Foel Fach Wind Farm Limited.

Foel Fach Wind Farm - Environmental Statement Volume III

Appendix 9.12 – Candidate National Park Assessment

Project Reference: 664094

DECEMBER 2025

Energy for generations

Coriolis Energy

RSK

CONTENTS

1 APPENDIX 9.12 – CANDIDATE NATIONAL PARK ASSESSMENT

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This assessment considers the likely significant effects on the landscape and visual resources of the area identified as the Glyndŵr candidate National Park (GcNP), associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed Foel Fach Wind Farm (herein referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). It also considers the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the emerging special qualities of the GcNP, should it be designated.

1.1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) presented in Environmental Statement **(ES) Volume II, Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual**.

1.1.3 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is consulting on the proposed Glyndŵr National Park. The consultation is based on a 'candidate area' which includes significant areas of upland and lowland landscape in northeast Wales, covering parts of Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Powys local authority areas.

1.1.4 **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.44: Proposed Glyndwr National Park Boundary Plan** shows the GcNP boundary in the context of the Proposed Development and the LVIA study area. **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.45: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Candidate National Park Boundary and Viewpoints** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.46: Blade Tip ZTV to 20 km with Candidate National Park Boundary and Viewpoints** show the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development (blade tip ZTV) at 35 km and 20 km respectively, in relation to the GcNP boundary.

1.1.5 This assessment is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 - Methodology - covers the assessment methodology specific to this report;
- Chapter 3 - Baseline Conditions – provides an analysis of the landscape and visual baseline conditions specific to the area within the GcNP but also drawing upon the baseline descriptions established in **ES Volume II, Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual** in particular for the National Landscape Area (Dee Valley and Corwen) which covers high proportion of the proposed GcNP;
- Chapter 4 - reviews the effects on landscape character within the GcNP, and considers whether any change to the sensitivity of the landscape receptors that might arise as a result of designation of that landscape as a National Park would alter these assessments;
- Chapter 5 - reviews the effects on views experienced within the GcNP, referencing the visual receptor group assessment and viewpoint assessment presented in **ES Volume III, Appendix 9.8: Preliminary Assessment of**

Receptor Groups and **ES Volume III, Appendix 9.9: Viewpoint Assessment**;

- Chapter 6 - reviews the emerging special qualities of the GcNP and considers how they may be affected by the Proposed Development, in light of the assessments of effects on landscape and views noted in the preceding sections. This section also presents the conclusions of the assessment; and
- Chapter 7 Conclusion - provides an overall summary of the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the GcNP.

1.1.6 The assessment draws upon the detailed viewpoint assessments, LANDMAP character area assessments, and ZTV analysis presented in the main LVIA and supporting appendix.

1.2 National Park Status

1.2.1 National Parks in Wales are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Environment Act 1995 and are afforded the highest level of landscape protection. The statutory purposes of National Parks are to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

1.2.2 The proposed Glyndŵr National Park would become Wales's fourth National Park, joining Eryri (Snowdonia), Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), and Arfordir Penfro (Pembrokeshire Coast).

1.2.3 Planning Policy Wales establishes that great weight should be given to the statutory purposes of National Parks.

1.2.4 In pursuing these purposes, National Park Authorities also have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park (the socio-economic duty).

1.3 Proposed Glyndŵr National Park Boundary

1.3.1 The proposed boundary of the Glyndŵr National Park extends across approximately 533 square kilometres of upland and valley landscapes in north Wales. The boundary follows the eastern edge of Eryri National Park and extends eastward to include parts of the Dee Valley and the whole of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape.

1.3.2 The proposed boundary has been defined following consultation and landscape assessment work undertaken by NRW. The boundary reflects areas identified as having landscape qualities of national significance.

1.3.3 The proposed boundary encompasses a diverse range of landscapes, including:

- The Berwyn mountain range and associated upland moorlands
- The upper Dee Valley and its tributaries
- Parts of the Clwydian Range
- Traditional farming landscapes and historic settlements, and
- Extensive areas of woodland and forestry.

1.3.4 The nearest point of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary to the Foel Fach Wind Farm Site is approximately 4.25 km, located in the Llandderfel area to the south-east of the Site. The proposed National Park extends from this closest point to over 30 km distance in the north-east (elevated summits of the Clwydian Range).

