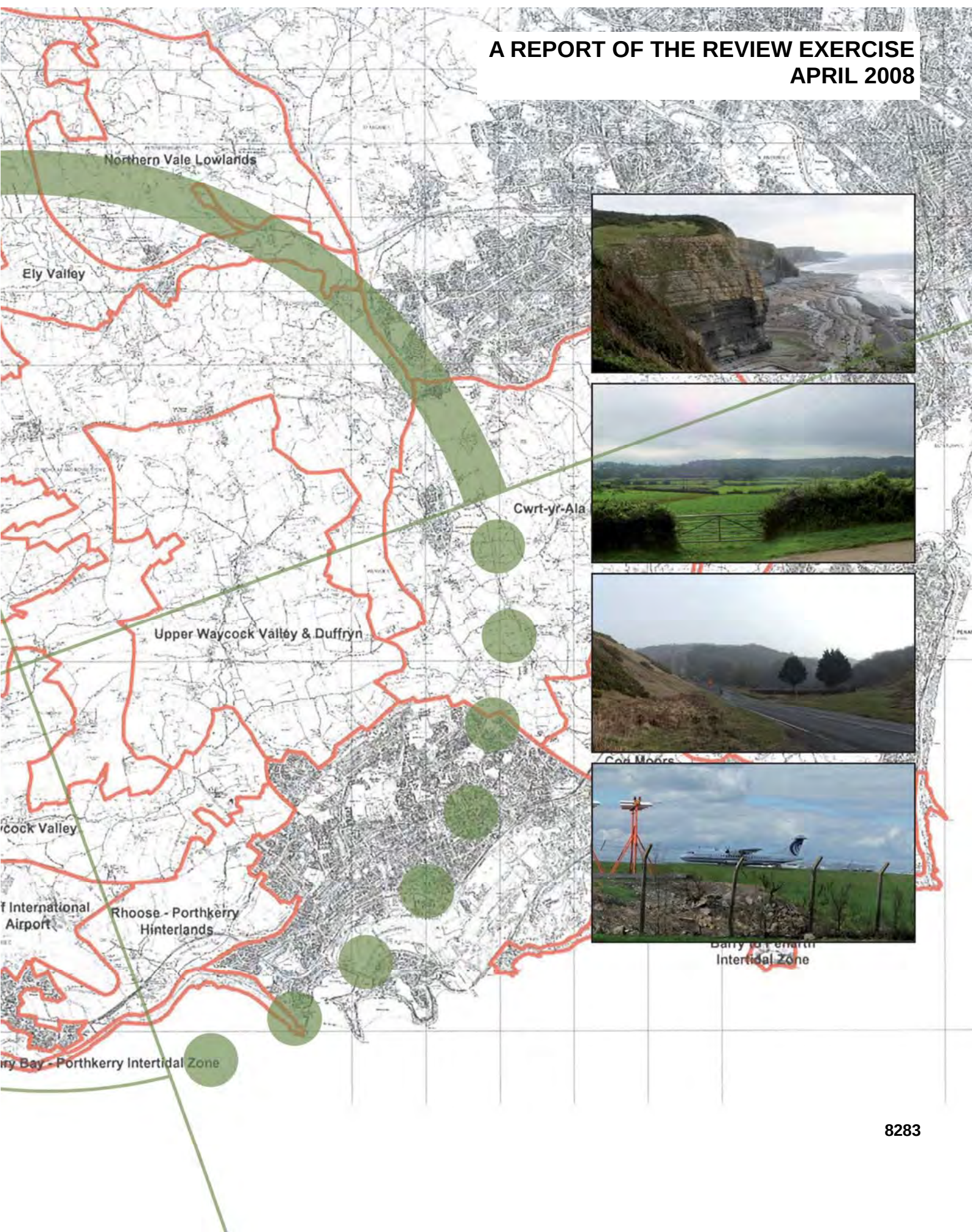


Vale of Glamorgan Council
SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS
- INTEGRATION WITH ADJOINING AUTHORITIES

A REPORT OF THE REVIEW EXERCISE
APRIL 2008



VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

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ADJOINING AUTHORITIES**

A REPORT OF THE REVIEW EXERCISE

APRIL 2010

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Project No:	8283
Document Status:	Report
Checked by:	JP
Approved by:	LAJ
Date:	30.04.2010

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Appendices

Appendix A – Extracts from LANDMAP Collector files for Aspect Areas referred to in text

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** TACP Consultants were appointed in December 2009 by the Vale of Glamorgan Council to review the Special Landscape Area designations with the adjoining local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff.
- 1.2** The review took the form of a desk review of:
- a.** the approach and methodology used
 - b.** of LANDMAP data sets to identify any inconsistency in approach and resultant boundary definitions.
- 1.3** This report sets out the findings of this exercise and identifies any inconsistencies and issues that require to be addressed.

