

DECC REFERENCE: LLANDINAM GRID CONNECTION

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 (Sections 36, 37, 62(3) & Schedule 8)

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (Section 90)

and

**THE ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATIONS AND OVERHEAD LINES (INQUIRIES
PROCEDURE (ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2007**

**APPLICATION BY SCOTTISH POWER ENERGY NETWORKS (SPEN), DATED 7th
DECEMBER 2009, FOR CONSENT UNDER SECTION 37 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT
1989**

**TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 132KV OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY
TRANSMISSION LINE BETWEEN BRYN DADLAU SUBSTATION AND WELSHPOOL
SUBSTATION, POWYS, MID WALES (“LLANDINAM GRID CONNECTION”)**

DECC REFERENCE: LLANDINAM GRID CONNECTION BERR/2009/0005

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE
of
Mr John Campion BA(Hons) BLD MSc CMLI MCIEEM**

On behalf of

Natural Resources Wales

Volume 1

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is John William Campion. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect, having been qualified in both the Landscape Architecture and Landscape Management Divisions of the Landscape Institute since September 1982 and January 1989, respectively. I am also a full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Town and Country Planning from the Liverpool Polytechnic; a postgraduate Bachelor of Landscape Design Degree from the Victoria University of Manchester; and a Master of Science Degree in Landscape Ecology, Design and Maintenance from the University of London (Wye College).

1.3 I have over 33 years' experience of landscape design and management, in both the public and private sectors. I am Director of John Campion Associates Ltd and an Associate in the practice of Anthony Jellard Associates, Chartered Landscape Architects. As part of an ongoing Framework Agreement since 2007, I have led a small team of landscape consultants for Anthony Jellard Associates, which has provided for the Countryside Council for Wales and Natural Resources Wales technical advice and technical reviews of the landscape and visual impact assessments submitted in support of over 30 major planning applications in Wales.

1.4 Anthony Jellard Associates were commissioned by Natural Resources Wales on 27th June 2013 to provide landscape evidence to this Inquiry. We have previously reviewed landscape and visual impact assessments provided in support of the development proposal for the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), under the above-mentioned Landscape Consultancy Framework, during the period September 2012 to the present day, providing technical assistance to CCW and Natural Resources Wales in preparing their response to Powys County Council on the planning application, in their role as a statutory consultee.

1.5 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was established in April 2013 and brings together the work of the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales, as well as some functions of Welsh Government. It is the statutory adviser to the UK and Welsh Governments on sustaining and enhancing the natural resources of Wales. As a body, its purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future.

1.6 Natural Resources Wales's functions are set out in the Natural Resources Body

for Wales (Functions) Order 2012 and include the requirement to exercise its functions so as to:

- Promote nature conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and amenity, and
- Promote the provision and improvement of opportunities for access to and enjoyment of the countryside and open spaces; open air recreation; and the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Natural Resources Wales's advice and comments to the Inspectors and the Planning Inquiry are therefore provided in the context of the above remit.

1.7 Natural Resources Wales fully supports the government's energy policy and its targets for renewable electricity production and, to minimise environmental harm, the strategic approach to the location of wind farms as embodied in the Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 5, November 2012) and TAN 8 Planning for Renewable Energy July 2005. NRW fully endorses the recognition in the National Policy Statements for Energy (NPS) and PPW that energy provision should seek to avoid or minimise the impact on the environment, and should not compromise international and national statutory obligations for designated areas, species and habitats.

1.8 In my evidence, I shall examine the landscape context of the proposed 132kV line route and its environs. I then examine the process of defining landscape character and provide definitions and explanations of the technical terms used. I then comment on the landscape character and sensitivity assessments undertaken by the Applicant, following which I provide my own assessments based upon reviews of the underlying LANDMAP information together with a more detailed analysis of some sections of the proposed line route. I review the capacity of the affected landscape to accommodate change of the type proposed without significant adverse effects upon landscape character. Finally, I examine the anticipated landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and draw conclusions as to the emphasis which I consider the Planning Inspector should give to the predicted landscape and visual effects of the scheme, as proposed, in reaching his decision as to whether he recommends that the development should be granted planning permission.

1.9 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this Planning Inquiry in this Proof of Evidence is true, and has been prepared and given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution, and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The application seeks consent for the construction and operation of 382 double wood pole line supports, each between 12 and 16 metres (m) high. The proposed route extends for a distance of around 35 kilometres (km) between the proposed substation at Bryn Dadlau, near the entrance to the operational Llandinam wind farm, and the operational substation situated just to the east of Welshpool in the Severn Valley.

2.2 The proposed line route originates at the proposed Bryn Dadlau substation within Strategic Search Area (SSA) C (Newtown South) identified by TAN8 in July 2005. The southernmost section of the proposed line route, some 8.3 kms long, would also lie within the defined boundary of SSA C.

2.3 The Applicant states that the operational life of the grid connection is currently dependent upon the operational life of the Llandinam Wind Farm Re-Powering scheme and that the need for the long term retention of the line would be kept under review.

POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 My evidence does not address the matter of planning need or any alternative proposals for a grid connection route but identifies the impacts of the proposal on landscape and visual amenity, and on historic landscape, and considers whether the proposal has adequately avoided or minimised the environmental impacts. I refer in my Proof of Evidence to the Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1) and the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), in relation to landscape and visual matters concerning route alignment, design and mitigation measures.

3.2 When addressing the topic of '*Criteria for "good design" for energy infrastructure*', NPS EN-1 provides guidance in addressing the problem of taking into account the aesthetics of the infrastructure and the contribution to the area in which is it to be sited.

*'Whilst the applicant may not have any or very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure, there may be opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate good design in terms of siting relative to existing landscape character, landform and vegetation. Furthermore, the design and sensitive use of materials in any associated development such as electricity substations will assist in ensuring that such development contributes to the quality of the area.'*¹

The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection wind farm proposes 382 double wood pole line supports, at around 90-metre intervals, the construction and operation of which will alter the landscape character of the area through which it passes. This will significantly and adversely affect the landscape character of the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales and the visual amenity of walkers along a section of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

3.3 NPS EN-1 *Part 5 Generic Impacts* contains a section (5.9) dedicated to landscape and visual effects. In dealing with IPC decision making in respect of landscape impact, the wording is as follows:

*'Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise the harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.'*²

NPS EN-1 also contains specific references to the impact of a proposed development on any heritage assets.³ Paragraph 5.8.12 states:

'In considering the impact of a proposed development on any heritage assets, the IPC should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage assets and the value that they hold for this and future generations. This understanding should be used to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation of that significance and proposals for development.'

Paragraph 5.8.13 states that

'The IPC should take into account the desirability of sustaining and, where appropriate, enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the contribution of their settings and the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities and economic vitality.¹²² The IPC should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use. The IPC should have regard to any relevant local authority development plans or local impact report on the proposed development in respect of the factors set out in footnote 122.'

¹ *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)*, op.cit. para 4.5.3 (CD/COM/001)

² *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)*, op.cit. para 5.9.8 (CD/COM/001)

³ As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Annex 2: "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)".

Footnote 122 explains that:

'This can be by virtue of:

- *heritage assets having an influence on the character of the environment and an area's sense of place;*
- *heritage assets having a potential to be a catalyst for regeneration in an area, particularly through leisure, tourism and economic development;*
- *heritage assets being a stimulus to inspire new development of imaginative and high quality design;*
- *the re-use of existing fabric, minimising waste; and*
- *the mixed and flexible patterns of land use in historic areas that are likely to be, and remain, sustainable.'*

Notwithstanding the fact that the southernmost part of this line route lies within an SSA identified in TAN8, where landscape character change is to be expected, the policy advises that careful design should take account of the potential impact upon the landscape. The effects of the construction of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection will bring about a change in landscape character along its route outside the SSA and those areas immediately adjacent to it, especially where the landscape is currently devoid of such features, or has only a low incidence of low-voltage overhead lines present. Such adverse changes would have a significant detrimental landscape impact on that part of the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales⁴ which it crosses, as well as on part of the setting of - and the visual amenity of travellers along - the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail which runs close to much of its route across the Vale of Montgomery. In addition, the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would traverse an area of historical landscape importance adjacent to the Kerry Ridgeway evaluated as being of outstanding historical value by the LANDMAP historic aspect specialist. The proposed route of the grid connection does not demonstrate that reasonable mitigation by means of avoidance, as part of a carefully designed approach, has been a determining factor in its design.

3.4 For proposed '*Developments in other areas*', in dealing with IPC decision making in respect of landscape impact, the wording is as follows:

'The IPC should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to minimise harm to the landscape, including by reasonable mitigation'.⁵

⁴ *'Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales; Part 2.1: Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest'*; Cadw, 1998; pp.133-135 (CD/CON/003/LAN/020)

⁵ *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)*, *op.cit.* para 5.9.17 (CD/COM/001)

The direct landscape effects on the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales indicate that the proposed line route design has not demonstrated that harm to the landscape has been minimised. An important element of the Registered Landscape is Offa's Dyke, parts of which are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, along the line of which runs Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. NPS EN-1 at paragraph 5.10.24 deals with the matter of National Trails and other rights of way, advising that

'Rights of way, National Trails and other rights of access to land are important recreational facilities for example for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The IPC should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects on coastal access, National Trails and other rights of way. Where this is not the case the IPC should consider what appropriate mitigation requirements might be attached to any grant of development consent.'

The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would alter the landscape character, which would have a consequent adverse effect on the perception of a Registered Historic Landscape and on the visual amenity of users of the nearby section of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Mitigation by avoidance would be a reasonable approach to minimising such harm in respect of the route of a National Trail, especially where it follows the line of a legible historical feature in the landscape and which forms an integral part of an area of landscape identified as being of outstanding historical interest in Wales. Where it is not possible to avoid such harm by means of a reasonable diversion of the line route, then placing the line underground should be considered as a practicable alternative means of avoidance.

3.5 In addition, NPS EN-5 deals specifically with landscape and visual impacts in section 2.8 of the document. It notes that

*'For the most part these impacts can be mitigated, however at particularly sensitive locations the potential adverse landscape and visual impacts of an overhead line proposal may make it unacceptable in planning terms, taking account of the specific local environment and context. New substations, sealing end compounds and other above ground installations that form connection, switching and voltage transformation points on the electricity networks can also give rise to landscape and visual impacts. Cumulative landscape and visual impacts can arise where new overhead lines are required along with other related developments such as substations, wind farms and/or other new sources of power generation.'*⁶

The Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales is of national significance so, in my professional opinion, constitutes a *'particularly*

⁶ National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5); para 2.8.2 (CD/COM/003)

sensitive location' which warrants special consideration in design terms. NPS EN-5 advises that

*'..... wherever the nature or proposed route of an overhead line proposal makes it likely that its visual impact will be particularly significant, the applicant should have given appropriate consideration to the potential costs and benefits of other feasible means of connection or reinforcement, including underground and sub-sea cables where appropriate.'*⁷

In my opinion, undergrounding that part of the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection which traverses the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales is the mitigation measure which should be applied to the design of the route. This approach is supported by the Holford Rules, also incorporated into guidance in NPS EN-5, which advises avoidance of *'smaller areas of high amenity value or scientific interest by deviation.'*⁸ The Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest is of high amenity value. Since it does not appear to have been possible to avoid the Historic landscape by means of a reasonable deviation in the proposed route, then avoidance by undergrounding should be regarded as the practicable alternative mitigation measure.

3.6 In referring to 'IPC Decision Making', NPS EN-5 advises that

*The IPC should recognise that the Holford Rules, and any updates, form the basis for the approach to routeing new overhead lines and take them into account in any consideration of alternatives and in considering the need for any additional mitigation measures.*⁹

The SEI acknowledges this at paragraph 6.3.17, with a quotation from NPS EN-5, together with an explanatory footnote which states that:

'The Holford Rules are a series of guidelines for the routeing of new high voltage transmission lines which were first formulated in 1959 by Lord Holford. Whilst the Holford Rules relate specifically to high voltage lines supported on lattice steel towers, many of the principles can also be used as a guide to the routeing of lines supported on wood poles. The Holford Rules are regarded as industry standards and have been tested at public inquiries and at hearings under the Electricity Act 1989. NPS EN-5 states that the Holford Rules should form the basis for the approach to routeing new overhead lines (para.2.8.7).'

The Holford Rules are referred to *'in overview'* in the SEI (at paragraph 5.3.26) and are more fully detailed in the Environmental Statement produced by SPEN for the proposed upgrade to the 132kV transmission line (carried on 'Trident' wood pole supports) between

⁷ National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5); para 2.8.4 (CD/COM/003)

⁸ National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5); para 2.8.6 (CD/COM/003)

the Oswestry substation and the Legacy Substation near Wrexham, currently under construction:

Rule 1: Avoid altogether, if possible, the major areas of highest amenity value, by so planning the general route of the line in the first place, even if the total mileage is somewhat increased in consequence.

