycle Network
- ▭ Special Landscape Area
- ▭ Llantarnam Abbey Registered Park and Garden
- Listed Buildings**
- ▲ I
- ▲ Grade II
- ▲ Grade II\*
- ▭ Scheduled Monuments



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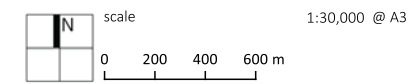
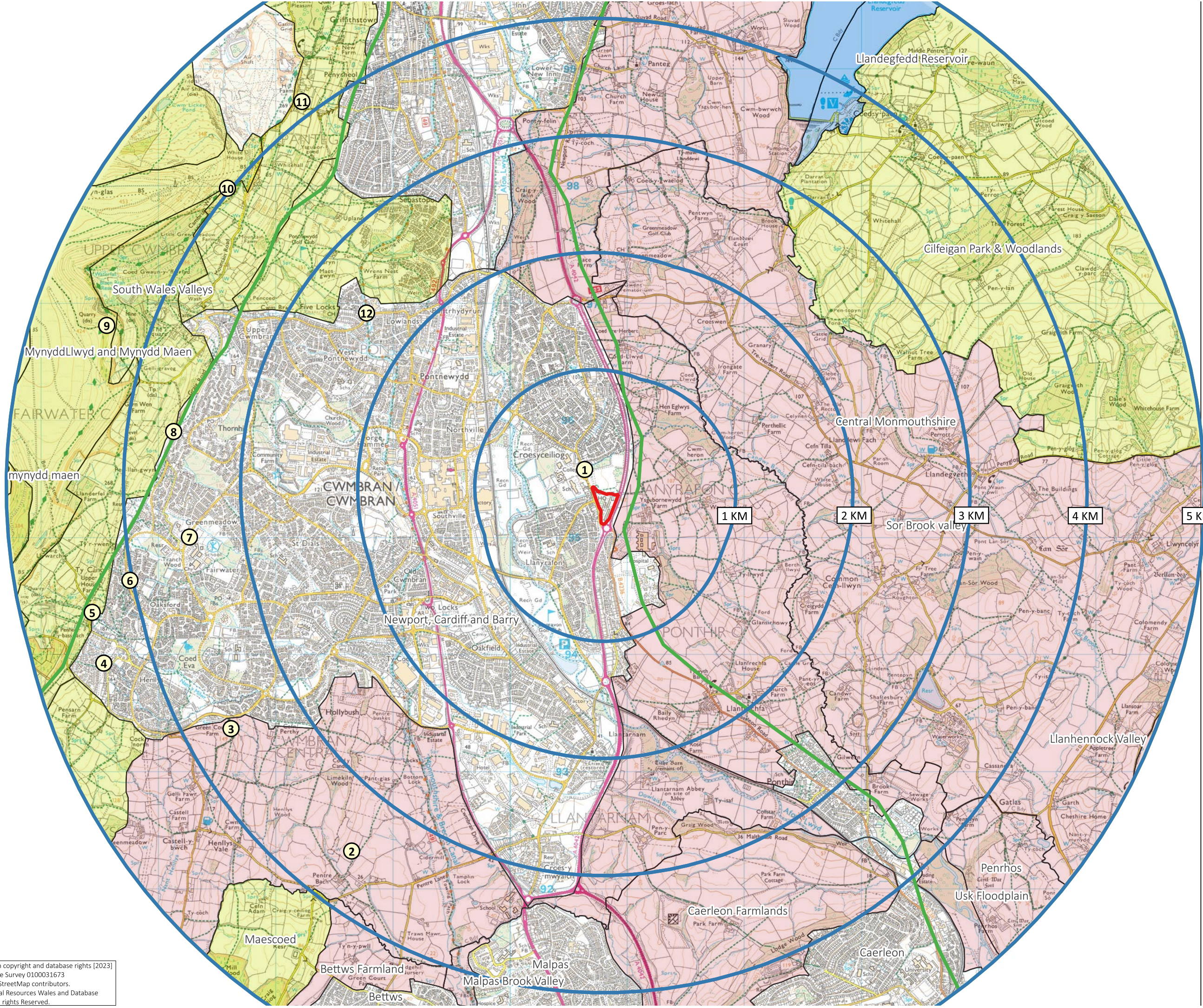
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**Key**

- ▭ Application Site
- ▭ Distance Intervals (1km)
- Viewpoints (1-12)
- ▭ National Landscape Character Areas