1.4 Emerging Special Qualities of the Proposed National Park

1.4.1 NRW commissioned Craggattak Consulting in 2024 to identify the Special Qualities of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park. Six Special Qualities have been identified that would underpin the national significance of the area:

- **SQ1: An inspiring space that promotes mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellbeing**

  The area provides extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation, from gentle valley walks to challenging mountain ascents. The diverse landscapes offer settings for quiet contemplation and active recreation, supporting mental health and wellbeing. The area's natural beauty and relative tranquillity provide opportunities for spiritual connection to landscape and place.
- **SQ2: A place with cohesive communities and distinctive settlement patterns**

  The candidate National Park contains strong, resilient communities with deep connections to place. Traditional settlement patterns reflect the historic relationship between people and landscape. Communities maintain strong cultural identity including the Welsh language and traditional land management practices.
- **SQ3: A story of human interaction with the landscape over millennia**

  Archaeological evidence spans prehistoric to modern times, revealing continuous human occupation and adaptation. Historic landscapes tell stories of agricultural development, industrial heritage including quarrying and mining, and evolving relationships between communities and their environment. The landscape bears witness to changing land use patterns over thousands of years.
- **SQ4: A home to internationally and locally important species and habitats**

  The diverse topography and varied land management practices support a rich array of species and habitats. Upland moorlands, ancient woodlands, river systems and traditional farming landscapes provide habitat for both common and rare species. The area contributes to regional biodiversity networks and ecological connectivity.

- **SQ5: A distinctive, complementary, and contrasting landscape**

  The candidate National Park encompasses remarkable landscape diversity within a relatively compact area. Rolling hills, dramatic valleys, upland plateaux, and intimate enclosed farmland create a complex mosaic of contrasting character areas. This diversity provides scenic quality and natural beauty of national significance.

- **SQ6: A landscape providing benefits beyond its borders**

  The area provides important ecosystem services including carbon storage, water regulation, and flood management that benefit wider regions. The landscape supports sustainable tourism and recreation industries that contribute to the regional economy. Cultural and heritage assets attract visitors and support local businesses throughout the broader area.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Assessment Approach

2.1.1 This assessment follows the methodology set out in **ES Volume II, Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual** and **ES Volume III, Appendix 9.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Criteria**. The assessment considers the emerging National Park designation as a material consideration in determining the sensitivity and value of landscape and visual receptors within the proposed National Park boundary.

2.1.2 The assessment has been structured to address:

- The spatial relationship between the Proposed Development and the proposed National Park, with particular attention to those parts which lie outside the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape, which is addressed separately at **ES Volume III, Appendix 9.6: National Landscapes Assessment**.
- The extent to which landscape character within the proposed National Park would be affected, focusing on the western boundary areas closest to the Site
- The extent to which visual amenity from publicly accessible locations within the proposed National Park would be affected, and
- The potential for effects on the six identified Special Qualities that justify National Park designation.

2.2 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Analysis

2.2.1 The ZTV analysis has been specifically reviewed in relation to the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary. **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.45: Proposed Glyndŵr National Park Boundary Plan** shows the relationship between the proposed National Park boundary, the Foel Fach Wind Farm Site, and the theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines.

2.2.2 Additional ZTV plans have been prepared to specifically illustrate this relationship:

- Figure 9.45: Blade Tip ZTV to 35 km with Candidate National Park Boundary and Viewpoints
- Figure 9.46: Blade Tip ZTV to 20 km with Candidate National Park Boundary and Viewpoints
- Figure 9.47: Landscape Designations to 20 km with Blade Tip ZTV Candidate National Park and Viewpoints, and
- Figure 9.48: LANDMAP Visual and Sensory boundaries to 20 km with Candidate National Park Boundary.

2.2.3 These plans demonstrate the extent of theoretical visibility from within the proposed National Park and inform the assessment of potential effects. The ZTV analysis shows that the nearest parts of the proposed National Park to the Site (in the Llandderfel area, 4.25 km to the south-east) have the highest theoretical visibility,

though actual visibility would be significantly reduced by the valley topography, woodland cover, and settlement in this area.