Rule 2: Avoid smaller areas of high amenity value or scientific interest by deviation, provided this can be done without using too many angle towers, i.e. the more massive structures used when lines change direction.

Rule 3: Other things being equal, use the most direct line, with no sharp changes of direction and thus fewer angle towers.

Rule 4: Choose tree and hill backgrounds in preference to sky backgrounds wherever possible; and where the line has to cross a ridge, secure this opaque background as long as possible and cross obliquely when a dip in the ridge provides an opportunity. Where it does not, cross directly, preferable between belts of trees.

Rule 5: Prefer moderately open valleys with woods where the apparent height of towers will be reduced, and views of the line will be broken by trees.

Rule 6: In country which is flat and sparsely planted, keep the high-voltage lines as far as possible independent of smaller lines, converging routes, distribution poles and other masts, wires and cables, so as to avoid a concatenation of 'wirescape'.

Rule 7: Approach urban areas through industrial zones, where they exist; and where pleasant residential and recreation land intervenes between the approach line and the substation, go carefully into the comparative costs of undergrounding, for lines other than those of the highest voltage'.

3.7 Paragraphs 2.8.8 to 2.8.9 of NPS EN-5 deal specifically with the topic of undergrounding. Of three sub-sections covering matters which are to be considered in relation to undergrounding, the first notes that the IPC should consider

*'the landscape in which the proposed line will be set, (in particular, the impact on residential areas, and those of natural beauty or historic importance such as National Parks, AONBs and the Broads).'*⁹¹⁰

The Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales is a landscape of acknowledged national historic importance.

3.8 Planning Policy for Wales Edition 5, 2012 (PPW), at Chapter 6 translates the statutory requirements for conserving the historic environment into National Planning

⁹ National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5); para 2.8.7 (CD/COM/003)

¹⁰ National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5); para 2.8.9 CD/COM/003

Policy. Paragraph 6.5.25 sets out the guidance for development management in respect of the Register:

*'Information on the historic landscapes in the second part of the Register should be taken into account by local planning authorities in considering the implications of developments which are of such a scale that they would have a more than local impact on an area on the Register (see para 6.4.9).'*¹¹

The construction of the 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection as proposed would have more than a local impact upon the historic landscape areas through which it would pass. The length of the route passing through the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales would be around 6kms, between the area north-west of Montgomery and the A490 road near Fron, to the west of Forden and to the south of the hamlet of Cilcewydd. The line as proposed would have significant adverse landscape effects upon the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape by way of introducing new and incongruous man-made features into this sensitive landscape. The conclusion of the ASIDOHL assessment undertaken by the Applicant is that the construction of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection line would have a 'Moderate' impact upon the *entire landscape area on the Register*, not just the area of the Registered Landscape through which it passes - impact meaning the degree of change in its historic character and value.¹²

3.9 Planning Policy for Wales Edition 5, 2012 (PPW), at Chapter 12 sets out policy for Infrastructure and Services and includes guidance on development management in relation to renewable and low carbon energy, including grid connection issues where renewable (electricity) energy developments are proposed.¹³ Routeing the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection across a Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales and close to sections of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail does not demonstrate avoidance or a minimisation of the effects on landscape and visual amenity. In respect of policy dealing with Tourism Sport and Recreation, Paragraph 11.1.8 states that

'Planning authorities should provide the framework for well-located, good quality tourism, sport, recreational and leisure facilities. The areas and facilities provided in both rural and urban areas should be sensitive to the needs of users, attractive, well-maintained, and protected from crime and vandalism. They should be safe and accessible, including to deprived or disadvantaged communities and to people whose mobility is restricted, by a variety of sustainable means of travel, particularly walking, cycling and public transport. Long-distance routes, rights of way, disused

¹¹ *Planning Policy Wales*; Edition 5, November 2012; p.96 (CD/COM/008)

¹² *SEI October 2013*, Appendix 08a

¹³ *Planning Policy Wales*; Edition 5, November 2012; p.174 (CD/COM/008)

*railways and waterways are important tourism and recreation facilities, both in their own right and as a means of linking other attractions.'*¹⁴

The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection design would have significant adverse landscape and visual effects with regard to sections of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. At the approach to its northern terminus, the proposed line route would also have significant adverse effects on the visual amenity of the users of National Cycle Route 81, which crosses the Severn Valley between Hope and Welshpool, following the B4381. I conclude that the route proposed by the Applicant has not minimised the predicted adverse landscape and visual effects arising from the construction and operation of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection.

3.10 PPW refers to '*Technical Advice Note 8 - Planning For Renewable Energy*', Welsh Assembly Government 2005 (TAN8), for detailed guidance on renewable energy developments. The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection line would not be required if the proposed re-powering and extension of the operational Llandinam Wind Farm, which is also the subject of this planning inquiry, was to connect to the proposed SPEN 132kV line from SSA C to the proposed Cefn Coch 400kV substation, and if a more strategic approach to the planning of grid line connections from SSA C was undertaken. TAN8 has identified and demarcated SSA C, Newtown South, as being considered suitable for the location of large scale (over 25MW installed capacity) wind farm developments. Annex D of TAN8 deals specifically with SSAs and provides guidance as to the landscape implications of their development for wind-powered energy generation as follows:

'There is an implicit objective in TAN 8 to maintain the integrity and quality of the landscape within the National Parks/AONBs of Wales i.e. no change in landscape character from wind turbine development.

In the rest of Wales outside the SSAs, the implicit objective is to maintain the landscape character i.e. no significant change in landscape character from wind turbine development.

*Within (and immediately adjacent) to the SSAs, the implicit objective is to accept landscape change i.e. a significant change in landscape character from wind turbine development.'*¹⁵

Only the southernmost section of the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection, amounting to around 8.3 kms, or approximately 24 % of the total length of the

¹⁴ *Planning Policy Wales*; Edition 5, November 2012; p.154 (CD/COM/008)

¹⁵ *Technical Advice Note 8*; Annex D; para 8.4 (CD/COM/016)

proposed route, would run within the boundaries of SSA C, Newtown South, as defined in TAN8 in July 2005.

THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT OF THE APPLICATION SITE

4.1 The landscape through which the proposed line would pass is very varied, as is to be expected when constructing a connection between a new substation located at around 490m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) on a largely open elevated upland plateau, via small scale upland and lowland valleys, across a broad and distinctive lowland river basin and along part of a lowland major river valley close to a town, terminating at around 70m AOD.

4.2 The landscape varies from being sparsely settled, between Bryn Dadlau and Montgomery, with a greater density of settlement - but still largely dispersed in nature - in that section of the route from north-west of Montgomery to the edge of Welshpool. Land-use is dominated by pastoral agriculture, on both enclosed and open rough grazing land, between Bryn Dadlau and the north-west of Montgomery. Between there and Welshpool, there is a higher incidence of arable land. The few man-made vertical features on or crossing the local skylines are confined largely to communications masts, occasional small wind turbines and low-voltage electricity and telephone lines carried on single wood poles at around 8 metres high. The exception to this is the northern section of the route within the Severn Valley. Here, the existing 132Kv line running northwards from Abermule to Welshpool and onwards to the England border is carried on double wood poles at around 14 metres high, with taller steel lattice towers occurring where there are significant changes in direction. It is noteworthy that the 180-degree view eastwards from the route of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, where it crosses the floodplain of the River Camlad in the Vale of Montgomery, is of a landscape devoid of visible overhead transmission lines and poles. It is also noteworthy that no other tall man-made vertical elements are apparent in this view.

4.3 Offa's Dyke Path National Trail runs through nearby areas of open land, along that section of the route crossing the Vale of Montgomery between Forden and south east of the hamlet of Hendomen, to the north west of Montgomery. In the southern section of the route, where it runs up the valley culminating in the col at Black Gate on the B4355 to the south of Dolfor, the Kerry Ridgeway promoted regional trail runs along the high ground of the ridge forming the southern side of this valley. Between a point to the north-west of Montgomery, south west of Hendomen, and the A490 road between Forden and Fron, south of Cilcewydd, the land crossed by the route lies within the Vale of Montgomery

Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales. (*Refer to the photographs at Figure 1 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*).

4.4 The northernmost section of the route passes through the narrowest section of the lower Severn Valley, which has a landscape character strongly influenced by the juxtaposition of two large country estates - Powis Castle and Leighton Hall - which have a high concentration of heritage assets. Powis Castle is positioned on high ground on the western valley side and is visible from a wide area of the Severn Valley and from sections of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, including where it crosses part of the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance in Wales. Powis Castle Garden and Leighton Hall are included on the '*Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales*'. Powis Castle Garden and Leighton Hall are both evaluated as Grade I. The Register entries note that both sites have '*significant views*' out across the nearby sections of the Severn Valley.¹⁶ A notable and very conspicuous local landmark on the eastern side of the valley is Holy Trinity Church at Leighton (a Grade II* Listed Building), partly designed and positioned as an eye-catching feature of the Leighton Hall estate, and described in the register entry as:

*' a large and spectacular Cefn stone church with side aisles, flying buttresses, and a high tower and spire at its north-west end.'*¹⁷.

Parkland and specimen trees, some of them large veteran trees, are recurring elements in the landscape between Welshpool and Montgomery and are noted in an interpretation leaflet issued by Cambrian Lines for rail travellers along the Shrewsbury-Machynlleth railway line.¹⁸ They contribute to the landscape character and sense of place. (*Refer to the photographs at Figure 1 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*).

DEFINITIONS

5.1 Since 2007, when the UK government signed and ratified the articles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), public bodies and others have increasingly adopted its definition of the term 'landscape'. The definition is:

A "landscape" is "an area, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of natural and/or human factors".

¹⁶ '*Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales; Part 1: Parks & Gardens*'; Cadw, 1999; p.216 and p.128 (CD/CON/003/LAN/021)

¹⁷ '*Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales; Part 1: Parks & Gardens*'; Cadw, 1999; p.130 (CD/CON/003/LAN/021)

¹⁸ '*Window Gazers*' leaflet Shrewsbury-Machynlleth, Cambrian Lines; Arriva Trains website December 2013

5.2 The effect of having a commonly accepted definition and high level objectives is that discussions between different parties about landscape matters can, at last, share a common understanding of the concept, and what we need to consider when working with landscapes.

5.3 Landscape character, included within the scope of the ELC definition, is an important concept to enable our understanding of landscapes. Technical approaches to identifying and assessing landscape character have evolved over recent decades.

5.4 *Landscape character* is defined as the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how it is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation and land use, and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.¹⁹ The practice of landscape character assessment has evolved with reference to the various underlying natural, cultural and perceptual influences that combine to create landscape character. In Wales, the collection of information on the underlying influences that make up landscape character has been structured through a national assessment programme known as LANDMAP. This programme resulted in a suite of five themed layers (or 'Aspects') of information: geological landscapes, landscape habitats, historic landscapes, visual and sensory and cultural landscapes. Thus, practice in landscape character assessment in Wales is to draw upon LANDMAP information when combining the various natural, cultural and perceptual influences that create landscape character.

5.5 In LANDMAP, each themed layer includes an overall evaluation score, which is underpinned by unique evaluation criteria for each landscape aspect area identified. The evaluations are often used to highlight where our landscapes are particularly important in respect of particular evaluation criteria. However, it must be stressed that in offering evaluations, it is LANDMAP's intention to stimulate discussions about how important our landscapes are, rather than to close down further discussion. It must also be recognised that although LANDMAP can provide a context, further, more locally detailed assessment is likely to be needed when considering individual development proposals. It should be noted that LANDMAP methodology defines 'Outstanding' value as being of national or

¹⁹ *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England & Scotland*; The Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002; s.7.8, p.53. (CD/CON/003/LAN/005)

international importance; 'High' value is of county or regional importance; and 'Moderate' value is of local importance.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

5.6 The Historic Landscape Characterisation which has taken place for Registered Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales has identified, described and mapped constituent Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCAs), which are the equivalent of a Level 4 LANDMAP Historical Landscape Assessment. Registered Historic Landscapes are based on professional academic consensus, backed by Historic Landscape Characterisation. My understanding is that, in relation to the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Interest in Wales, the constituent HLCAs are founded upon much more detailed research and analysis than the LANDMAP Level 3 Historical Landscapes Aspect assessment data. Each of these constituent HLCAs is not individually evaluated. This Historical Landscape Characterisation process has identified 19 constituent Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCAs); each of these is the equivalent of a Level 4 LANDMAP assessment. Parts of 5 of these HLCAs lie beneath the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection.