2.0 Study Background

- 2.1** Planning Policy Wales (2002) sets out the policy guidance as to the process of designating Special Landscape Areas (SLA) (Section 5.3.11). It also notes that the designation should draw upon a formal approach and that use should be made of CCW's LANDMAP Information System (5.3.13). This is complimented by guidance within the Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide (2006) published to assist the preparation of Local Development Plans.
- 2.2** In response to this guidance the South East Wales Local Authority Consortium commissioned TACP Consultants to develop an appropriate methodology for the designation of SLA's using the LANDMAP Information System. This has subsequently been adopted by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) as the basis for a national guidance note (Note 1: LANDMAP and Special Landscape Areas; June 2008).
- 2.3** In 2007, TACP consultants were appointed by the Vale of Glamorgan to review the existing SLA's, using the regional guidance. The results were published in a report in March 2008 (Vale of Glamorgan Council Designation of Special Landscape Areas - see Figure 1.0).
- 2.4** In terms of the surrounding local authorities, Rhondda Cynon Taff Council undertook the review and designation of their SLA designation in 2007/2008 using the Regional Guidance produced by the South East Wales Local Authority Consortium (see Figure 2.0).

The guidance was amended by Rhondda Cynon Taff by identifying a number of factors additional to those within the guidance as follows:-

- Prominence
 - Spectacle - dramatic views
 - Unspoilt areas - ie: pre-industrial patterns of landscape
 - Remoteness and tranquillity
 - Vulnerability and sensitivity to change
 - Locally rare landscape
 - Setting for special landscapes
- 2.5** Cardiff have also reviewed their SLA's which had been identified for the emerging Unitary Development Plan. The review exercise used the CCW guidance and the report was published in August 2008. In all eight SLA's were identified and their distribution is shown on Figure 2.0.

- 2.6** Bridgend County Borough Council have reviewed the SLA designations within their administrative area as part of the Local Development Plan Work Programme. This review has used the CCW guidance as published and is, at the time of writing, a draft report has been submitted identifying potential SLA's areas. Their distribution is shown on Figure 2.

3.0 Review Exercise

3.1 The review exercise conducted by TACP has been concerned with identifying the integration of the Vale of Glamorgan SLA's with those in the neighbouring authorities. Each authority has been considered in turn and in each case has been checked for boundary discrepancies and a review of the LANDMAP Information System to establish the reasons for any variations.

3.2 Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT)

RCT has the longest border with the Vale of Glamorgan, running east-west, essentially along the M4 corridor from Junction 32 at Capel Llanilltern to Junction 35 at Pencoed. From a desk top review of the information provided by RCT, areas of inconsistency between SLA boundaries have been identified. It was considered appropriate to review whether these discrepancies were justified on the basis of LANDMAP information and the guidance produced by CCW for SLA designation. The two SLA's in question are (See Figure 1.0):

i. **SLA 2 - Upper and Lower Thaw Valleys**

This SLA is based upon a previously designated area. It is formed by the Thaw Valley which dissects the main limestone plateau. This dramatic valley forms the primary landscape quality of the area, with distinctive deep, wooded side slopes giving a strong sense of place. Under the 2007/8 review exercise, the SLA was extended westwards and northwards to include the "High" designations for the visual and sensory, cultural and landscape habitat aspect areas, and "Outstanding" geological landscapes aspect area evaluations.

The SLA does not directly abut any SLA's within RCT. However the north-eastern boundary follows an unclassified road running from Ton Breigan, parallel with the M4 motorway. Close to Ton Breigan, a SLA within RCT runs up to the M4 motorway, which at this point forms the local authority boundary. This SLA (Policy SSA23-1 Llanharry surrounds) lies between the western edge of Llanharry and the reclaimed open cast site of Mynydd Hywel Deio. The underlying LANDMAP information for this SLA indicates that the majority of its area follows a large visual and sensory aspect area (RCTVS572), which is an area of rolling, farmland mosaic landscapes, valued as "Moderate" that forms the southern boundary of the coalfield valleys and its interface with the limestone plateau that forms the Vale of Glamorgan. The highly valued landscape elements relate to the Geological Landscapes (RCTGL049) which is valued as "Outstanding". TACP have reviewed the LANDMAP information and have concluded that the boundary of the SLA within RCT has been chosen for reasons of coherence, using the M4 motorway as its southern boundary. Only a very short

section of this SLA abuts the Vale boundary along the M4 motorway and this does not justify any amendments to SLA2 within the Vale.