LandMap Visual Sensory

- Development
- Lowland
- Upland
- Water
- LandMap Visual Sensory



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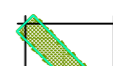











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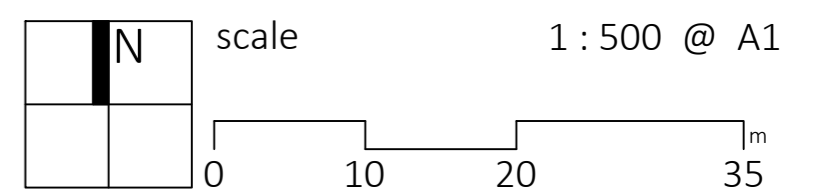
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**LEGEND**

	Boundary
	Existing trees retained
	Existing trees removed
	Existing other native hedgerows to be retained h2a6
	Proposed species-rich native hedgerow h2a5
	Proposed small trees native/non-native
	Proposed medium trees native/non-native
	Proposed large trees native/non-native
	Proposed introduced shrub u1 1160
	Proposed modified grassland g4
	Proposed other neutral grassland (EM3) g3c
	Proposed rain garden u1 1192
	Proposed 2.0m anti-climb weldmesh
	Proposed 3.0m anti-climb weldmesh
	Proposed retaining walls (type TBC)
	

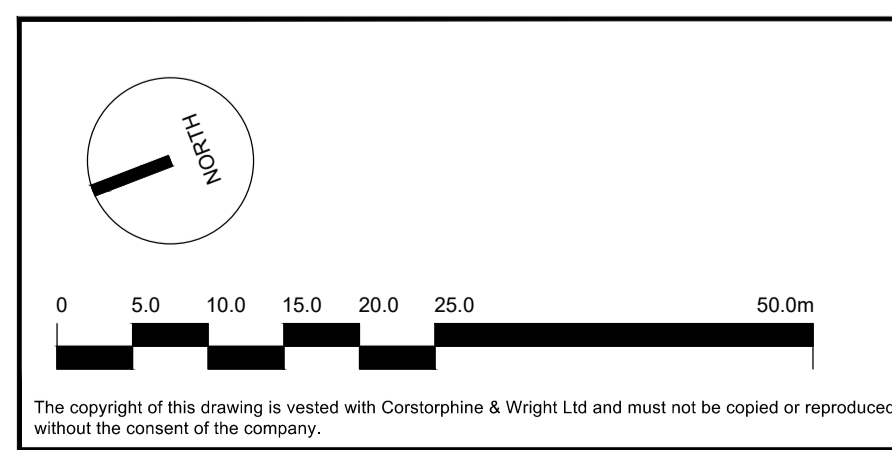
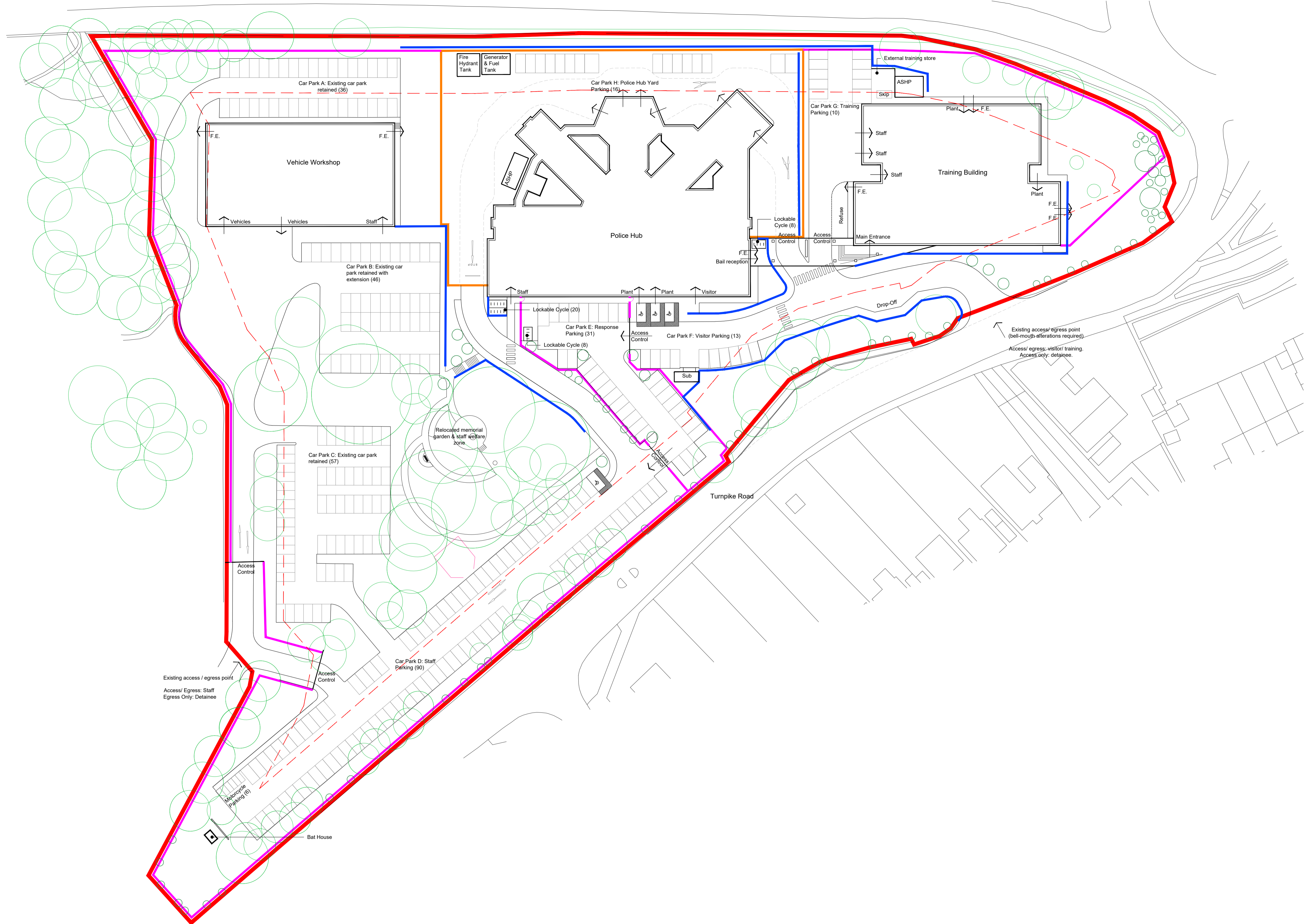