5.7 The Applicant's landscape assessor has relied upon the underlying Level 3 LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas within the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest to inform their landscape sensitivity analysis. The details of these Aspect Areas are provided in *Appendix 2 to my Proof of Evidence*.²⁰ The boundary between two of them lies along the Shrewsbury-Machynlleth railway line. West of the line, MNTGMHL441 - *Lower Severn Valley*, is evaluated overall as 'Outstanding'; east of the line, MNTGMHL980 - *Salt Bridge*, is evaluated as 'High'. The more detailed Historic Landscape Characterisation process has identified only one HLCA encompassing the floodplain of the River Camlad in this vicinity (Fflos), which includes the land on both sides of the railway assessed as being of common character. I consider that it is unreliable to use a coarser level of historic landscape data to inform sensitivity analysis, when more detailed information is available. My analysis of the LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect at Level 4 in this locality has resulted in a correlation between a Visual and Sensory Aspect Area *Camlad Valley Farmland* boundary and the *Fflos* HLCA boundary, which is also supported by the underlying LANDMAP Geological Aspect Area boundary for MNTGMGL391, *Fflos to Llandyssil*. In my opinion, there is no difference in

landscape character and sensitivity between the landscape on either side of the railway line. I therefore conclude that the sensitivity ascribed to all of the landscape within the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, using the Applicant's terminology should be high, since it is of national significance. In my professional opinion, it is not valid to regard the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales as being anything other than an entity for planning purposes.

5.8 A comparison could be made with the landscape designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). For example, whilst not all Visual and Sensory Aspect areas within a given AONB may be of outstanding or high overall value, all areas derive equal protection from that designation for planning purposes. Therefore, although two of the constituent Historic Landscape Aspect Areas are scored overall as high, and one is outstanding, the entire Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales should receive equal consideration, in view of the level of national importance attributed to it. In my professional opinion, this should result in the whole of the Registered Landscape being regarded as being of *high landscape sensitivity*, using the Applicant's assessor's terminology.

5.9 In short, LANDMAP identifies, describes and maps areas. The Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales and Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies, describes and maps areas of common character based upon an historical understanding of the themes and processes which have shaped the landscape.

Commentary on the Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessments by the Applicant

5.10 I consider that the 2013 SEI's treatment of baseline landscape condition is broadly consistent with current practice and widely-accepted national guidelines published in relation to the assessment of landscape and visual impact. The SEI makes specific reference to the Powys Landscape Character Assessment and underlying LANDMAP Level 3 data. The Powys Landscape Character Assessment was based upon Level 3 LANDMAP data sets, but the Montgomeryshire LANDMAP Historical Landscape Aspect data had not been evaluated at the time of preparation; it was subsequently evaluated in July 2009.

²⁰ LANDMAP Methodology: *Guidance for Wales; Historic Landscape*, 2013, p.19

5.11 The LANDMAP information referred to in the SEI includes data from all ‘five LANDMAP landscape layers’, in accordance with guidance on the LANDMAP methodology on the introductory page of the NRW website, as follows:

‘It is the use of all five layers of information that promotes sustainable landscape decision-making as what may be less important to in one particular layer may be of high importance in another. Giving all five layers equal consideration ensures no aspect of the landscape is overlooked.’²¹

5.12 The Applicant’s assessment has relied upon Level 3 LANDMAP data, both in that this level of data capture underpins the Powys LCA study, and in looking in more detail at the underlying LANDMAP data itself. In my professional opinion, given that the landscape and visual effects of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection are likely to be potentially significant within the study area identified and perhaps beyond, it is necessary to analyse the landscape at a more detailed level - ‘Level 4’ in LANDMAP terminology, at least for the Visual & Sensory Aspect.

5.13 The presence of the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales underlying part of the route is a very significant landscape receptor. This Registered Landscape, in common with other such registered areas of historic landscape interest in Wales, has been analysed, described and mapped by way of the Historical Landscape Characterisation process. This has identified 19 constituent Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCAs); each of these is the equivalent of a Level 4 LANDMAP assessment. Parts of 5 of these HLCAs lie beneath the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection.

5.14 The Applicant’s landscape assessor has subdivided the route for the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection into eight sections, labelled A-H, running from south to north.²² This more detailed level of analysis and description was produced partly in response to NRW’s consultation responses during 2012-13, having been founded upon a field-based sensitivity appraisal in support of their desk research, by way of establishing the sensitivity of the local landscape to the changes predicted to arise from the construction and operation of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection. In my opinion, the landscape sensitivity analysis undertaken by the Applicant is at too coarse a level to be reliable in fully understanding the sensitivity of the landscape through which the

CD/CON/003/LAN/19)

²¹ LANDMAP Methodology *Guidance for Wales. Overview to LANDMAP, 2012*; p.1
(CD/CON/003/LAN/001)

route will pass across the Vale of Montgomery and in the lower Severn Valley between Powis Castle and Leighton. It follows that it does not form a reliable basis for predicting the level and extent of landscape and visual effects which would arise from the construction and operation of the line. In my opinion, this has led to an understatement of the value placed upon parts of the landscape, which has then been used as part of the basis for reaching their conclusions as to the significance of the predicted landscape and visual effects. The SEI confirms that the sensitivity assessment used in the 2009 and 2010 ES Addendum was based on the 'eight Powys LCAs identified across the study area'. It then states that the 'Field-Based Landscape and Visual sensitivity Study provided a finer grained assessment', but I note that this assessment also identified and mapped just eight discrete sections.²³ Whilst the Applicant's landscape assessor's methodology correctly uses the LANDMAP Aspect data [particularly Visual & Sensory] to inform the landscape sensitivity for each of the subdivisions A-H, the boundaries between the Sections are not founded upon - and do not correlate with - the underlying LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect boundaries. Their assessment of sensitivity is therefore unreliable.

5.15 The Applicant's landscape assessor has concluded that the landscape sensitivity of Section B - A483 near Old Neuadd Bank to Cae Betin Wood - is enhanced beyond its Visual & Sensory overall value by way of the underlying outstanding Historic Landscape Aspect Area overall evaluations, the justification being given as follows:

*'High landscape sensitivity partly because it is an attractive rural landscape, but more because it is a highly valued historic landscape that is locally recognised and also promoted as a recreational resource due to the Kerry Ridgeway Regional Trail.'*²⁴

There is no Registered Historic Landscape in this area and the Kerry Ridgeway is not a National Trail, yet historical values are being used by the Applicant's landscape assessor used to justify an increased level of local landscape sensitivity to *high*. I agree that this section of the proposed line route should be regarded as being of high sensitivity, for the reasons provided by the Applicant. However, if this conclusion is valid in relation to the Kerry Ridgeway vicinity, then it must apply to the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest which includes Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

5.16 No such conclusion has been reached in respect of those sections of the proposed route (Sections F and G) which would traverse the Vale of Montgomery Registered

²² SEI Oct 2013; Appendix 6, Figure 1: Field-Based Sensitivity Map

²³ SEI Oct 2013, Appendix 5a paras 3.5.3-3.5.5, p.9

²⁴ SEI Oct 2013, Vol I, Chapter 6, text preceding para 6.6.67, p.21

Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales. The SEI notes in respect of Section F: *Court Calmore near B4385 to B4386 near Woodlands* that it has:

*'Medium-high landscape sensitivity due to the combination of the scenic quality of the farmland as well as the influence of historical features on the landscape, which is recognised by its inclusion within the Vale of Montgomery Registered Historic Landscape. Offa's Dyke National Trail lies within 1 km of the line.'*²⁵

For the reasons I have given above, at paragraphs 5.6 to 5.9 of my Proof of Evidence, I consider that the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales should be classified for landscape and visual assessment purposes as being of *high landscape sensitivity*, since it is of acknowledged national importance. The Applicant's landscape assessor has chosen to rely on the LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas overall values to inform their assessment of the local landscape sensitivity. Historic Landscape Aspect Area (MNTGMHL980), to the east of the railway line across the Camlad valley, has an Overall Evaluation of 'High'. MNTGMHL 441, to the west of the railway, has an Overall Evaluation of 'Outstanding'. (Refer to Figure 2 at Appendix 3 to my proof of Evidence) By routeing the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection across the Camlad valley through the land east of the railway line, the Applicant has assessed the landscape sensitivity of Section F of the route as being Medium-High. The underlying 'Fflos' HLCA within the Camlad Valley area of the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape is identified as being an area which covers the floodplain of the Camlad Valley on both sides of the railway line, as a common character area.²⁶ (Refer to Figure 3 at Appendix 3 to my proof of Evidence). In addition, Offa's Dyke National Trail passes through the same area of landscape as the proposed line route, within 1 km to the east. This is one of only 3 National Trails in Wales.

5.17 The Applicant's assessor concludes in respect of Section F that

*'There may be some significant landscape effects along this section of the route particular where the landscape is more open. Nevertheless the larger scale of the farmland, existing man-made features and scope for backdropping against the valley sides affords good opportunities for sensitive routeing and for the most part the proposed overhead line would blend into the background of trees and hillsides.'*²⁷

Where the line route would rise from the edge of the river Camlad floodplain up to the B4386 road east of Woodlands Farm, '*land backdropping*' ceases to be a mitigation factor

²⁵ SEI Oct 2013, Vol I, Chapter 6, text preceding para 6.6.74, p.22

²⁶ Historic Landscape Characterisation; Vale of Montgomery Registered Historic Landscape; CPAT website entry, December 2013 (CD/CON/003/LAN/022)

²⁷ SEI Oct 2013, Vol I, Chapter 6, para 6.6.74, p.22

and the line would be skylined in views from the east, from the B4388 and parts of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. In addition, the reliance on the woodland cover along the Shrewsbury-Machynlleth railway line as background trees when viewed from the east - such as along Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and the B4388 - is less effective in winter. Also ash trees are a significant component of the woodland and tree cover in this area and are likely to be adversely affected by the predicted onset of ash die-back disease *Chalara fraxinea*, thus reducing the density of cover. The Applicant's assessor draws the following conclusion in respect of the significance of the effects:

*'Although the magnitude of change is likely to be low, when combined with the medium-high sensitivity the overall effect would be **minor-moderate** and therefore borderline significant.'*²⁸

In my professional opinion, from my conclusions in para 5.16, above, Section F of the proposed line route should be ascribed a *high level of landscape sensitivity*. Consequently, even a minor-moderate adverse effect upon a high sensitivity landscape receptor results in a significant effect, not one which is '*borderline significant*', as judged by the Applicant's landscape assessor. I would judge the worst-case scenario of magnitude of change to be medium when the line is seen along the line of the route, with poles appearing to be stacked and with low-angle sunlight in winter reflecting from insulators and galvanised steelwork. These factors would contribute to causing significant effects.

5.18 The SEI notes in respect of Section G: *B4386 near Woodlands to Cilcewydd* that the landscape sensitivity is judged to be

*'**Medium** due to potential effect on views from properties and the more rural pockets of landscape. Although this area forms part of the Vale of Montgomery Historic Landscape, the area has more overt man-made influences including settlement and also provides more scope for sensitive routeing due to the rolling landform and high prevalence of hedgerows and trees.'*²⁹

I make the same observations in respect of the sensitivity which should be ascribed to that part of this section which lies within the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, as at paragraph 5.7 of my Proof of Evidence. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail is running on a similar alignment to the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection, and within the identified study area for the landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken by the Applicant. The Applicant's assessor appears to be using the criterion of settlement as being a reason for reducing the landscape sensitivity of this part of the route. Human settlement and its influence on the landscape is

²⁸ SEI Oct 2013, Vol I, Chapter 6, para 6.6.74, p.22

a component of the Registered Historic Landscape; it should not be used as a means of justifying the placing of new man-made landscape elements into this landscape. Section G of the proposed line route within the Registered Landscape should therefore also be ascribed a *high level of landscape sensitivity*.

5.19 The Applicant's assessor has concluded that

*'The low magnitude of change combined with the medium sensitivity would result in a minor effect on the landscape.'*³⁰

My professional opinion is that the landscape effects of constructing this line would be of medium magnitude which, when combined with high landscape sensitivity, for the reasons set out in para 5.17, above, would result in a moderate effect on the landscape which would be significant. I note that the Applicant's assessor includes at *Table 6.5 in the SEI a 'Scale of Significance of Landscape Effects'*. This is said to be sourced from Table 5.10 of the GLVIA3. Reference to the actual source material shows that there are three criteria clearly identified as being more significant, one of which is effects on rare, distinctive or particularly representative landscape character are considered to be of higher significance. The Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest is one such area of landscape.

5.20 The SEI notes in respect of Section H: *Cilcewydd to Welshpool Grid Substation* that the landscape sensitivity is judged to be

*'Medium-high landscape sensitivity because although there is scope for screening, the presence of the culturally and historically important Powis Castle and Leighton Estates, Sustrans National Cycle Route 81 and the Severn Valley Way locally increase the sensitivity.'*³¹

This landscape is strongly characterised by the presence of the two juxtaposed estates, Powis Castle and Leighton Hall. As well as Leighton Hall and Powis Castle themselves, there are many historic buildings and built elements with common architectural features which contribute strongly to the local sense of place, and there are discernible extant elements of the wider planned estate landscapes - gate lodges, parkland, veteran trees, formal tree avenues, boundary walls and railings and ornamental gateway features. Leighton Hall was sited at the centre of a once large estate on the eastern side of the valley. The close juxtaposition of the Leighton Hall and Powis Estates across this narrow section of the Severn Valley - and the intervisibility between the two main sites - means

²⁹ *SEI Oct 2013, Vol I, Chapter 6, text preceding para 6.6.75, p.22*

³⁰ *SEI Oct 2013, Vol I, Chapter 6, para 6.6.76, p.22*

that the planned estate appearance is a major characterising influence on this part of the Severn Valley landscape.