2.3 Representative Viewpoints

2.3.1 The main LVIA includes seven representative viewpoints located within or relevant to the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary:

- Viewpoint 9: B4391 South of Rhanneg - edge of Eryri National Park at approximately 9.2 km distance to the south
- Viewpoint 14: Green Lane, Corwen - promoted recreational route within CRDVNL at approximately 13.3 km distance to the east
- Viewpoint 15: East of Cynwyd - promoted recreational route within CRDVNL at approximately 14.1 km distance to the east
- Viewpoint 16: Castell Dinas Brân - iconic tourist viewpoint within CRDVNL at approximately 27.2 km distance to the north-east
- Viewpoint 19: Moel y Garnedd (ENP) - elevated summit viewpoint at approximately 6.4 km distance to the south-west (within both Eryri NP and the proposed Glyndŵr NP boundary overlap area)
- Viewpoint 20: Moel Morfydd (CRDVNL) - elevated moorland at approximately 21.4 km distance to the east, and
- Viewpoint 21: Moel y Plas (CRDVNL) - elevated ridge at approximately 25.9 km distance to the north-east.

2.3.2 These viewpoints have been selected to represent key publicly accessible locations within different parts of the proposed National Park from which the Proposed Development would be visible. The viewpoint assessments presented in **ES Volume III, Appendix 9.9: Viewpoint Assessment** provide detailed analysis of the visual effects from these locations.

2.4 LANDMAP and Special Qualities Assessment Framework

2.4.1 The assessment of effects on landscape character uses LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas as the technical baseline, as detailed in **ES Volume III, Appendix 9.4: LANDMAP Detailed Assessment**. However, this assessment also considers how effects on these character areas would translate into effects on the six identified Special Qualities of the proposed National Park.

2.4.2 This dual approach ensures that:

- Technical landscape character effects are rigorously assessed using the established LANDMAP framework
- The assessment addresses the qualities that actually justify National Park designation, and
- Effects are considered in terms meaningful to the National Park's statutory purposes.

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 Spatial Relationship with Proposed National Park

3.1.1 The Foel Fach Wind Farm Site is located approximately 4.25 km to the north-west of the nearest point of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary, which is in the Llandderfel area to the south-east of the Site. The Site lies outside the proposed National Park in an area of elevated moorland between the existing Eryri National Park boundary (approximately 1.9 km to the west) and the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary to the south-east.

3.1.2 The proposed National Park boundary in the Llandderfel area follows the Dee Valley and encompasses upland areas and valleys of the Dee catchment. From this nearest point at 4.25 km, the proposed National Park extends:

- South-eastward along the Dee Valley towards Corwen (10-14 km from Site)
- Eastward across the Berwyn uplands (7.5-30 km from Site), and
- North-eastward towards the Clwydian Range (15-30 km from Site).

3.2 Topography and Screening

3.2.1 The topography in between the Foel Fach Wind Farm Site and the nearest part of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park (Llandderfel area) is characterised by the descending slopes from the outer edges of the Foel Goch uplands towards the Dee Valley. This creates a varied topography with:

- Elevated moorland within the Site (400-500 m AOD);
- Descending hillsides with scattered woodland and farmland;
- The Dee Valley floor at Llandderfel (approximately 150-200 m AOD); and
- Rising ground beyond the valley towards the Berwyn uplands.

3.2.2 The ZTV analysis (**ES Volume IV**, **Figures 9.45** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.46**) demonstrates that theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines from the nearest parts of the proposed National Park is complex:

- Llandderfel Valley Floor (4.25-5 km): Limited theoretical visibility due to valley containment. The valley floor and lower slopes would have restricted views of the turbines due to the intervening topography and screening by woodland, hedgerows, and settlement;
- Elevated Slopes South-East of Llandderfel (5-8 km): Higher theoretical visibility from elevated locations on the south-eastern valley sides, though actual visibility would be reduced by woodland cover and field boundaries;
- Berwyn Uplands (8-30 km): Variable theoretical visibility depending on specific topography and orientation of slopes. Western-facing slopes have higher theoretical visibility; and

- Eastern Clwydian Range (15-30 km): Extensive theoretical visibility from elevated summits and ridgelines, but at substantial distances where turbines would appear much reduced in scale.

3.3 Landscape Character of Nearest Areas

3.3.1 The nearest parts of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park (within 4-10 km of the Site) are described as follows:

LANDMAP Visual & Sensory Aspect Area SNPVS093 - Llandderfel and Dee Valley Bottom (4.25 km at closest point):

- Classification: Valley | Flat Valley Bottom | Mixed Agricultural Valleys
- Overall Evaluation: **High**;
- Characteristics: Intimate valley landscape with strong sense of enclosure provided by rising valley sides. Mixed agricultural land use with improved pastures, scattered woodland blocks, and hedgerows;
- More wooded areas in the western half, where the flood plain is narrower;
- Settlement pattern of dispersed farms and the village of Llandderfel which is in a sheltered location with wooded hillsides to the west of the village;
- River Dee forms the focus of the valley floor; and
- Views are generally contained by valley sides with occasional glimpsed views to surrounding uplands.