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## APPENDIX 2



P-02 Deck car park removed. Vehicle workshop adjusted to maintain existing car parks. R.W. positions updated.	13.08.23	EHC	SC
P-01 First Issue	02.05.23	EHC	SC
Rev. Description	Date	Drw.	Chk.

Key	
	Site boundary
	15m stand off
	2.0m anti-climb weldmesh
	3.0m anti-climb weldmesh
	Retaining walls (type tbc)
	Existing trees
	Proposed trees
	Building access
	EV Parking Spaces (New)
	EV Parking Spaces (Existing)
	Parking Spaces (New)
	Parking Spaces (Existing)

Client Willmott Dixon		<b>Corstorphine &amp; Wright</b>	
Project Gwent Police Operational Facility			
Drawing Title Proposed Site Plan		Warwick Studio Brook Hall, Brook Street, Warwick, CV34 4BL 01926 658 444 corstorphine-wright.com	
Drawing Status PLANNING		Drawing No. GPOF-CWA-04-XX-DR-A-0300	Revision P-02
Drawn SS	Checked EHC	Paper Size A1	Scale 1:500
		Date 02.05.2023	

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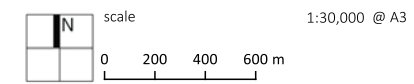
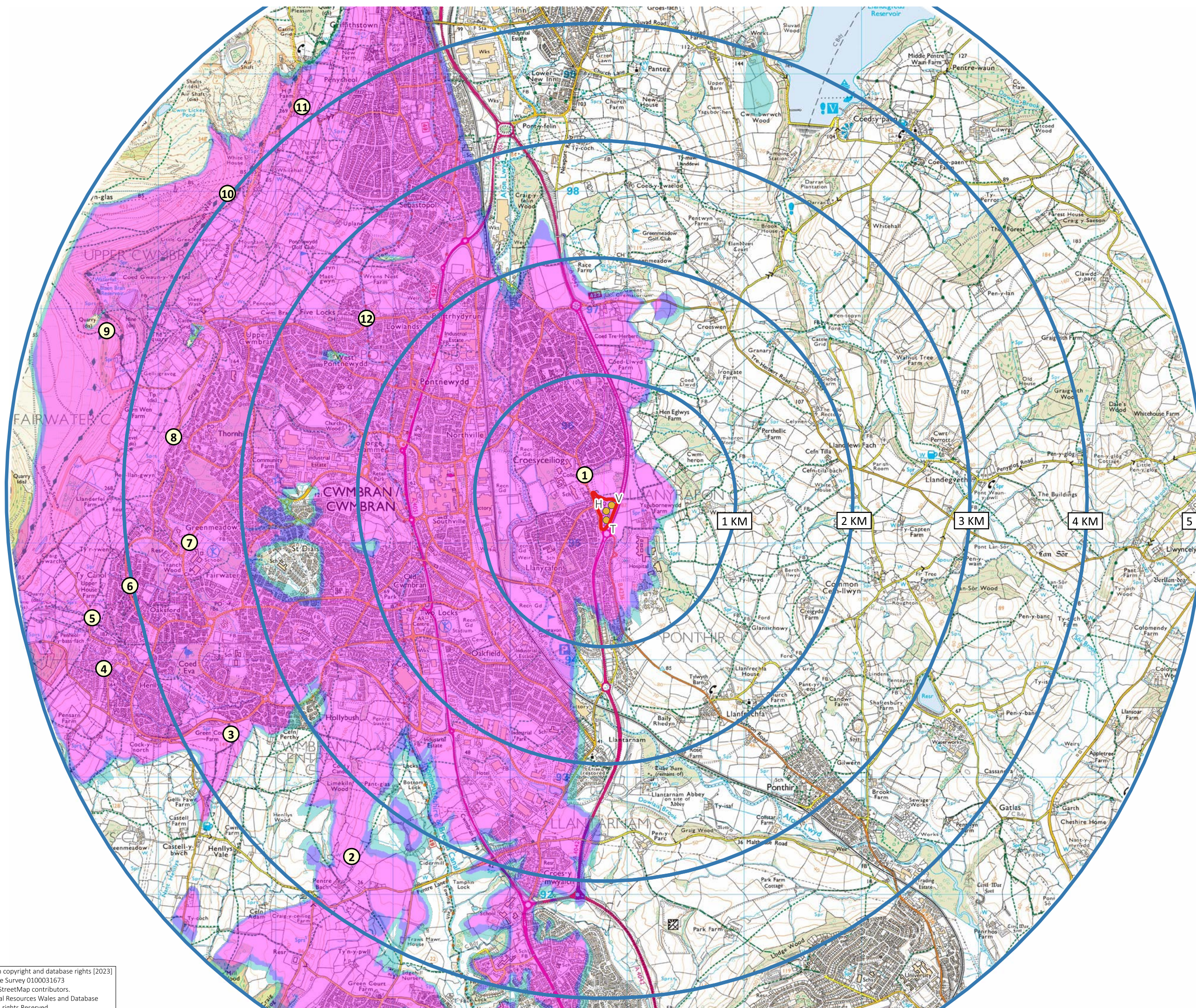
## APPENDIX 3

- Key**
- Application Site
  - Distance Intervals (1km)
  - Viewpoints (1-12)
  - ZTV Reference Points
- ZTV
- Theoretical Visibility of the Hub
  - Theoretical Visibility of the Training Building
  - Theoretical Visibility of the Vehicle Workshop

**NOTES:**

This figure is based on the following parameters (height above ground level):  
 Pedestrian height: 1.6m  
 Viewers height: 2.0m  
 Landform data: OS Terrain 5 (5m grid)  
 Height of proposal: Vehicle Workshop 8.6m/ Hub 14.86m/ Training 11.79m

This ZTV is based on a bare earth model of the landform and does not illustrate any effects of screening such as buildings and vegetation.



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## APPENDIX 4

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

This methodology is specific to developments determined by the Local Planning Authority as not requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment. The Third Edition of the GLVIA3<sup>2</sup> provides clarification that the same principles and processes apply for EIA and non-EIA assessments however there is no requirement for establishing whether the effects are significant given this development falls out with the formal requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment.

The methodology sets out the approach for the core steps in describing the baseline conditions, identifying where potential impacts may occur and evaluating the subsequent effects. In accordance with GLVIA3, the appraisal reflects the clear distinction between the landscape as a resource and visual amenity. The steps of the methodology used in the LVA are set out below:

- Illustrative Tools
- Baseline Conditions:
- Landscape Baseline
- Visual Amenity Baseline
- Potential Effects - including magnitude of change and nature of change:
- Assessment and Evaluation of Landscape Effects
- Assessment and Evaluation of Effects on Visual Amenity

### ILLUSTRATIVE TOOLS

In accordance with The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, a proportionate approach has been applied to determine the visualisation type appropriate for this project. It is considered annotated viewpoint photographs are sufficient level of detail to support the appraisal.