5.21 The most notable local landmark on the eastern side of the Severn Valley is the fine church tower and spire of Holy Trinity Church at Leighton village, a Grade II* Listed Building. The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments for Wales (RCAHMW) describes this church as

*'...one of the best examples of a Victorian Estate Church in Wales. It was commissioned by John Naylor, and built in 1851-3 to the design of W.H. Gee, as part of an ambitious programme of building across the entire Leighton estate.'*³²

This graceful feature was partly designed as an 'eye-catcher' as part of the Leighton Estate³³ and its conspicuous spire draws the eye in many extensive views from the western side of the Severn Valley, both at higher levels - such as from Powis Castle Garden terraces or the housing areas in the north of Welshpool - as well as from lower levels, such as along the Welshpool by-pass and the Shrewsbury-Machynlleth railway line. It is also a prominent focal point in views from public roads and rights of way along that part of the eastern side of the Severn Valley, since its walled churchyard stands on a small spur of relatively level ground at around 114m AOD, projecting outwards from the typical slope of the valley sides around Leighton village. The northernmost section of the proposed 132kV line route would pass through part of the landscape setting of this church.

5.22 The underlying Historical Landscape Aspect Area (MNTGMHL441) overall evaluation in this Section is outstanding. The Cultural Aspect Area overall evaluation is also outstanding. In my opinion, the characteristics of the landscape in Section H and of the adjacent Leighton Hall estate are such that they warrant an increase in landscape sensitivity to *high* rather than medium-high, as ascribed by the Applicant's assessor. Therefore, this increase in sensitivity leads to an increase in the significance of the effects on this area. **Landscape Character Assessment based upon LANDMAP Data and Historic Landscape Characterisation**

5.23 I have examined the Landscape Character along the route for the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection and its landscape context referring to the most recent LANDMAP data for all five Aspects.

³¹ *SEI Oct 2013, Vol I*, Chapter 6, para 6.6.77-78, p.22

³² Text from *Cadw* listing information, November 2008, RCAHM Wales website; January 2013 (CD/CON/003/LAN/023)

³³ *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales; Part 1: Parks & Gardens; Powys; Cadw Welsh Historic Monuments*, 1999; p.129 (CD/CON/003/LAN/021)

5.24 The SEI makes specific reference to the Powys Landscape Character Assessment and LANDMAP data. There is direct reference to all of the underlying LANDMAP data level of local detail (Level 3) and which would properly inform the baseline condition assessment.

5.25 I have reviewed the relevant Level 3 LANDMAP data for the proposed route. I have also undertaken a Level 4 Visual & Sensory Aspect assessment for that section of the proposed line route referred to in the SEI as Sections F, G and H. The details of these Level 4 V & S Aspect Areas are included for reference purposes in the 'Collector Sheets' included at *Appendix 1A*, to my Proof of Evidence.

Conclusions in respect of Landscape Character Assessment

5.26 The Applicant's landscape assessor has undertaken an assessment of landscape character which is at too coarse a level to identify and describe accurately the underlying landscape character along sections F, G and H of the route for the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection.

5.27 By undertaking a more detailed Level 4 LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect assessment for Sections F, G and H, I conclude that the overall evaluations of the Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas as assessed at Level 4 are as follows:

- Section F -
 - *Hendomen Rolling Farmland - Moderate*
 - *Camlad Valley Farmland - High*
 - *Forden Rolling Lowland - Moderate*
- Section G -
 - *Forden Rolling Lowland - Moderate*
 - *Edderton Hall Estate Farmland - Moderate*
- Section H -
 - *Edderton Hall Estate Farmland - Moderate*
 - *Severn Valley Cilcewydd to Leighton Bridge - High*
 - *Leighton Hall Estate Parkland - High.*

The disposition of these Level 4 and the Level 3 Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas is shown on the map at *Figure 4 in Appendix 3* to my Proof of Evidence. A comparison of my Level 4 data, and the Level 3 LANDMAP data used by Applicant's landscape assessor to inform the Landscape Sensitivity, is detailed in *Appendix 1B to my Proof of Evidence*.

LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

5.28 *Landscape capacity* is defined as:

*“... the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects upon its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.”*³⁴

5.29 In the absence of any published equivalent guidance for the determination of landscape sensitivity and capacity for specific use in the context of Wales, I have applied the most recent capacity guidance³⁵ published by the Countryside Agency, Natural England's predecessor, in examining the landscape of Sections F, G and H of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection, in order to assess its capacity to accept the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection without detriment. Landscape capacity is a function of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and landscape value, defined as follows:

*“the **Landscape Character Sensitivity** of each landscape type or area to that type of change, which will reflect the sensitivity of individual aspects of landscape character including landform, land cover, enclosure, form and pattern, tree cover, settlement form and pattern, and other characteristic elements, and the aesthetic aspects of landscape character, including for example, its scale, complexity, and diversity;*

*the **Visual Sensitivity** to that type of change, which will reflect, for each landscape type or area; general visibility, influenced by landform and tree and woodland cover, the presence and size of populations of different types, and potential for mitigation of visual impacts, without the mitigation in itself causing unacceptable effects.*

*the **Value** attached to each landscape, which will reflect: national designations based on landscape value; other judgements about value based either on a 'Quality of Life Assessment', or on consideration of a range of appropriate criteria relating to landscape value.”*³⁶

5.30 *Topic Paper 6* makes the following statement regarding *Landscape Value*:

*“... Simply relying on designations is to be avoided as this is an oversimplification of the complex issues but the issue remains of whether there is agreement about the way that value can be defined. At present it seems that this approach to defining capacity, by combining sensitivity and aspects of value, is reasonably accepted in Scotland, particularly in recent wind farm capacity studies....”*³⁷

³⁴ *Landscape Character Assessment, op.cit.*, s.7.8, p.53 (CD/CON/003/LAN/005)

³⁵ *Topic Paper 6: Landscape Capacity and Landscape Sensitivity*; Swanwick, C.; Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2004; p.20 (CD/CPL/LAN/001)

³⁶ *Topic Paper 6, op.cit.* p.20 (CD/CPL/LAN/001)

³⁷ *Topic Paper 6, op.cit.* p.20 (CD/CPL/LAN/001)

5.31 In Wales, the evaluated Aspects derived from the LANDMAP methodology provide objective assessments of value and other key data sets to be used in the analysis of landscape capacity. My assessment of the landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and the landscape capacity is based upon a critical review of data from the appropriate LANDMAP Aspect Areas as the baseline, data which has been independently assessed by the respective LANDMAP Aspect Specialists (Level 3). It is supported by my own assessment of the Visual and Sensory Aspect at the more detailed level (Level 4).

5.32 In Wales, LANDMAP provides this information through its Evaluated Aspect Areas, and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3) make specific reference to this:

*'Considering value at the baseline stage will inform later judgements about the significance of effects. Value can apply to areas of landscape as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. LANDMAP in Wales, for example, evaluates each area for each of its five aspects or layers. A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point in understanding landscape value, but the value attached to undesignated landscape also needs to be carefully considered...'*³⁸

5.33 The Applicant's landscape assessor has not carried out a Landscape Capacity Study in strict accordance with current guidance, as contained in Topic Paper 6.³⁹ This guidance sets out the process by which, firstly, landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity combine to produce overall landscape sensitivity. Secondly, it combines the overall landscape sensitivity with landscape value, and these two factors produce the assessment of landscape capacity. The landscape sensitivity study undertaken by the Applicant's landscape assessor has used 11 criteria (see SEI Vol 3a, Appendix 6c, Table 2) to arrive at overall landscape sensitivity, but has incorrectly used landscape value as one of these criteria. This is a misapplication of landscape value in assessing capacity in accordance with Topic Paper 6. This has effectively relegated the role of *Value* to being only 1 of 11 criteria, since Topic Paper 6 requires that *Value* is one of only 2 key factors in arriving at landscape capacity (see Figure 3b, p.22).

5.34 In my opinion, the landscape through which Sections F and G of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would run across the Camlad valley between Calmore and the A490 near Fron is underpinned by high overall Visual & Sensory evaluations which, when combined with the justification of an outstanding historical evaluation

³⁸ GLVIA, 2013, *op.cit.*; p.80 (CD/CPL/LAN/005)

because of the national significance of the registered landscape, results in an overall *landscape sensitivity* which is *high* and therefore which has a *low* capacity to accept change in the form of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection.

5.35 Section H is identified by the Applicant's assessor as that part of the route which runs northwards from Cilcewydd to terminate at the operational substation adjacent to the B4381 east of Welshpool. My Level 4 LANDMAP Visual & Sensory assessment has resulted in the overall Visual & Sensory Evaluation of the land in the Severn Valley being increased to *High*. When combined with an overall *landscape sensitivity* which is *high*, *this landscape* has a *low* capacity to accept change in the form of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection. The Planning Inspector in her Report to the Welsh Government regarding the Lower Leighton Farm Planning Inquiry held in March 2013 noted that

*'The landscape in this part of Powys is rightly considered to be a valuable resource.'*⁴⁰

The Inspector also noted in the conclusions to her report

'... the importance of the historic link between the landscape and the heritage assets.'

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED LLANDINAM GRID CONNECTION

6.1 *For clarification, the difference between the terms landscape effects and visual effects is as follows: landscape effects* are the effects on individual landscape elements and characteristics - that is, the effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right; *visual effects* are the effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.⁴¹ The GLVIA3 defines visual amenity as being

*'The overall pleasantness of views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.'*⁴²

6.2 The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would have both effects upon the landscape and visual effects. My assessment of the likely effects of the proposed

³⁹ *Topic Paper 6, op.cit., Figures 1A and 1B, p.6 (CD/CPL/LAN/001)*

⁴⁰ Lower Leighton Farm Planning Inquiry; Planning Inspector's Report, 1st May 2013; paragraphs 369 and 450; ref: APP/T6850/V/12/2169855 (CD/CON/003/LAN/025)

⁴¹ *GLVIA3, op.cit; Glossary, pp. 155-159 (CD/CPL/LAN/005)*

⁴² *GLVIA3, op.cit; Glossary, pp. 155-159 (CD/CPL/LAN/005)*

development is a product of my professional judgement, supported by current published advice on landscape and visual assessment.⁴³

6.3 The significance of visual effects is assessed by taking into consideration the sensitivity and importance of the receptor and the nature, scale or magnitude and duration of the change or effect.⁴⁴ The Applicant has stated clearly in the ES and the SEI the methodology used in their assessment of landscape and visual effects. I am in broad agreement with the methodology used, with reservations which I detail below.

Effects on the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest In Wales

Landscape Effects on the Registered Landscape

6.4 The baseline landscape character along the route has been described in the Powys Landscape Character Assessment (2008) based upon all 5 LANDMAP Aspect Area datasets.⁴⁵ The route as it crosses the Vale of Montgomery lies within the *Severn Farmlands* Landscape Character Area (LCA M9), which is a very large area encompassing not only the lower Severn Valley between Newtown and the England border, but also the lower Vyrnwy Valley, from west of Meifod to the England border near Llanymynech. Assessment of landscape effects in relation to such a large area of land at this scale of description can be misleading, and so examination of the underlying LANDMAP data is necessary to achieve a more reliable result. The relevant underlying LANDMAP Level 3 Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas⁴⁶ along the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection between Montgomery in the south and Cilcewydd in the north - with their 'Overall Evaluations' - are (listed from south to north, with Overall Evaluation scores) - *Refer to Figure 4 at Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence.*

- MNTGMVS 434 - *Montgomery Mosaic Rolling Farmland - Moderate*⁴⁷
- MNTGMVS 650 - *River Severn Floodplain - Moderate*
- MNTGMVS 370 - *Crewgreen to Forden Hill and Scarp - Moderate.*⁴⁸

⁴³ *Landscape Character Assessment – op.cit.* (CD/CON/003/LAN/005); and *GLVIA3, op.cit.* (CD/CPL/LAN/005)

⁴⁴ *GLVIA3, op.cit.*; p.46 (CD/CPL/LAN/005)

⁴⁵ Note that the Montgomeryshire Historic Landscapes Aspect Data had not been evaluated at that time but has been since (July 2009)

⁴⁶ Text is abstracted from current LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect Collector data December 2013

⁴⁷ A moderate evaluation is of local importance.

⁴⁸ Text is abstracted from current LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect Collector data December 2013.

The Applicant's assessor's subdivision of the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection in relation to the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales does not appear to be based upon the identified and mapped boundaries of the underlying LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect Areas (Level 3) - *Refer to Figure 4 at Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*. Since the Applicant has not gone to the more detailed Level 4 Visual & Sensory LANDMAP Assessment to provide any supporting visual and sensory information, I can see no Visual & Sensory evidence basis as justification for the identified line route subdivisions in the October 2013 SEI.