ii. SLA 3 - Ely Valley & Ridges

This too is based upon an existing SLA designation. The area is focused on the Ely valley and in the 2007/8 review exercise was extended westwards to include Hensol Castle and parkland and the adjacent Hensol Forest. This reflects the “High” evaluation levels for the visual and sensory, geological, landscape habitats and cultural landscape aspect layers relating to this part of the Vale landscape. The majority of the SLA boundary to the north is formed by the M4 motorway, however to the west of Junction 32, the boundary moves south of the motorway and it abuts the ‘Talgarn Surrounds’ SLA in RCT (Policy SSA23.2). Again, in terms of visual and sensory qualities, the SLA follows the outline of aspect area VSRCT572, the area of lowland farmland mosaic that forms the landscape context for this area. The ‘Outstanding’ elements relates to geological landscapes, as well as the historic and cultural landscape features associated with the historic parklands at Miskin Manor (RCTHL751, RCTCL033) and Talgarn (RCTHL987).

3.3 Cardiff

The eastern boundary of the Vale of Glamorgan abuts that of Cardiff. There is one SLA of relevance - SLA3 Ely Valley and Ridges. The boundary of the SLA mirrors that of the St Fagan’s lowlands and Ely Valley SLA in Cardiff. This reflects the continuity of the valley landscape type across the two local authority areas which has a consistent quality. In this instance both of the local authorities have utilised the logical, defensible local authority boundary formed by the A4232 road. Accordingly no discrepancies exist.

3.4 Bridgend

Bridgend County Borough Council are currently reviewing the SLA designations for their area, using the CCW guidance, as part of their Local Development Plan process. At the time of writing (April 2010) they are currently at the draft report stage which has identified potential SLA’s within their area. One has been identified which includes Merthyr Mawr and the Ogmore Valley. This has a limited area of conjoined boundary with the Vale SLA 1 – Castle upon Alun. The boundary of the Bridgend SLA has yet to be finalised, however, it would be inappropriate to amend any existing boundary, given the underlying moderate quality and difference of form of the Vale landscape that abuts Merthyr Mawr.

However SLA2 - Upper and Lower Thaw Valley does touch the Bridgend boundary, albeit for a very small distance. From Junction 35 of the motorway, close to the A473 road. The quality of the landscape within Bridgend does not justify its inclusion with the SLA broad search areas. Given that the use of the local authority boundary by the Vale is justified on the grounds of coherence and no cross border discrepancies exist.