The viewpoint assessment is illustrated by photographs taken to represent a maximum visibility scenario. Photographs have been annotated to show the extent of the site within the view, its context and highlight key features. The photographs used have been taken using a full frame sensor digital camera with a 50 mm lens equivalent mounted on a tripod, which conforms to the GLVIA3 guidance since this lens size is considered to most closely represent the view obtained by the human eye. The photographs have been taken to most represent a maximum visibility scenario during the season in which the assessment is undertaken.

It should be noted that whilst photography is a valuable tool to assist in the visualisation process, it cannot be expected to replicate the actual view or predicted view which would be attained on the ground. The photographs provide the viewer with a fair representation of the proposed Development site within its setting.

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<sup>2</sup> *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013)*

<sup>3</sup> *Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019)*

## **BASELINE CONDITIONS**

### **Desktop Survey Work**

- The following desktop sources were consulted in order to compile the baseline information:
- Existing Landscape Character Assessments;
- Register of Parks and Gardens;
- Ordnance Survey Maps; and
- Aerial photography.

### **Landscape Baseline**

Landscape receptors comprise the landscape fabric of the site, landscape character areas/ types and designated landscapes which may be affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed Development.

Existing Landscape Character Assessments have been reviewed and interpreted for use within the appraisal based on field work and further desktop survey work. A description is provided of the existing landscape elements, features, characteristics, designations and the value, condition and importance of the landscape and resources within the study area which are likely to have potential impacts as a result of the proposed Development.

An evaluation is required for each landscape character area/ type and landscape receptor which has the potential to interact with the development on:

Landscape value – It is often regarded in association with landscape designations however other more local factors have been considered such as local heritage or community interest. Key factors in regard to landscape value include landscape condition, scenic quality, rarity, recreational value, tourism, local heritage and community interest.

Susceptibility to change – Landscapes are constantly changing and evolving. The current pressures in the landscape have been clearly stated in the absence of the proposal for each landscape character area/ type.

Landscape sensitivity to changes has been defined as high, medium, low or negligible based on professional interpretation of a combination of parameters including:

- The value placed on the landscape as defined by designation or other identifiable form of recognition;
- The scale and pattern of the landscape and its elements/features;
- The simplicity or complexity of the landscape;
- The nature of skylines;
- Landscape quality or condition;
- Existing land-use;
- Visual enclosure/openness of views and distribution of visual receptors; and
- The scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape.



**Table A.2: Sensitivity of The Landscape Baseline**

Visual Sensitivity	Land Use
<b>Very High</b>	<p><i>Value:</i> Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.</p>
<b>High</b>	<p><i>Value:</i> Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.</p>
<b>Medium</b>	<p><i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.</p>
<b>Low</b>	<p><i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.</p>
<b>Negligible</b>	<p><i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.</p> <p><i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change</p>

### Visual Amenity Baseline

Visibility Analysis concentrated on publicly accessible areas and key receptors including residential and outdoor recreational areas, as well as road and public footpath networks. The aim is to identify the interactions between the proposal and the visual receptors.

The study area is based upon analysis of the natural landform, using contours from the 1:25k Ordnance Survey map and a desktop review of intervening structures which are predicted to screen views of the Development such as buildings on mass and block woodland from the aerial.

Fieldwork is undertaken to establish the extent of available views towards the site and to establish the extent of views from the site.

Visual receptors comprise those individuals or groups of people who may have views of the proposed Development. The main groups of visual receptors are usually defined as follows:

Residents;

- Tourists or visitors, which includes users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or public rights of way whose attention would be focused on the landscape; important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes; principal views from residential buildings; beauty spots or picnic areas;
- Hill walkers, which includes those walking on unmarked footpaths; and
- Road users.

Viewpoint Assessment - A selection of viewpoints was identified and considered to be representative of the main sensitive receptors in the study area for the purposes of assessing the proposed Development. The viewpoints have been numbered in a clockwise direction starting in the north and were chosen to be representative such as a promoted visitor attraction or illustrative to demonstrate a particular effect or theme from the appraisal.

Viewpoint Description - The extent and nature of the existing views are described by reference to the following and illustrated through annotated photographs:

- Composition of the view, landscape character, features, visual amenity and quality of the landscape;
- nature of the view;
- elevation;
- direct or indirect/ angled;
- full or partial;
- open or filtered;
- seasonal variation; and
- extent.