6.5 The route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection across the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales has the following underlying Historic Landscape Aspect Areas:

- MNTGM HL541 - *Fridd Faldwyn - High*
- MNTGM HL980 - *Salt Bridge - High*
- MNTGM HL514 - *Forden/Trelystan - High*⁴⁹

There is also no correspondence between the identified Level 3 Historic Landscape Aspect Area boundaries and the Applicant's assessor's line route subdivisions. Within Section F, there are 3 Historic Landscape Aspect Areas, as shown above (*Refer to Figure 2 at Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*). There is also no correlation between the HLCA boundaries identified by the Historic Landscape Characterisation work for the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales (*Refer to Figure 3 at Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*). I can therefore see no Historical Landscape evidence basis as justification for the identified line route subdivisions in the SEI.

6.6 Therefore, in the Applicant's approach, there is an element of confusion being introduced which has affected the assessment of landscape sensitivity within Section F: *Court Calmore near B4385 to the B4386 near Woodlands*. By incorporating LANDMAP Aspect data for areas to the north and south of the Camlad valley, this has distorted and downgraded the sensitivity of the Camlad valley *per se*. In order to address this anomaly, I have carried out a Level 4 LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Assessment for the locality and referred in detail to the HLCA information underpinning the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales. LANDMAP Collector Sheets are included at *Appendix 1A to my Proof of Evidence*; and their spatial distribution is shown at *Figure 3 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*.

6.7 The Applicant concludes:

*'This sensitivity is due to the combination of the scenic quality of the farmland within the Camlad Valley as well as the influence of historical features of the landscape which is recognised by its inclusion within the Vale of Montgomery Registered Historic Landscape. Offa's Dyke national trail lies within 1km of the line. There may be some significant landscape effects along this section of the route particularly where the landscape is more open. Nevertheless the larger scale of the farmland, existing man-made features and scope for backclothing against the valley sides affords good opportunities for sensitive routeing and for the most part the proposed overhead line would blend into the background of trees and hillsides. Although the magnitude of change is likely to be low, when combined with the medium-high sensitivity the overall effect may be **low to moderate** and be considered **borderline significant**.'*

For the reasons I have set out in Section 5 of my Proof of Evidence, I do not agree with the Applicant's landscape assessor's conclusion that Corridor Section F: *Court Calmore near B4385 to the B4386 near Woodlands* should be ascribed medium-high sensitivity.⁵⁰ The landscape traversed by the proposed line across the Camlad valley is substantially open, with a gently sloping terrain and the aggregation of multiple double wood poles and their supporting frames will be an entirely new linear element in this landscape. Low winter sun effects on this infrastructure will increase their visibility and their presence in the landscape, resulting in a medium magnitude of change. The new line will give rise to cumulative landscape effects with the existing low-voltage lines which run through that section of the landscape between Offa's Dyke National Trail and the Shrewsbury-Machynlleth railway line and the incongruous operational substation adjacent to the B4386 road east of Woodlands Farm. These effects would conflict with Holford Rule 6, which states that:

'Rule 6: In country which is flat and sparsely planted, keep the high voltage lines as far as possible independent of smaller lines, converging routes, distribution poles and other masts, wires and cables, so as to avoid a concentration or 'wirescape'.'

These effects would be apparent not only from Offa's Dyke Path National Trail but also from the B4388 road which crosses the Camlad valley and from the B4386 road which runs along the northern edge of the valley. My Viewpoint NRW1 south of Salt Bridge on the B4388 shows the local context. (Refer to the photograph at Figure 5 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence). There will be significant direct and adverse effects on both

⁴⁹ Text is abstracted from current LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect Collector data December 2013.

⁵⁰ SEI October 2013: *Planning Considerations Appendix*; para 3.42, p.11

landscape elements and landscape character along the route of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection between Court Calmore and Fron. There is no existing structure in this landscape which has any similarity to that of the proposed 12-16 metres high double wood poles with steel supporting frames. Reliance upon tree cover which includes a significant proportion of ash trees to contribute to screening or assimilation needs to be considered in the light of the onset of ash die-back disease. The effects of this pathogen would be to open up the landscape still further, with younger trees affected first. Views of the Camlad valley from the western edge of the hamlet of Hendomen and from the elevated viewpoint at Montgomery Castle illustrate the rather open nature of much of the valley landscape where the line would run. My Viewpoint NRW 2 at the western edge of Hendomen hamlet shows this landscape. (*Refer to the photographs at Figure 6 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*).

Visual Effects on Offa's Dyke Path National Trail

6.8 In addition to the adverse landscape effects described above, travellers along Offa's Dyke Path National Trail would experience significant adverse visual effects. The length of the National Trail experiencing such effects would be at least 2 kms. This is an important route along which travellers can experience the unspoilt nature of much of the Vale of Montgomery landscape without distractions caused by passing vehicular traffic. I do not agree with the full detail of the Applicant's assessors definitions of magnitude of visual effects as set out in the SEI, for the following reasons. Reference to *Tables 6.10a and 6.10b of the SEI* shows that the assessment of significance has been reduced in relation to the visual sensitivity and the magnitude of change assessed at several viewpoint locations (for example, at VP13a, VP50 and VP51). For each of these viewpoints, a high visual sensitivity and a high magnitude have been ascribed, and yet the resulting visual effect is judged to be moderate, whereas I would expect the outcome to be major, unless otherwise qualified. This gives me little confidence in the Applicant's judgements of the predicted effects from Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

6.9 These adverse effects would be particularly experienced from that section of the National Trail crossing the open landscape of the Camlad valley between the B4386 running east-west along the northern edge of the valley between the B4388 and Upper Hem farmstead and to the south of Devil's Hole. The footbridge over the River Camlad at c. 83m AOD (OSGR SO 2310 9925) is an important change point in the experience of this local landscape - crossing the river which also forms the border with England - a place where it is natural to pause, take in the views and reflect on the scene. The 180-degree view to the east, remarkably, is devoid of any overhead lines and poles and other man-

made vertical elements. By contrast, there is a local concentration of low-voltage overhead lines between the National Trail and the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth railway line. Some of these run up to the unattractive operational substation adjacent to the B4386 road east of Woodlands Farm, whilst another runs north-westwards towards the Severn Valley, its wood pole supports being seen as closely stacked in the view (*Refer to the photographs for Viewpoint NRW3 at Figure 7 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*). Increasing the density of the concentration of overhead lines in the locality, especially by introducing much larger poles and steel supporting frames, would again conflict with Holford Rule 6.

6.10 There will be repeated views of sections of the proposed 132kV line, especially as it traverses the higher ground as it rises up from the Camlad floodplain near Woodlands Farm, where it is likely to be seen breaking the skyline. Powis Castle is visible as part of the distant backdrop to this view north-west, another important heritage asset in the wider landscape. The attractive views to the south towards Montgomery would also be adversely affected, where key historical features also form important landmarks - Montgomery castle, Montgomery church, the wooded hill of Ffridd Faldwyn and the Town Hill monument. The proposed line would also be visible as it crosses the lower valley slopes just to the west of Hendomen hamlet, which forms part of the landscape and visual setting of the scheduled ancient monument site at Hen Domen motte.

6.11 The proposed 12-16 metres high double wood poles, with their steel supporting frames between their tops, would be entirely new man-made features in these views. In winter, when the sun is at a low angle, such steel frames and insulators can be readily seen, especially when strong sunlight follows rain, which increases the reflectivity of these components and their impacts upon the amenity of users of the trail. I include examples of these effects in the lower Severn Valley illustrated in the photographs at *Figure 8 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*.

Visual Effects on the National Cycle Route 81, B4381 Lower Leighton

6.12 There would be cumulative landscape and visual effects in combination with the existing 132kV and low-voltage lines which would adversely affect part of the setting of Holy Trinity Church, Leighton, and the views of it to the south-east from the National Cycle Route 81, where it runs along the B4381 road east of Leighton Bridge over the River Severn. I include images of the existing network of lines in the lower Severn Valley between Leighton and Welshpool and the visually intrusive Welshpool grid substation, in the photographs at *Figure 9 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence*.

6.13 Moderate adverse effects would occur upon a high sensitivity landscape which would result in a significant adverse landscape effect in this section of the proposed line route. Moderate adverse effects would occur on the visual amenity of the travellers along National Cycle Route 81, high sensitivity receptors, the main focal point of attractive views being the conspicuous spire of Holy Trinity Church. It should be noted that the existing 132kV line in this locality is supported on double wood poles with only a single steel supporting frame at the top, unlike the much heavier lattice frames proposed for the Llandinam Grid connection line poles, as illustrated at *Figure 1.2 of the Non-Technical Summary of the SEI. Refer to Figure 9 in Appendix 3 to my Proof of Evidence.* In addition, the two terminal poles proposed for the end of the line opposite the Welshpool grid substation are heavier still, each having four supports and multiple insulators.

Landscape and Visual Effects on the Kerry Ridgeway Locality

6.14 The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would cause significant adverse landscape and visual effects in Section B of the route as it crosses the high ground in the area of Black Gate. This is a remote location which is close to the western end of the promoted Kerry Ridgeway regional trail. There are very few overhead lines in this area and these are low voltage. Although the proposed 132kV line would be seen against land backdrops for much of its route, it would be partly sky-lined as it crosses the B4355 road running southwards from Dolfor towards the head of the Teme Valley. Some mature tree removal will be required, and a long section of the line would be seen at an angle from the road when looking east down the adjoining narrow upland valley, with multiple sets of poles being evident.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

7.1 GLVIA3 guidance at para 7.4 discusses the challenge in cumulative landscape and visual assessment

‘to keep the task reasonable and in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration’.

It goes on to say that

*‘Common sense has an important part to play in reaching agreement about the scope of assessment.....It is always important to remember that the emphasis in EIA is on **likely** significant effects rather on comprehensive cataloguing of every conceivable effect that might occur’.*

7.2 With this advice in mind, I wish to focus on the main points of concern with the cumulative assessment provided by the Applicant. I am dealing here with matters within SSA C, relating to existing and proposed wind farm developments, and in relation to the existing 132kV lines within the Severn Valley between Welshpool and Leighton and the consented Lower Leighton Farm Extension.

7.3 Part of Section B of the proposed line route within SSA C would pass through the northern section of the proposed Neaudd Goch wind farm site. This would create a potential conflict with the operation of wind turbines in that vicinity which would need to be resolved by re-siting proposed turbines, diverting the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection or by placing part of it underground.

7.4 In the northernmost part of the route, Section H between Cilcewydd and the Welshpool grid substation, there would be a gradual convergence of the proposed line with the operational 132kV line running down the lower Severn valley from Abermule. This line crosses over the River Severn from its western side to the east of the river to the south-east of Gravel Lodge. Both lines would then run roughly parallel along the valley as far as the Welshpool substation. There would be cumulative landscape and visual effects arising from this part of the line route, both in combination with the existing 132kV line in the valley and the network of existing low voltage lines, many of which connect to the Welshpool substation. In my opinion, these effects would be significant and adverse. These effects would conflict with Holford Rule 6.

7.5 The significant landscape effects would occur as a result of introducing a further high-voltage line into this part of the Severn Valley which has a high landscape sensitivity. This section of the valley forms part of the wider setting of the Leighton Hall estate with clearly legible estate landscape features, both built elements and characteristic parkland trees, specimen exotic tree species and avenue trees.

7.6 The significant visual effects would occur in further disrupting the views across the valley to Holy Trinity Church from the B4381 and from the footpath along the eastern bank of the River Severn to the north of Gravel Lodge.

CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would cause significant adverse landscape and visual effects within Sections F and G, where it crosses the Vale of

Montgomery Registered landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales. By failing to avoid this landscape of national importance, the proposed route here would conflict with Holford Rules 1 and 2:

Rule 1: 'Avoid (if possible) the major areas of highest amenity value, even if total mileage is somewhat increased in consequence';

Rule 2: 'Avoid smaller areas of high amenity value or scientific interest by deviation, provided this can be done without using too many angle towers.'

If deviation is not considered to be a reasonable mitigation measure, then the new line should be placed underground throughout the Vale of Montgomery Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales.

8.2 The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would cause significant adverse landscape and visual effects within Section H in the sensitive area of the lower Severn Valley landscape between Powis Castle estate and the Leighton Hall estate. There would be individual and cumulative landscape and visual effects, the latter in combination with the existing high and low voltage line infrastructure and the Welshpool grid substation. These effects would conflict with Holford Rule 6 which states that:

'Rule 6: In country which is flat and sparsely planted, keep the high voltage lines as far as possible independent of smaller lines, converging routes, distribution poles and other masts, wires and cables, so as to avoid a concentration or 'wirescape'.'

Although the Applicant suggests that the detailed design stage of the project would consider local undergrounding of low-voltage lines where they would cross the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection, the undergrounding of the new line is not considered by the Applicant in the SEI to be *'embedded mitigation'*. In my professional opinion, the undergrounding of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection in the section between the road north east of Cilcewydd and the Welshpool grid substation should be the appropriate mitigation measure.