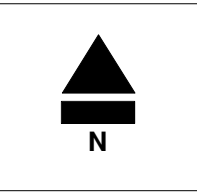
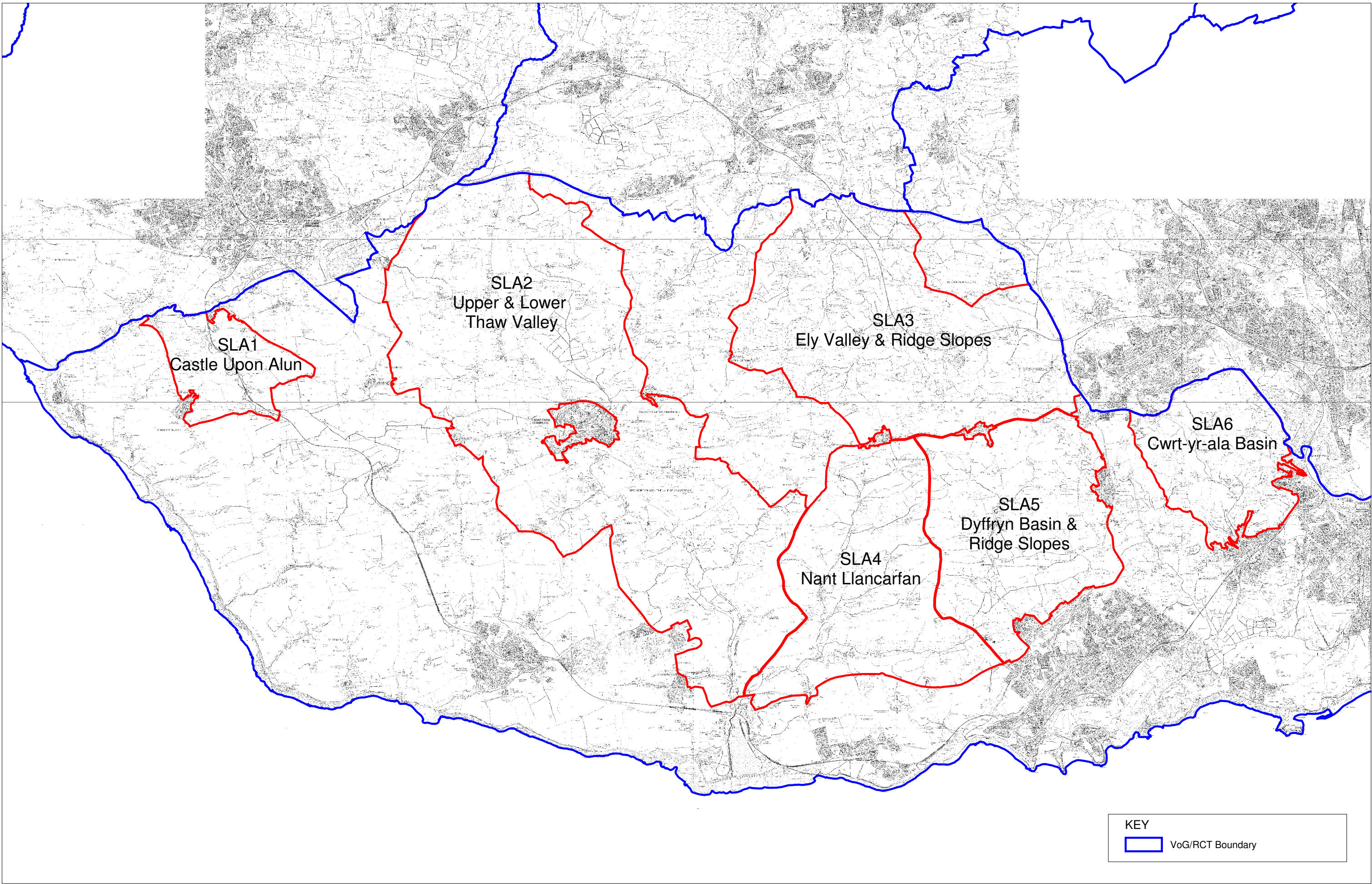
4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1** All of the local authorities around the Vale of Glamorgan are reviewing Special Landscape designations as part of the Local Development Plan process. All have followed the published CCW guidance, although this has been slightly amended by Rhondda Cynon Taff by the addition of other criteria to be considered. It is unclear from a review of the information how much this influenced the SLA's identified. Indeed the main SLA boundary with the Vale of Glamorgan, Talygarn surrounds is based primarily on designated landscapes, such as Talygarn House and Miskin Manor, given that the visual and sensory (aspect area RCTVS 572) and landscape habitats (aspect area LH101) were both 'moderate' in evaluation levels.
- 4.2** An initial visual assessment of the SLA boundaries has identified apparent boundary inconsistencies and discrepancies. However, from a more detailed review of the LANDMAP information it is concluded the following:-
- i) SLA 2 - Upper and Lower Thaw Valley** - the boundary with Bridgend abuts land adjacent to Junction 35 at Pencoed of the M4 motorway. The SLA study for Bridgend has currently identified no potential SLA's worthy for consideration as SLA's which includes this area. Within RCT, the SLA abuts the southern boundary of the Llanharry surrounds SLA with a mutual boundary formed by the M4 motorway which also forms the local authority boundary. Therefore the use of the local authority boundary by the Vale for its own SLA is fully justified for reasons of coherence and is one that reflects the LANDMAP data for the area and is therefore a justifiable boundary and does not require any amendment to the Vale SLA boundary.
 - ii) SLA 3 - Ely Valley and Ridges** - the 2007/08 review of SLA's within the Vale identified land around Hensol Park and woodlands that justified inclusion for reasons of 'High' evaluations, such as VS913 Hensol Forest, Landscape Habitats, including LH471 Hensol Forest and LH476 Hensol Park Mosaic, geological (GL532 Pendoylan) and cultural landscapes (CL033 Hensol Castle). However the boundary chosen for the Vale study, an unclassified road has resulted in a small area between it and the local authority boundary undesignated, yet abutting a SLA in RCT. On landscape quality grounds alone, its inclusion is not justified, with only geological and cultural layers have 'high' evaluations. There are limited opportunities for permanent, defensible boundaries in this area and therefore the minor road offers the best solution. Furthermore this has ensured that we have no included land of lesser quality. Therefore its inclusion will need

to be on the grounds of coherence and continuity. A boundary location has been identified and is shown on Figure 3.0.

- 4.3** With regard to the other authorities, no changes need to be made to the SLA bordering with Cardiff. Likewise the emerging SLA's from the Bridgend Study do not raise any questions as to coherence across boundaries, given the quality and form of the broach search areas identified in Bridgend in comparison with the Vale SLA's.