The extent of view and proportion of the development which is visible is categorised as follows:

- Full views - Where greater than 75% of the proposed Development is visible
- Partial views - Where less than 75% of the proposed Development is visible
- Restricted views - Where less than 50% of the proposed Development is visible and/ or very limited views of the proposed Development

Distance: The distance of the views towards the application and development is categorised below:

- Short distance - less than 0.25km
- Medium distance - between 0.25 and 0.5km
- Long distance - Greater than 0.5km

Viewpoint Sensitivity is defined as high, medium or low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters, as follows and defined in Table A.1:

- Location and context of the viewpoint;
- Land use or main activity at the viewpoint;
- Frequency and duration of use;
- Landscape character and quality of the intervening landscape; and
- Value attached to view.

**Table A.2: Visual Sensitivity in relation to Main Activity at Viewpoint**

Visual Sensitivity	Land Use
<b>Very High</b>	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is: designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
<b>High</b>	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
<b>Medium</b>	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
<b>Low</b>	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
<b>Negligible</b>	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.

## POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The text below provides an analysis of the potential direct/ indirect impacts based on site reconnaissance to make a professional judgement on the magnitude and evaluation of effects of the main landscape and visual receptors identified in the study area as outlined in the Baseline Conditions.

### Assessment of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of Landscape Effects - The effect on landscape character as a result of the proposed Development is largely dependent on; the characteristics of the receiving landscape, the consistency of the proposed development in relation to the receiving landscape and the perceptions of the proposed development influenced by distance, weather and appearance.

Landscape effects are classified as substantial, moderate, slight, negligible and none based on a professional judgement which combines landscape sensitivity, value, susceptibility to change and the level of interaction with the proposed Development.

- The criteria utilised in ascribing magnitude of change of landscape effects throughout this assessment are as follows:
- Very High: Total loss or considerable alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the view that is directly visible resulting in a substantial change to the baseline condition;
- High: Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements
- Medium: Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view. Change perceived as a partial or localised change within a broader, unaltered context which maybe noticed directly or obliquely;
- Low: Limited loss or small alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view. Change is discernible but underlying composition of the view would be similar to baseline;
- Negligible: Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape
- Indiscernible: In some circumstances, changes to key landscape components will be lower than negligible and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to an imperceptible effect i.e., less than negligible.

Landscape effects also consider whether the Development:

- Reinforces the landscape elements, structure and key landscape characteristics (positive). Or would it include low or negligible changes that maybe considered part of the baseline condition (neutral). Or an adverse effect which may include the loss of landscape elements such as mature trees and hedgerows as part of construction leading to a reduction in the landscape quality and character of an area.
- Would have a physical change to landscape fabric (direct) or consequential change (indirect).
- Results in short term (up to 5 years), medium term (up to 25 years) or long-term changes (25+ years).
- Would have reversible or irreversible effects on the landscape.

## Assessment of Effects on Visual Amenity

**Magnitude of the Visual Effects** - The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint is described as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- Distance of the viewpoint from the development;
- Duration of the predicted impact;
- Extent of the development in the view, e.g. the horizontal angle subtended by the development;
- Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- Degree of contrast;
- Visual permeability of proposed Development, i.e. extent to which views would be blocked or would be restricted;
- Background to the Development; and
- Extent and nature of other built development visible.

In the case of magnitude of change occurring within designated areas or along roads or recreational routes, the proportion of the designated area or length of the route affected by the proposals is also a consideration.

The criteria utilised in ascribing visual magnitude of change throughout this assessment are as follows:

- Very High: Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view
- High: Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.
- Medium: Moderate alteration to one or more key characteristics of the baseline view.
- Low : Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
- Negligible: Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.
- Indiscernible: In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints will be lower than negligible and changes to the existing baseline of the view will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to an imperceptible effect i.e., less than negligible.

Visual effects also consider whether the Development:

- Results in short term (up to 5 years), medium term (up to 25 years) or long-term changes (25+ years).
- Would have reversible or irreversible effects on the visual amenity.

## EVALUATING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape or visual effects have been assessed as major, major/moderate, moderate, moderate/minor, minor or minor/negligible. These categories have been based on combining viewpoint sensitivity and predicted magnitude of change (Table A.2).

**Table A.2: Evaluation of Landscape and Visual Effects**

	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE				
Receptor Sensitivity	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor
High	Major	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor
Medium	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible	Negligible	Negligible/-none
Indiscernible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

The matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool, and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location must allow for the exercise of professional judgement. Thus in some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.