8.3 The proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection would cause significant adverse landscape and visual effects in Section B of the route as it crosses the high ground in the area of Black Gate. The high landscape sensitivity of this section of the route is acknowledged by the Applicant and the potential for undergrounding part of this Section has been mentioned as a potential mitigation measure. I would suggest that this mitigation measure is applied in this locality.

8.4 For the above reasons, I believe that the Inspector should give very considerable weight to the landscape and visual effects of the proposed 132kV Llandinam Grid Connection when formulating his recommendation as to whether the scheme should be granted consent, and consider whether such impacts could be avoided or minimised through placing sections of the route underground, as detailed above.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - LANDMAP Information

APPENDIX 1 A

Visual & Sensory Level 4 Aspect Area Survey Data Collector Sheets

LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Level 4 [based on LANDMAP Methodology 2013 augmented by the Level 4 classification in LANDMAP Methodology 2008]

Aspect Specialists: John Campion, Rob Malcomson

Survey Date: 29/11/2013

Area: Hendomen Rolling Farmland

Region: Montgomeryshire

Classification Level 1: Lowland

Classification Level 2: Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 3: Open Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 4: Rolling Farmland

VS1: Has the information been verified in the field?

Yes

VS2: Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

Yes

Visual links with Montgomery and Corndon Hill

VS3: Summary Description (answer may exceed column length)

Open rolling landscape characterised by predominantly pasture fields of varying size, bounded by a loose network of hedgerows with some hedgerow trees. There are several small woodland blocks in lower lying areas. Scattered farm buildings and hamlet of Hendomen are connected by a simple network of minor roads and tracks, bounded by hedges or post and wire stock-proof fences. Low voltage overhead lines cross the area on single wood poles. Noise locally from traffic on busy B4385 and B4388 roads.

VS4: Physical Form And Elements: Topographic Form?

Rolling/Undulating

VS5: Physical Form And Elements: Landcover Pattern?

Field Pattern/Mosaic

VS6: Physical form and elements: Settlement pattern

Clustered

VS7: Physical form and elements: Boundary type

Mixture

VS8: Aesthetic Qualities: Scale?

Medium

VS9: Aesthetic Qualities: Sense of Enclosure?

Open

VS10: Aesthetic Qualities: Diversity?

Simple

VS11: Aesthetic Qualities: Texture?

Medium

VS12: Aesthetic Qualities: Lines?

Straight

VS13: Aesthetic Qualities: Colour?

Moderate Contrasts

VS14: Aesthetic Qualities: Balance?

Balanced

VS15: Aesthetic Qualities: Unity?

Neutral

VS16: Aesthetic Qualities: Pattern?

Organised

VS17: Aesthetic Qualities: Seasonal Interest?

Mixed

VS18: Other Factors: Level of Human Access?

Frequent

VS19: Other Factors: Night Time Light Pollution?

Slight

VS20: Other Factors: Use of Construction Materials?

Generally Appropriate

VS21: What materials? Give Details: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS22: There are attractive views...

...both in and out

To surrounding farmland, across Camlad Valley to Corndon Hill, and Montgomery Castle

VS23: There are detractive views...

...neither in or out

VS24: Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities

Attractive

Safe

Settled

VS25: What is the sense of place/local distinctiveness?

Moderate

VS26: Value:

Moderate

N/A

VS27: Condition:

Good

N/A

VS28: Trend:

Unassessed

VS29: Existing management

Generally Appropriate

VS30: Existing management remarks: (answer may exceed column length)

Mixed arable/livestock farming

VS31: Principal management recommendation: (answer may exceed column length)

Maintain as existing

VS32: Guideline

VS33: Define the key qualities that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Safe, settled, attractive views to Montgomery [that contribute to SoP]

VS34: Define the key qualities that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS35: Define the key qualities that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

None

VS36: Define the key elements that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Field pattern and network of hedgerows and woodland blocks

VS37: Define the key elements that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS38: Define the key elements that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

Replace post and wire stockproof fence with hedgerow

VS39: Are there any significant threats to the current integrity and condition of the visual & sensory features of the area?

Not known

VS40: To what level was this information site-surveyed?

Level 4

VS41: At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

All

VS42: What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

Other

Aerial Photograph, V&S L3 and CPAT HLCA [Level 4 equivalent]

VS43: If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

1:25,000

VS44: What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries? (answer may exceed column length)

Field pattern, field size, aspect and topography

VS45: List the key sources used for this assessment (answer may exceed column length)

V & S Level 3; CPAT HLCA [Level 4 equivalent]

VS46: Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality

High

Attractive views across Camlad Valley to Corndon Hill, and views to Montgomery

VS47: Evaluation Criteria: Integrity

Moderate

N/A

VS48: Evaluation Criteria: Character

Moderate

N/A

VS49: Evaluation Criteria: Rarity

Moderate

N/A

VS50: Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation

Moderate

VS51: Justification of overall evaluation (answer may exceed column length)

Rolling farmland that is typical of the region, but benefits from proximity to Montgomery [that adds to SoP] and attractive views out to Corndon Hill = Moderate

Area: Camlad Valley Farmland

Region: Montgomeryshire

Classification Level 1: Lowland

Classification Level 2: Lowland Valleys

Classification Level 3: Open Lowland Valleys

Classification Level 4: Open Low Valleys

VS1: Has the information been verified in the field?

Yes

VS2: Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

Yes

Provides the wider setting to Montgomery and has visual links within Corndon Hill

VS3: Summary Description (answer may exceed column length)

A generally flat lowland valley, that lies at an elevation of approximately 80mAOD. Views out are dominated by the distinctive Corndon Hill to the north east and Montgomery to the south. It is an open flat landscape of medium to large-scale rectilinear fields, of permanent pasture and arable land. Many of the fields are bounded by managed hedges and hedgerows, with some mature hedgerow trees and individual field trees; in places small blocks of deciduous woodland and conifer plantation occur. The flat valley floor is crossed by the meandering course of the River Camlad, a small river course that appears slightly out of scale with the wider valley. This is a settled and domesticated landscape, the tranquillity in the central area disturbed by the busy B4388 on the route of the old Turnpike [characteristically straight] – and to a much lesser extent by the railway. Settlement mainly comprises scattered farmsteads, connected by a sparse network of minor roads and tracks. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail crosses the eastern length of this area, running parallel to the old Turnpike Road. The railway on vegetated embankment forms the dominant feature in the western/central area. Low voltage overhead wires on single wood poles cross the northern area from east-west and the western area from north to south.

VS4: Physical Form And Elements: Topographic Form?

Levels

VS5: Physical Form And Elements: Landcover Pattern?

Field Pattern/Mosaic

VS6: Physical form and elements: Settlement pattern

Scattered Rural/Farm

VS7: Physical form and elements: Boundary type

Mixture

VS8: Aesthetic Qualities: Scale?

Large

VS9: Aesthetic Qualities: Sense of Enclosure?

Open

VS10: Aesthetic Qualities: Diversity?

Simple

VS11: Aesthetic Qualities: Texture?

Medium

VS12: Aesthetic Qualities: Lines?

Angular

VS13: Aesthetic Qualities: Colour?

Moderate Contrasts

VS14: Aesthetic Qualities: Balance?

Balanced

VS15: Aesthetic Qualities: Unity?

Unity

VS16: Aesthetic Qualities: Pattern?

Organised

VS17: Aesthetic Qualities: Seasonal Interest?

Mixed

VS18: Other Factors: Level of Human Access?

Frequent

VS19: Other Factors: Night Time Light Pollution?

Slight

VS20: Other Factors: Use of Construction Materials?

Generally Inappropriate

VS21: What materials? Give Details: (answer may exceed column length)

Post and wire fencing,

VS22: There are attractive views...

...both in and out

Views out to Corndon Hill and Montgomery add to sense of place, attractive views within the generally unspoilt valley farmland...

VS23: There are detractive views...

...neither in or out

VS24: Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities

Settled

Tranquil [apart from B4388 corridor]

Attractive

VS25: What is the sense of place/local distinctiveness?

Strong

Distinctive bowl landform with views to Corndon Hill and Montgomery Castle

VS26: Value:

High

VS27: Condition:

Fair

VS28: Trend:

Constant

VS29: Existing management

Generally appropriate

VS30: Existing management remarks: (answer may exceed column length)

Mixture of pasture and arable farming

VS31: Principal management recommendation: (answer may exceed column length)

Maintain the patchwork of field boundaries and natural character

VS32: Guideline

Medium Term

Maintain existing hedges, hedgerow trees and field trees

Long Term

Maintain open character free from development

VS33: Define the key qualities that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Enclosure, tranquillity

VS34: Define the key qualities that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS35: Define the key qualities that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

None

VS36: Define the key elements that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Hedgerows and trees

VS37: Define the key elements that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS38: Define the key elements that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

Replace lengths of post and wire stockproof fence with hedge/hedgerow

VS39: Are there any significant threats to the current integrity and condition of the visual & sensory features of the area?

Not known

VS40: To what level was this information site-surveyed?

Level 4

VS41: At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

All

VS42: What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

Aerial Photograph, V&S L3 and CPAT HLCA [Level 4 equivalent]

VS43: If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

1:25,000

VS44: What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries? (answer may exceed column length)

Defined by the rising ground of rolling farmland to the north and south, and by the River Severn to the west.

VS45: List the key sources used for this assessment (answer may exceed column length)

V&S Level 3, CPAT HLCA [Level 4]

VS46: Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality

High

A rural farmed landscape with attractive views to Corndon Hill and Montgomery Castle with no detractive views

VS47: Evaluation Criteria: Integrity

High

The area is of generally good condition and of consistent character.

VS48: Evaluation Criteria: Character

High

The area has a strong sense of place resulting from the distinctive bowl landform and views to Corndon Hill, and part of the wider setting for Montgomery Castle.

VS49: Evaluation Criteria: Rarity

High

Distinctive landform and setting for Montgomery Castle...

VS50: Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation

High

A rural farmed valley within distinctive 'bowl shaped' landscape with superb views to the Corndon Hill and Montgomery Castle... The area is generally in good condition and of consistent character. The area has a strong sense of place and is part of the wider setting for Montgomery Castle...

VS51: Justification of overall evaluation (answer may exceed column length)

All high value...

Area: Forden Rolling Farmland

Region: Montgomeryshire

Classification Level 1: Lowland

Classification Level 2: Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 3: Open Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 4: Rolling Farmland

VS1: Has the information been verified in the field?

Yes

VS2: Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

Yes

Visual links with the Camlad Valley to the south and Severn Valley to the west.

VS3: Summary Description (answer may exceed column length)

Rolling farmland consisting of medium to large sized fields; predominantly pasture with some low intensity arable. Hedges and hedgerows form many of the field boundaries, some with mature hedgerow trees. Blocks of woodland and shelter belts add to the local perception of enclosure where these occur. Settlement is predominantly scattered farmsteads, small villages at Forden and Hem. Other built form consists of the sewage works opposite the Tavern caravan park and the railway in the south west of the area. The farmsteads and villages are connected via a network of minor roads and tracks, the major route being the busy B4388. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail crosses the eastern length of this area, running parallel to the B4388. The western length is crossed by the Cambrian Railway, generally at grade. Low voltage overhead wires cross the area from the substation east of Woodlands Farm.

VS4: Physical Form And Elements: Topographic Form?

Rolling

VS5: Physical Form And Elements: Landcover Pattern?

Field pattern/Mosaic

VS6: Physical form and elements: Settlement pattern

Scattered Rural/Farm

VS7: Physical form and elements: Boundary type

Managed hedge

VS8: Aesthetic Qualities: Scale?

Medium

VS9: Aesthetic Qualities: Sense of Enclosure?

Open

VS10: Aesthetic Qualities: Diversity?

Simple

VS11: Aesthetic Qualities: Texture?

Medium

VS12: Aesthetic Qualities: Lines?

Straight

VS13: Aesthetic Qualities: Colour?

Muted

VS14: Aesthetic Qualities: Balance?

Balanced

VS15: Aesthetic Qualities: Unity?

Neutral

VS16: Aesthetic Qualities: Pattern?

Organised

VS17: Aesthetic Qualities: Seasonal Interest?

Autumn

n/a

VS18: Other Factors: Level of Human Access?

Frequent

VS19: Other Factors: Night Time Light Pollution?

Slight

Scattered Settlement

VS20: Other Factors: Use of Construction Materials?

Generally appropriate

VS21: What materials? Give Details: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS22: There are attractive views...

...both in and out

Across rolling farmland to Camlad and Severn valleys

VS23: There are detractive views...

...neither in nor out

VS24: Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities

Attractive

Safe

Settled

VS25: What is the sense of place/local distinctiveness?