Figures



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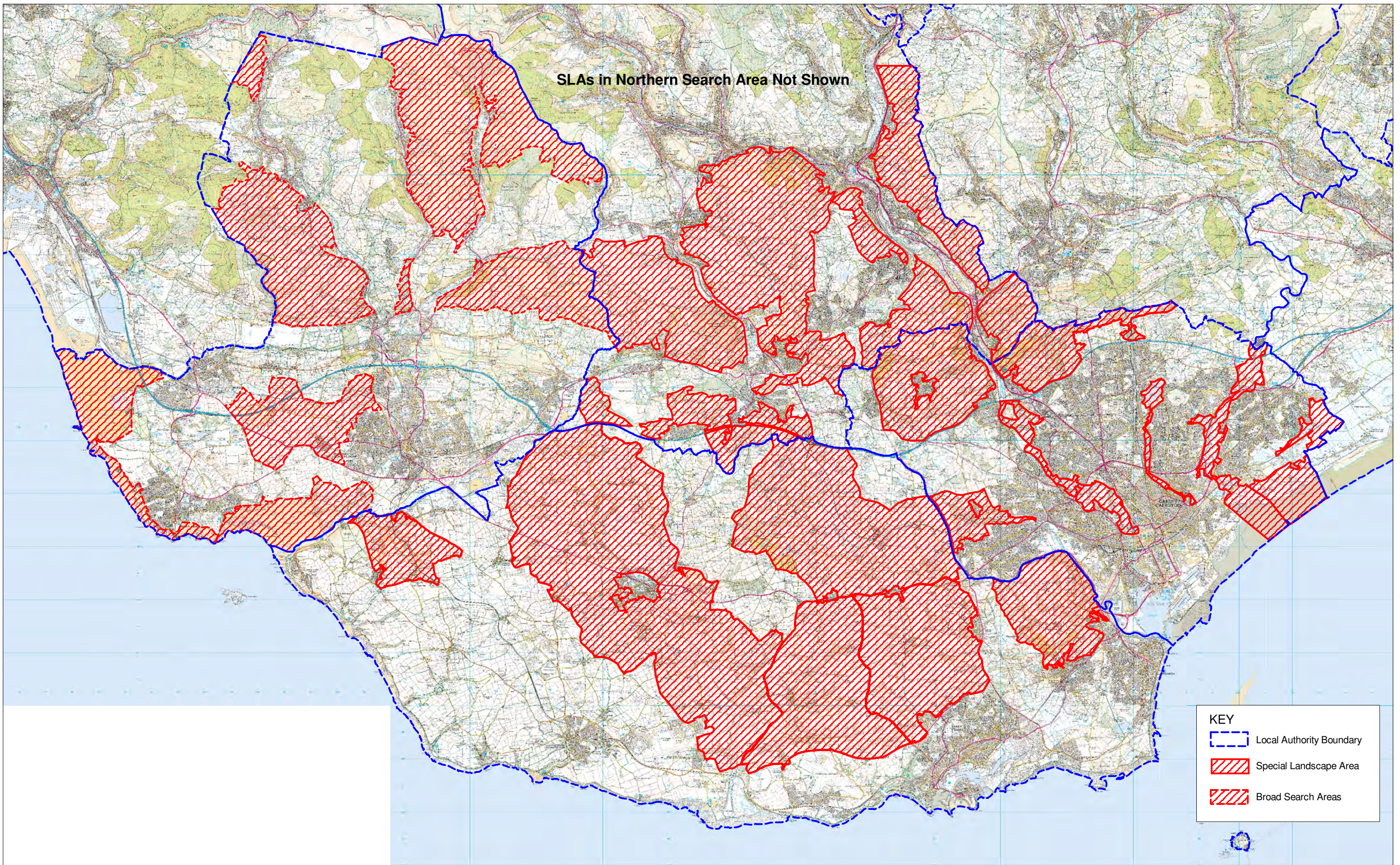
NOTES

VALE OF GLAMORGAN SPECIAL
LANDSCAPE AREAS (2008)

KEY

 VoG/RCT Boundary

o DRAWN CD	o CHECKED LJ	o OFFICE : CARDIFF
o NOT TO SCALE	o DATE FEBRUARY 2010	
FIGURE / DRAWING NO. FIGURE 1.0		REV



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NOTES

VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIAL LANDSCAPE
AND BROAD SEARCH AREAS WITH THE
VALE AND NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

DRAWN CD

NOT TO SCALE

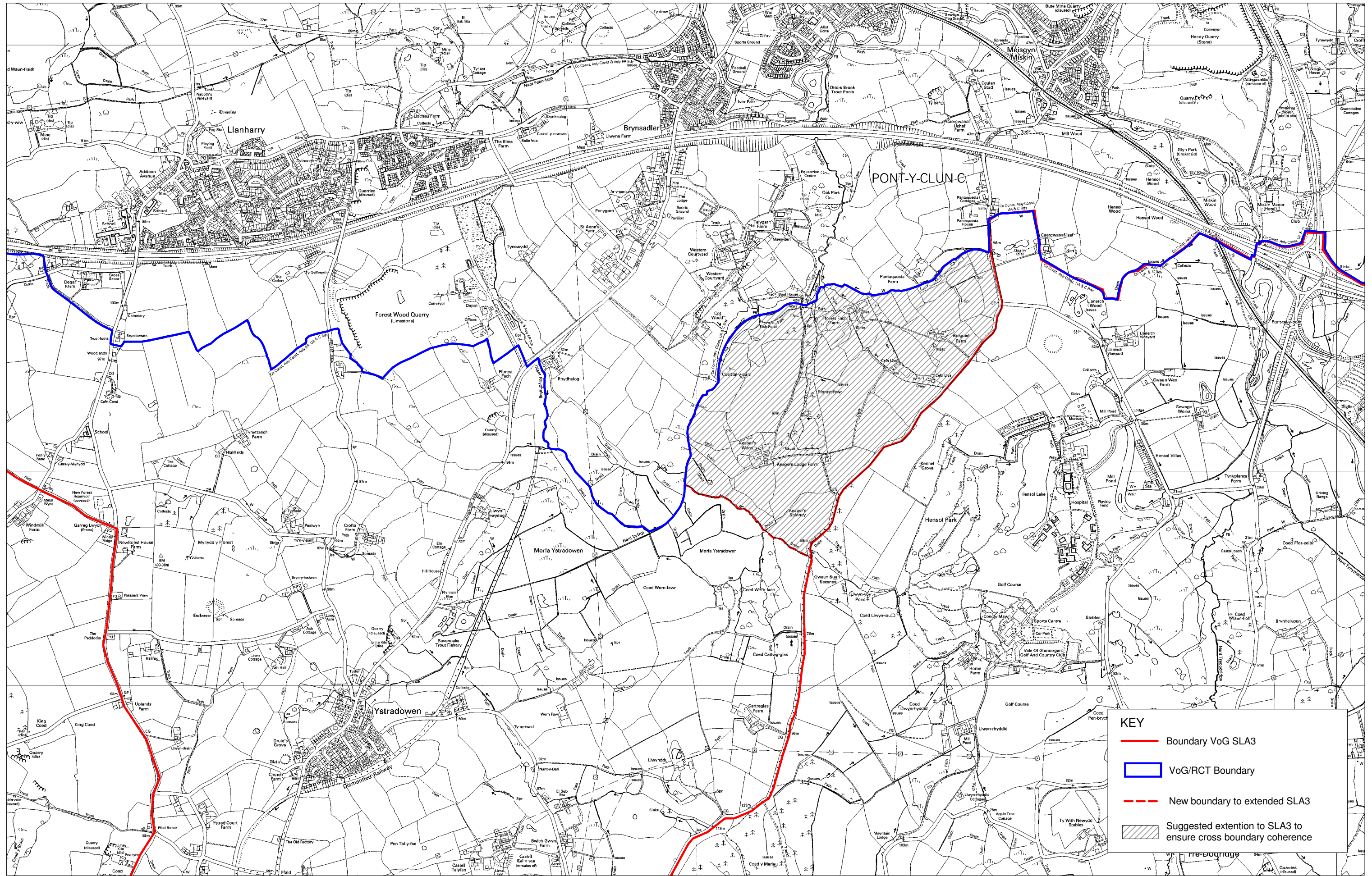
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DATE FEBRUARY 2010

OFFICE : CARDIFF

FIGURE / DRAWING NO.
FIGURE 2.0

REV
A



KEY

- Boundary VoG SLA3
- VoG/RCT Boundary
- New boundary to extended SLA3
- Suggested extension to SLA3 to ensure cross boundary coherence

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NOTES

**SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO
VALE OF GLAMORGAN SPECIAL
LANDSCAPE AREA 3**

○DRAWN CD	○CHECKED LJ	○OFFICE : CARDIFF
○ NOT TO SCALE	○DATE FEBRUARY 2010	
FIGURE / DRAWING NO.		REV
FIGURE 3.0		

Appendix

Rhondda Cynon Taf

GL049 Llanharry-Pontyclun

ORS and Dinantian (Lower Carboniferous) in E-W low strike ridges separated by strike valleys, overlain unconformably by gently-dipping Triassic marginal facies conglomerates... Topography dissected by Ely valley, filled with glacial silts & clays, head & alluvium... Boulder clay extensive with hummocky moraine & peat... Disused limestone quarries & iron mines...