Moderate

VS26: Value:

Moderate

VS27: Condition:

Good

VS28: Trend:

Constant

VS29: Existing management

Generally appropriate

VS30: Existing management remarks: (answer may exceed column length)

Mixture of grazing and arable farming

VS31: Principal management recommendation: (answer may exceed column length)

Maintain as existing

VS32: Guideline

Medium Term

Maintain existing hedges, hedgerow trees and field trees

VS33: Define the key qualities that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Settled

VS34: Define the key qualities that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS35: Define the key qualities that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS36: Define the key elements that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Hedgerows and trees

VS37: Define the key elements that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

Hedgerows and trees, Settlement edges, expansion of farm buildings

VS38: Define the key elements that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS39: Are there any significant threats to the current integrity and condition of the visual & sensory features of the area?

Not known

VS40: To what level was this information site-surveyed?

Level 4

VS41: At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

All

VS42: What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

Aerial Photograph, V&S L3 and CPAT HLCA L4

VS43: If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

1:25,000

VS44: What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries? (answer may exceed column length)

Field pattern, dispersed settlement and rolling topography between approximately 70m – 140mAOD.

VS45: List the key sources used for this assessment (answer may exceed column length)

V&S Level 3, CPAT HLCA [Level 4]

VS46: Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality

High

The rural landscape has attractive features, with scenic views over the Camlad to Montgomery

VS47: Evaluation Criteria: Integrity

Moderate

The area is in generally good condition

VS48: Evaluation Criteria: Character

Moderate

The area has a distinctive character with a moderate sense of place mainly derived from its setting between the Camlad and Severn Valleys...

VS49: Evaluation Criteria: Rarity

Moderate

Typical rolling farmland.

VS50: Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation

Moderate

Whilst the area has a high scenic quality, the character, integrity and rarity are fairly typical of rolling farmland in the region.

VS1: Justification of overall evaluation (answer may exceed column length)

Three moderates and one high equals a moderate value...

Area: Edderton Hall Estate Farmland

Region: Montgomeryshire

Classification Level 1: Lowland

Classification Level 2: Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 3: Mosaic Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 4: Rolling Wooded Estate Farmland

VS1: Has the information been verified in the field?

Yes

VS2: Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

Yes

River Severn valley

VS3: Summary Description (answer may exceed column length)

Rolling farmland with an estate character, consisting of predominantly pasture fields that vary in size from medium to large. Hedges and hedgerows form many of the field boundaries, some with mature hedgerow trees. Blocks of estate woodland and shelter belts add to perception of enclosure. Settlement is predominantly scattered farmsteads, a country house at Edderton Hall, hamlets at Fron and Cilcewydd. Other built form consists of the broiler sheds between Kingswood and Fron north of the A490, the major route through the area. Low voltage overhead wires cross the A490 corridor east of Fron.

VS4: Physical Form And Elements: Topographic Form?

Rolling

VS5: Physical Form And Elements: Landcover Pattern?

Field Pattern/Mosaic

VS6: Physical form and elements: Settlement pattern

Scattered Rural/Farm

VS7: Physical form and elements: Boundary type

Mixture

VS8: Aesthetic Qualities: Scale?

Medium

VS9: Aesthetic Qualities: Sense of Enclosure?

Open

VS10: Aesthetic Qualities: Diversity?

Simple

VS11: Aesthetic Qualities: Texture?

Medium

VS12: Aesthetic Qualities: Lines?

Angular

VS13: Aesthetic Qualities: Colour?

Muted

VS14: Aesthetic Qualities: Balance?

Balanced

VS15: Aesthetic Qualities: Unity?

Neutral

VS16: Aesthetic Qualities: Pattern?

Organised

VS17: Aesthetic Qualities: Seasonal Interest?

Mixed

VS18: Other Factors: Level of Human Access?

Frequent

VS19: Other Factors: Night Time Light Pollution?

Slight

Rural settlement and scattered farmsteads

VS20: Other Factors: Use of Construction Materials?

Generally Appropriate

VS21: What materials? Give Details: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS22: There are attractive views...

...both in and out

to surrounding valley and within estate farmland

VS23: There are detractive views...

...within

Broiler Sheds

VS24: Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities

Attractive

Settled

Safe

VS25: What is the sense of place/local distinctiveness?

Moderate

VS26: Value:

Moderate

VS27: Condition:

Fair

VS28: Trend:

Constant

VS29: Existing management

Generally appropriate

VS30: Existing management remarks: (answer may exceed column length)

Mixture of grazing and limited arable farming with woodland

VS31: Principal management recommendation: (answer may exceed column length)

Maintain as existing

VS32: Guideline

Medium Term

Maintain existing hedges, hedgerow trees, field trees and woodland blocks

VS33: Define the key qualities that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Settled

VS34: Define the key qualities that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS35: Define the key qualities that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS36: Define the key elements that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Woodland, hedgerows and trees

VS37: Define the key elements that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

Woodland, hedgerows and trees, Settlement edges, expansion of farm buildings

VS38: Define the key elements that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS39: Are there any significant threats to the current integrity and condition of the visual & sensory features of the area?

Not known

VS40: To what level was this information site-surveyed?

Level 4

VS41: At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

All

VS42: What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

Aerial Photograph, V&S L3 and CPAT HLCA L4

VS43: If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

1:25,000

VS44: What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries? (answer may exceed column length)

Field pattern and woodland cover, estate character, dispersed settlement and rolling topography between approximately 80m – 140mAOD.

VS45: List the key sources used for this assessment (answer may exceed column length)

V&S Level 3, CPAT HLCA [Level 4]

VS46: Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality

High

The rural landscape has attractive features with scenic views over the Severn to Powis Castle

VS47: Evaluation Criteria: Integrity

Moderate

The area is in generally good condition

VS48: Evaluation Criteria: Character

Moderate

The area has a distinctive character with a moderate sense of place mainly derived from its setting by the Severn Valley.

VS49: Evaluation Criteria: Rarity

Moderate

Rolling farmland with estate character

VS50: Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation

Moderate

Whilst the area has a high scenic quality and estate character, the integrity and rarity are fairly typical of rolling farmland in the region.

VS51: Justification of overall evaluation (answer may exceed column length)

Three moderates and one high equals a moderate value...

Area: Severn Valley Cilcewydd to Leighton Bridge

Region: Montgomeryshire

Classification Level 1: Lowland

Classification Level 2: Flat Lowland

Classification Level 3: Flat Lowland Mosaic

Classification Level 4: Flat Lowland Estate Farmland

VS1: Has the information been verified in the field?

Yes

VS1B: During which season(s) was fieldwork carried out? (answer may exceed column length)

VS2: Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

Yes

Provides the wider setting to Leighton Hall and visual links with Powis Castle

VS3: Summary Description (answer may exceed column length)

Flat to gently undulating lowland farmland on the Severn floodplain. Groups and specimen trees of exotic and native species, and avenue trees along the River Severn, provide legible signs of the parkland origins, and add to the perception of estate character. Mixture of arable and pasture fields, predominantly medium-sized. Hedges and hedgerows form many of the field boundaries, some with mature hedgerow trees. Blocks of estate woodland and shelter belts add to perception of enclosure. Settlement is predominantly scattered farmsteads. Along the valley lie both 132Kv overhead wires on double wood poles – with occasional steel lattice towers – and low voltage lines on single wood poles which converge towards the substation on the B4381. Traffic noise from busy A483 in the western areas. Views out to local prominent landmark of Holy Trinity church in Leighton and to Powis Castle add to the sense of place.

VS4: Physical Form And Elements: Topographic Form?

levels

VS5: Physical Form And Elements: Landcover Pattern?

Field pattern/mosaic

VS6: Physical form and elements: Settlement pattern

No settlements

VS7: Physical form and elements: Boundary type

Mixture

VS8: Aesthetic Qualities: Scale?

Large

VS9: Aesthetic Qualities: Sense of Enclosure?

Open

VS10: Aesthetic Qualities: Diversity?

Simple

VS11: Aesthetic Qualities: Texture?

Medium

VS12: Aesthetic Qualities: Lines?

Angular

VS13: Aesthetic Qualities: Colour?

Muted

VS14: Aesthetic Qualities: Balance?

Balanced

VS15: Aesthetic Qualities: Unity?

Neutral

VS16: Aesthetic Qualities: Pattern?

Organised

VS17: Aesthetic Qualities: Seasonal Interest?

n/a

VS18: Other Factors: Level of Human Access?

Frequent

VS19: Other Factors: Night Time Light Pollution?

Moderate

Substantial in extreme north west by Welshpool

VS20: Other Factors: Use of Construction Materials?

Generally Appropriate

VS21: What materials? Give Details: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS22: There are attractive views...

...both in and out

Attractive setting of River Severn and out to adjacent parkland at Leighton Hall

VS23: There are detractive views...

...both in and out

Within to static site north of Cilcewydd and out to Welshpool urban areas to the north west

VS24: Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities

Exposed

Attractive

Tranquil

Includes River Severn and adjacent to Montgomery Canal

VS25: What is the sense of place/local distinctiveness?

Strong

Proximity to parkland on either side

VS26: Value:

High

VS27: Condition:

Good

VS28: Trend:

Unassessed

VS29: Existing management

Generally Appropriate

VS30: Existing management remarks: (answer may exceed column length)

Mixture of arable and dairy farming with managed hedgerow boundaries

VS31: Principal management recommendation: (answer may exceed column length)

Maintain as existing

VS32: Guideline

Long Term

Avoid loss of smaller fields and boundaries as part of extensification

Medium Term

Manage hedgerows and groups of trees

VS33: Define the key qualities that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Tranquillity, views

VS34: Define the key qualities that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS35: Define the key qualities that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS36: Define the key elements that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Parkland groups and specimen trees, hedgerows

VS37: Define the key elements that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS38: Define the key elements that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

N/A

VS39: Are there any significant threats to the current integrity and condition of the visual & sensory features of the area?

Not known

VS40: To what level was this information site-surveyed?

Level 4

VS41: At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

All

VS42: What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

Aerial Photograph, V & S L3

VS43: If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

1:25,000

VS44: What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries? (answer may exceed column length)

Defined by a landform, land use and elevation

VS45: List the key sources used for this assessment (answer may exceed column length) Visual & Sensory L3

VS46: Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality

High

Attractive views along the River and out to adjacent parkland...

VS47: Evaluation Criteria: Integrity

Moderate

A483 in the west, and overhead lines along valley...

VS48: Evaluation Criteria: Character

High

Proximity to parkland on either side with distinct landmarks of Powis Castle and Holy Trinity Church

VS49: Evaluation Criteria: Rarity

High

Location between parkland in relatively narrow part of the valley

VS50: Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation

High

Attractive lowland valley with distinctive estate character and strong sense of place,...

VS51: Justification of overall evaluation (answer may exceed column length)

Three high and one moderate = High

Area: Leighton Hall Estate Parkland

Region: Montgomeryshire

Classification Level 1: Lowland

Classification Level 2: Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 3: Mosaic Rolling Lowland

Classification Level 4: Rolling Wooded Estate Parkland

VS1: Has the information been verified in the field?

Yes

VS1B: During which season(s) was fieldwork carried out? (answer may exceed column length)

VS2: Does this area have a special or functional link with an adjacent area?

Yes

The River Severn valley farmland with estate character provides the wider setting to Leighton Hall...strong visual links with Powis Castle on opposite valley side

VS3: Summary Description (answer may exceed column length)

This is a distinctive parkland landscape on the western flanks of Long Mountain, consisting of rectilinear fields bounded by a mixture of hedgerows, hedgebanks and fences. Blocks of small conifer plantations, specimen trees and groups of both exotic and native species provide strong estate parkland character. Within the grounds are set a country house, a church with distinctive steeple, a model farm and other structures which formed part of the Leighton Estate. Intervisibility with Powis Castle.

VS4: Physical Form And Elements: Topographic Form?

Rolling/undulating

VS5: Physical Form And Elements: Landcover Pattern?

Field Pattern/Mosaic

VS6: Physical form and elements: Settlement pattern

Scattered Rural/Farm

VS7: Physical form and elements: Boundary type

Mixed

VS8: Aesthetic Qualities: Scale?

Medium

VS9: Aesthetic Qualities: Sense of Enclosure?

Open

VS10: Aesthetic Qualities: Diversity?

Diverse

VS11: Aesthetic Qualities: Texture?

Medium

VS12: Aesthetic Qualities: Lines?

Angular

VS13: Aesthetic Qualities: Colour?

Moderate Contrast

VS14: Aesthetic Qualities: Balance?

Balanced

VS15: Aesthetic Qualities: Unity?

Unity

VS16: Aesthetic Qualities: Pattern?

Formal

VS17: Aesthetic Qualities: Seasonal Interest?

n/a

VS18: Other Factors: Level of Human Access?

Infrequent

VS19: Other Factors: Night Time Light Pollution?

Slight

Dispersed rural settlement

VS20: Other Factors: Use of Construction Materials?

Generally Appropriate

VS21: What materials? Give Details: (answer may exceed column length)

N/a

VS22: There are attractive views...

...both in and out

Parkland views within and out across the Severn Valley to Powis Castle

VS23: There are detractive views...