Mosaic of settlements and rural landscapes with nationally important site for Lower Carboniferous stratigraphy (Brofiscin Quarry SSSI) and potential RIGS sites (e...g... Llanharry iron mine spoil tips)...

Development threat to metalliferous mine spoil tip areas not yet designated as SSSI/GCR sites (see Minescan database)... Ensure that no significant features of geological or geomorphological significance are lost/damaged due to development, , etc...

Includes nationally important site for Lower Carboniferous stratigraphy (Brofiscin Quarry SSSI) and potential mineralogical RIGS sites (e...g... Llanharry iron mine spoil tips)...

HL751 Miskin Manor

Registered Park and Garden PGW(Gm)9(RCT)

Miskin Manor is a well preserved landscaped Victorian and Edwardian pleasure grounds and gardens with a Victorian mock-Tudor mansion and ornamental walled kitchen garden... The site was a Welsh royal residence during the Medieval period... It is now a modern hotel, and is listed as a Grade II Registered Park and Garden (PGW (Gm) 9 (RCT))...

Miskin is first mentioned in 940AD as a commote or Hundred; it would appear that a house has stood on this site since the Early Christian period... The house was a royal residence in 1092 when occupied by Nest, a daughter of Iestyn ap Gwrgant the then prince of Glamorgan... From the 17th to the middle of the 19th century the manor was a seat of a cadet branch of the Bassetts of Old Beaupre... The house was remodified and extended by David Williams and his descendants into the early 20th century... Sir Rhys Rhys Williams made further improvements before it was sold in the mid 20th century, and a plain hotel extension was added in 1990... The character area is a multi-period aspect with archaeological structures and features spanning over a thousand years...

As it stands today, the Manor is a two and three storey house of greyish local stone, with lighter sandstone dressings... It features mullioned and transomed windows, tall pairs of chimneys and four-centred doorways... Carved sandstone beasts stand on the corners of the roof parapets... The main entrance front is on the west side, which has four projecting gable bays (the southern one only at ground floor level)... The east side has one single-storey and one two-storey projecting bay, chimneys on gable ends, and irregular two and three storey arrangements of windows...

A largely mid 19th century stone-built mansion (now a hotel) probably incorporating earlier 17th century fabric and occupying the site of a medieval residence of the princes of Glamorgan, set within extensive gardens and landscaped grounds which remain largely intact, in spite of limited modern encroachment... The overall value of high assigned to this area is based on the survival of components attesting to its exceptionally long history of

occupation dating back to the early medieval period; however, the construction of the M4 and A4119 has impacted significantly on the southern and eastern edges of the park, detracting from its overall coherence...princes of Glamorgan, set within extensive gardens and landscaped grounds which remain largely intact, in spite of limited modern encroachment... The overall value of high assigned to this area is based on the survival of components attesting to its exceptionally long history of occupation dating back to the early medieval period; however, the construction of the M4 and A4119 has impacted significantly on the southern and eastern edges of the park, detracting from its overall coherence...

HL987 Talygarn

Talygarn is a substantial stone mansion situated on elevated ground to the south of Pontyclun village... The present, mainly Victorian, house is largely the work of George Thomas Clark (1809-98), a prominent and wealthy railway engineer, industrialist, and antiquary of medieval Glamorgan... Clark extended and partly rebuilt an earlier house on the site in Tudor Gothic style after he bought it from the daughter of Dr W Lisle of St Fagans, in 1865... Dr Lisle had bought Talygarn in 1841... Some further additions were made in the early twentieth century by Godfrey Clark...

Talygarn is built in Tudor Gothic style... Constructed of local stone and slate, with mullioned and transomed windows and sandstone door and window dressings... The house is elongated east-west, with the main entrance, a single-storey, three-sided porch, on the north side... The house is of varying height, the main central block being of two storeys with an attic... On the north side a projecting ground floor was built in 1892-93, and a Registered Park and Garden PGW(Gm)8(RCT)..... A substantial late Victorian mansion and associated contemporary landscape gardens and woodland grounds, the work of the noted industrialist and antiquary G...T... Clark between 1865 and 1898; the visual coherence of the house and its surrounding designed landscape has remained largely intact, enhanced by a sympathetic programme of restoration and conversion into luxury apartments... ... The overall assessment of outstanding reflects the well preserved state of the house and grounds,, its associations with the noted antiquary G...T... Clark and the elaborate early Renaissance style of the internal decoration, unique in Glamorgan...

VS572 Hendre

A rolling rural landscape with small/medium sized fields, predominantly grazing, defined by hedgerows with scattered blocks of broadleaf and mixed woodland, some with a slight parkland /estate feel... landform lies between approximately 40m and 100mAOD... scattered villages and farmsteads sit within this attractive rural landscape, slightly spoilt by the presence of intrusive/visually detractive elements eg M4, pylons, sharply defined urban edges

LH101 Cynon

Improved grassland is of low ecological value, there are however areas of Broadleaved woodland, marshy grassland and hedgerows that give the area some value... Very likely that some hedgerows in such a large area will be important hedgerows by Hedgerow Regulations 1997... Hedgerows contain species such as Spindle and Dogwood which are rare in rest of country...

Lowland improved grassland with limited broadleaved woodland / marsh grassland / 2nd calcareous grassland associated with limestone quarries... Lake at Talygarn House... Hedges/trees - biodiversity focus...

CL033 Miskin

Both as a just-surviving and discernible estate village and as a designed landscape hemmed in by modernity in the form of the motorway, A road and sprawl of adjacent Pontyclun

VoG

GL532 Pendoylan

Relatively high and very irregular terrain, even hummocky in places, underlain by thick deposit of glacial clays with some sand, interpreted as a Devensian (i.e. last Glaciation) end moraine... local small areas of bedrock protrude through the cover, including 'Old Red Sandstone' (Devonian), Carboniferous limestone and Blue Lias Formation (Lower Jurassic)... The area includes potentially regionally important sites showing glacio-deposition features such as kettle holes (e.g. at Mynydd y forest) and ground survey is now needed to confirm potential status

The area includes potentially regionally important sites showing glacio-deposition features such as kettle holes (e.g. at Mynydd y forest) and ground survey is now needed to confirm potential status

LH471 Hensol Forest

An area largely dominated by conifer plantation but including remnant semi-natural vegetation in the form of heathland and acid grassland communities beside forest tracks and in fire breaks..... In addition, the open water of Pysgodlyn Mawr is of further biodiversity interest.....

Replacement of conifers with broadleaf tree cover as well as encouragement of acid grassland and heathland communities would potentially benefit overall wildlife value of the aspect area.....

LH476 Hensol Park

The frequency of plantation and semi-natural woodlands provides a natural affinity with Hensol Forest (FLFGLLH471) to the south.....

The frequency of extensively managed habitat including semi-natural broadleaved woodland and remnant semi-improved grasslands, as well as large waterbodies, provide a high level of interest..... Marsh Fritillary are present towards the north of the aspect area (CCW, 2006)..... Dormice have been recorded from woodland habitat associated with Talygarn, Rhondda Cynon Taff, habitat that is directly linked with this aspect area (VOG, 2007)..... Otter and Brown Hare are also present (VOG, 2007)..... The mosaic of habitats present are considered to have potential value for birds and bats.....

Undulating ground west of the River Ely consisting of agriculturally improved grassland fields dotted with frequent woodland blocks..... Additional interest is provided by open water including Hensol Lake and fragments of semi-improved grassland habitat including rhos pasture supporting Marsh Fritillary butterfly.....

VS913 Hensol Forest

The area is a predominantly coniferous forest set upon the hill tops and gentle slopes of a wider lowland hills and valley landscape... The highest point of the forest is to the north-west at approximately 130m AOD, the lowest point is approximately 75m AOD to the north-east near Nant Tredodridge... The forest cover creates a very distinctive landscape that has a sense of confinement and seclusion within, but which is highly visible from other areas outside... The forest contains no settlements, and only three minor roads run through it linking local settlements... Hence tranquillity is not affected by the roads... However, the area around the lake complete with picnic grounds and carpark attract visitors who also use trails through the forest and the other car park... Generally the forest appears well managed, although detailing around the carpark and picnic areas appears worn and overused...

There are attractive vistas, particularly related to the lake or views out of the forest... Within the coniferous forest views are generally uniform lacking in variety...

CL033 Hensol Castle

Hensol Castle (Grade I) and its designed parkland (Grade II) has variously been part of a landed estate, a Mental Health institution and conference centre, the latter being its owners' current aspiration... Part of the designed landscape is occupied by the Vale Hotel, Golf & Spa Resort which has quickly gained a reputation as a major sporting venue, regularly being a pre-match training centre for the Wales international rugby squad, and staging in the summer of 2006 the Ryder Cup Wales Seniors Open tournament...



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