... out

To south-eastern edge of Welshpool, static site north of Cilcewydd and substation on B4381

VS24: Perceptual and Other Sensory Qualities

Attractive

Tranquil

Settled

VS25: What is the sense of place/local distinctiveness

Strong

This estate parkland with extensive views across Severn valley has a strong sense of place.

VS26: Value:

High

VS27: Condition:

Fair

VS28: Trend:

Unassessed

VS29: Existing management

Generally Appropriate

VS30: Existing management remarks: (answer may exceed column length)

N/a

VS31: Principal management recommendation: (answer may exceed column length)

N/a

VS32: Guideline

N/a

VS33: Define the key qualities that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Tranquillity, parkland character

VS34: Define the key qualities that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS35: Define the key qualities that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

n/a

VS36: Define the key elements that should be conserved: (answer may exceed column length)

Specimen trees and groups of trees, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, woodland; views of Holy Trinity Church, Leighton

VS37: Define the key elements that should be enhanced: (answer may exceed column length)

As above

VS38: Define the key elements that should be changed: (answer may exceed column length)

n/a

VS39: Are there any significant threats to the current integrity and condition of the visual & sensory features of the area?

Not known

VS40: To what level was this information site-surveyed?

Level 4

VS41: At 1:10,000, how much of the Aspect Area boundary is precise?

All

VS42: What baseline information source was used for Aspect Area boundary mapping?

Aerial photography, LANDMAP V&S L3

VS43: If OS Data was used, what was the scale?

1:25,000

VS44: What is the justification for the Aspect Area boundaries? (answer may exceed column length)

Distinct parkland character...

VS45: List the key sources used for this assessment (answer may exceed column length)

Visual & Sensory Level 3

VS46: Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality

High

Parkland views within and out across the Severn Valley to Powis Castle

VS47: Evaluation Criteria: Integrity

High

The area has an unspoilt character and maintains its integrity, although condition could be improved.

VS48: Evaluation Criteria: Character

High

The area has a strong sense of place through its estate parkland character and the extensive views across Severn valley...

VS49: Evaluation Criteria: Rarity

High

A parkland landscape that displays intervisibility with Powis Castle and Leighton Hall

VS50: Evaluation Criteria: Overall Evaluation

High

Parkland views within and generally high scenic quality in views out including across Severn Valley to Powis Castle and of Holy Trinity Church, Leighton;, strong sense of place derived from its parkland character and wider setting.

VS51: Justification of overall evaluation (answer may exceed column length)

Four highs equals a high, due to scenic quality and strong character...

APPENDIX 1 B

Comparison of LANDMAP data from Visual & Sensory Level 3 and underlying Visual & Sensory Level 4, with reference to:

1. **Landscape Sensitivity Criteria** [SEI Table 6.3, Chapter. 6.0]
2. **Criteria Influencing Sensitivity** [SEI Table 2, Appendix 06]

1. **Landscape Sensitivity Criteria:**

(Note that highlighted text is where the Level 4 data differs from the Level 3 data)

V & S Data [taken from SEI Table 6.3]	River Severn Floodplain [L3] MNTGMVS650	Camlad Valley Farmland [L4]	Severn Valley Cilcewydd - Leighton Bridge [L4]
<i>Topographic Form</i>	Levels	Levels	Levels
<i>Landcover Pattern</i>	Field/mosaic	Field/mosaic	Field/mosaic
<i>Settlement</i>	Mixture	Scattered Rural	No settlements
<i>Boundary Type</i>	Mixture	Mixture	Mixture
<i>Scale</i>	Vast	Large	Large
<i>Enclosure</i>	Open	Open	Open
<i>Balance</i>	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced
<i>Pattern</i>	Organised	Organised	Organised
<i>Sense of Place</i>	Strong	Strong	Strong
<i>Condition</i>	Unassessed	Good	Good
<i>Scenic Quality</i>	Moderate	High	High
<i>Integrity</i>	Moderate	High	Moderate
<i>Character</i>	High	High	High
<i>Rarity</i>	High	High	High
<i>Overall Evaluation</i>	Moderate	High	High
<i>Attractive Views</i>	Both In and out	Both in and out	Both in and out
<i>Detractive Views</i>	Within	Neither in/out	Both in and out
<i>Human Access</i>	Constant	Frequent	Frequent

V & S Data <i>[taken from SEI Table 6.3]</i>	Crewgreen-Forden Hill & Scarp [L3] MNTGMVS370	Forden Rolling Farmland [L4]	Edderton Hall Estate Farmland [L4]	Leighton Hall Estate Parkland [L4]
<i>Topographic Form</i>	Hills/Valleys	Rolling	Rolling	Rolling
<i>Landcover Pattern</i>	Field/mosaic	Field/mosaic	Field/mosaic	Field/mosaic
<i>Settlement</i>	Scattered Rural	Scattered Rural	Scattered Rural	Scattered Rural
<i>Boundary Type</i>	Managed hedge	Managed hedge	Mixture	Mixture
<i>Scale</i>	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
<i>Enclosure</i>	Open	Open	Open	Open
<i>Balance</i>	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced
<i>Pattern</i>	Organised	Organised	Organised	Formal
<i>Sense of Place</i>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
<i>Condition</i>	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
<i>Scenic Quality</i>	High	High	High	High
<i>Integrity</i>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
<i>Character</i>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
<i>Rarity</i>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
<i>Overall Evaluation</i>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
<i>Attractive Views</i>	Both In and out	Both in and out	Both in and out	Both in and out
<i>Detractive Views</i>	Within	Neither in/out	Within	Out
<i>Human Access</i>	Infrequent	Frequent	Frequent	Infrequent

V & S Data <i>[taken from SEI Table 6.3]</i>	Montgomery Mosaic Rolling Farmland MNTGMVS434	Hendomen Rolling Farmland [L4]
<i>Topographic Form</i>	Rolling	Rolling
<i>Landcover Pattern</i>	Field/mosaic	Field/mosaic

<i>Settlement</i>	Clustered	Clustered
<i>Boundary Type</i>	Hedge with trees	Mixture
<i>Scale</i>	Medium	Medium
<i>Enclosure</i>	Open	Open
<i>Balance</i>	Balanced	Balanced
<i>Pattern</i>	Organised	Organised
<i>Sense of Place</i>	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Condition</i>	Good	Good
<i>Scenic Quality</i>	Moderate	High
<i>Integrity</i>	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Character</i>	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Rarity</i>	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Overall Evaluation</i>	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Attractive Views</i>	Both In and out	Both in and out
<i>Detractive Views</i>	Neither in/out	Neither in/out
<i>Human Access</i>	Infrequent	Frequent

2. **Criteria Influencing Sensitivity**

2.1 **Section F: Court Calmore to B4385 near Woodlands Farm**

The majority of Section F lies within the Level 4 V&S *Camlad Valley Farmland*. However, the northernmost section lies within Level 4 V&S *Forden Valley Farmland*, and the southernmost section lies within Level 4 V&S *Hendomen Rolling Lowland*. The landscape sensitivity of these areas is detailed below.

Camlad Valley Farmland

The *Camlad Valley Farmland* Aspect Area lies within the much larger *River Severn Floodplain* [MNTGMVS650]. The landscape of the Camlad Valley has been assessed as having a higher sensitivity using the more detailed LANDMAP VS Level 4 data compared to the less detailed Level 3 data used in the SEI, whilst applying the same methodology and *sensitivity criteria* as used in the SEI, as below:

Landform – no change

Landcover – no change

Settlement Pattern – The SEI states that ‘*settlement pattern which is closely related to the pattern and form of the landscape, particularly where traditional patterns are intact, is potentially more sensitive*’. The *scattered rural* settlement pattern identified at level 4 - compared to *mixture* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity.

Scenic Quality – The SEI states that ‘*areas of attractive scenery will generally be more sensitive*’. The *High* scenic value recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Moderate* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity.

Scale – little change

Human Influence – little change

Perceptual Aspects – little change

Condition – The SEI states that ‘*Areas in poorer condition are arguably more able to accommodate overhead lines as they will be perceived as less visually intrusive*’. The *Good* condition recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Unassessed* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity.

Skylines and Settings – little change

Visibility and Views – little change

Relative Landscape Value – The *High* overall evaluation value recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Moderate* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity.

Forden Valley Farmland

The *Forden Valley Farmland* Aspect Area lies predominantly within the much larger *Crewgreen to Forden Hill and Scarp* Aspect Area [MNTGMVS370]. The landscape of this area has been assessed as having similar sensitivity using the more detailed LANDMAP VS Level 4 data, compared to the less detailed Level 3 data used in the SEI, whilst applying the same SEI methodology and sensitivity criteria as used in the SEI.

There is no significant difference in the landscape sensitivity assessed using the Level 4 Aspect Area or the Level 3 Aspect Area.

Hendomen Rolling Lowland

The *Hendomen Rolling Lowland* lies predominantly within the larger *Montgomery Mosaic Rolling Farmland* Aspect Area [MNTGMVS434]. The landscape of this area has been assessed as having a slightly higher sensitivity using the more detailed LANDMAP VS Level 4 data compared to the less detailed Level 3 data used in the SEI, whilst applying the same SEI methodology and sensitivity criteria as used in the SEI, as below.

Scenic Quality – The SEI states that ‘*areas of attractive scenery will generally be more sensitive*’. The *High* scenic value recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Moderate* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity.

2.2 Section H - Severn Valley Cilcewydd to Leighton Bridge Level 4 V&S Aspect Area

The *Severn Valley Cilcewydd - Leighton Bridge* Aspect Area lies within the much larger *River Severn Floodplain* Aspect Area [MNTGMVS650]. The landscape of this part of the Severn Valley has been assessed as having a higher sensitivity using the more detailed LANDMAP VS Level 4 data, compared to the less detailed

Level 3 data used in the SEI, whilst applying the same SEI methodology and sensitivity criteria as used in the SEI, as below.

Landform – no change

Landcover – no change

Settlement Pattern – little change

Scenic Quality – The SEI states that ‘*areas of attractive scenery will generally be more sensitive*’. The *High* scenic value recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Moderate* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity

Scale – little change

Human Influence – little change

Perceptual Aspects – little change

Condition – The SEI states that ‘*Areas in poorer condition are arguably more able to accommodate overhead lines as they will be perceived as less visually intrusive*’. The *Good* condition recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Unassessed* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity

Skylines and Settings – little change

Visibility and Views – little change

Relative Landscape Value – The *High* overall evaluation value recorded for Level 4 - compared to *Moderate* for Level 3 - will result in increased landscape sensitivity

The landscape sensitivity is also increased by the Level 4 data VS2 entry which acknowledges *the special or functional link with an adjacent area* with the highly sensitive landscape at Leighton Hall, for which it provides the wider setting.

APPENDIX 2:

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'Overall Evaluation

A2.1 The Aspect Specialist should evaluate each Aspect Area according to the criteria and rationale above, and should assess the Level of intrinsic value against each criterion, and then accord an overall evaluation. To enable the overall evaluation to be determined, a crude mechanism would be to allow a score ranging from 1 for each Low (or Poor) to 4 for each Outstanding with each score then being added to the overall total. This gives an overall range from 5-20. This range of 16 points can be divided into four bands of four allowing the allocation of an Overall Evaluation thus.

Overall Evaluation	Total score
<i>Outstanding</i>	17-20
<i>High</i>	13-16
<i>Moderate</i>	9- 12
<i>Low</i>	5-8

If an Aspect Area cannot be assessed against two or more criteria, through lack of appropriate data for example, then an Overall Evaluation of Unassessed should be recorded irrespective of the numeric total score achieved.'

Vale of Montgomery Registered landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales

The following Historic Landscape Aspect Areas underlie the Registered Landscape.

A2.2 The **Lower Severn Valley Historic Landscape Aspect Area** (MNTGM HL441) has an Overall Evaluation of 'Outstanding', its constituent Evaluation Criteria scores being as follows:

- Integrity - High (3)
- Survival - Outstanding (4)
- Condition - Moderate (2)
- Rarity - Outstanding (4)
- Potential - Outstanding (4)

This gives a total Evaluation Score of 17 points, being at the lowest level of the Outstanding Evaluation band.

A2.3 The **Salt Bridge Historic Landscape Aspect Area** (MNTGM HL980) has an Overall Evaluation of 'High', its constituent Evaluation Criteria scores being as follows:

- Integrity - Moderate (2)
- Survival - Outstanding (4)
- Condition - Moderate (2)
- Rarity - Outstanding (4)
- Potential - Outstanding (4)

This gives a total Evaluation Score of 16 points, being at the highest level of the High Evaluation band.

A2.4 The **Forden/Trelystan Historic Landscape Aspect Area** (MNTGM HL514) has an Overall Evaluation of 'High', its constituent Evaluation Criteria scores being as follows:

- Integrity - High (3)
- Survival - High (3)
- Condition - High (3)
- Rarity - Moderate (2)
- Potential - High (4)

This gives a total Evaluation Score of 15 points, being at the middle level of the High Evaluation band.