DNBGHVS100 - Berwyn Mountain (7.5 km at closest point):

- Classification: Upland | Exposed Upland/Plateau | Upland Moorland
- Overall Evaluation: **High**;
- Characteristics: An extensive tract of open moorland with remote and windswept character, creating a wilderness-type landscape. The aspect is strongly linked visually to the remainder of the Berwyn Range to the south, with the moorland plateau taking on characteristics of upland pasture;
- Large-scale exposed landscape with diverse topography including plateaux and steep slopes;
- Mixture of land cover with no settlements, creating a sense of remoteness and tranquillity; and
- Strong sense of place with attractive, exposed, remote, wild and spiritual qualities providing high scenic value.

SNPVS103 - Moel Heulog (5 km at closest point):

- Classification: Upland | High Hills/Mountains | Upland Moorland | Rolling undulating
- Overall Evaluation: Moderate;
- Characteristics: Rolling upper valley side. Rough pasture broken up by conifer plantation & broadleaf woodland clumps;
- Medium to large-scale open landscape with simple landform characteristics and mixture of vegetation patterns;

- Elevated moorland character providing some long-distance views but with moderate landscape integrity and rarity;
- Generally appropriate land management with constant land use patterns maintaining upland grazing character.

3.4 How the Nearest Areas Embody the Special Qualities

3.4.1 The nearest parts of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park are considered by NRW to embody the six Special Qualities in the following ways:

- **SQ1**: (**An inspiring space that promotes mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellbeing**: The Dee Valley at Llandderfel and surrounding uplands provide opportunities for walking, cycling, and experiencing riverside and upland landscapes. The valley offers gentle walking while nearby uplands provide more challenging routes.
- **SQ2: A place with cohesive communities and distinctive settlement patterns**): Llandderfel village exemplifies the historic settlement pattern of valley-floor villages serving surrounding hill farms. Traditional stone buildings and field patterns reflect centuries of agricultural adaptation.
- **SQ3: An inspiring space that promotes mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellbeing**

  The area provides extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation, from gentle valley walks to challenging mountain ascents. The diverse landscapes offer settings for quiet contemplation and active recreation, supporting mental health and wellbeing. The area's natural beauty and relative tranquillity provide opportunities for spiritual connection to landscape and place.
- **SQ2: A place with cohesive communities and distinctive settlement patterns**

  The candidate National Park contains strong, resilient communities with deep connections to place. Traditional settlement patterns reflect the historic relationship between people and landscape. Communities maintain strong cultural identity including the Welsh language and traditional land management practices.
- **SQ3: A story of human interaction with the landscape over millennia**

  Archaeological evidence spans prehistoric to modern times, revealing continuous human occupation and adaptation. Historic landscapes tell stories of agricultural development, industrial heritage including quarrying and mining, and evolving relationships between communities and their environment. The landscape bears witness to changing land use patterns over thousands of years.
- **SQ4: A home to internationally and locally important species and habitats**

  The diverse topography and varied land management practices support a rich array of species and habitats. Upland moorlands, ancient woodlands, river systems and traditional farming landscapes provide habitat for both common and rare species. The area contributes to regional biodiversity networks and ecological connectivity.
- **SQ5: A distinctive, complementary, and contrasting landscape**

The candidate National Park encompasses remarkable landscape diversity within a relatively compact area. Rolling hills, dramatic valleys, upland plateaux, and intimate enclosed farmland create a complex mosaic of contrasting character areas. This diversity provides scenic quality and natural beauty of national significance.

- **SQ6: A landscape providing benefits beyond its borders**

  The area provides important ecosystem services including carbon storage, water regulation, and flood management that benefit wider regions. The landscape supports sustainable tourism and recreation industries that contribute to the regional economy.

  The area provides extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation, from gentle valley walks to challenging mountain ascents. The diverse landscapes offer settings for quiet contemplation and active recreation, supporting mental health and wellbeing. The area's natural beauty and relative tranquillity provide opportunities for spiritual connection to landscape and place.

4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 Effects on Nearest Areas of Proposed National Park

4.1.1 This section reviews the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, as presented in the LVIA in the ES, to determine:

- Whether landscape character in any part of the GcNP is likely to experience significant effects; and
- Whether the designation of the area as a National Park would affect the assessments within the LVIA, due to greater value being placed on the landscape

4.1.2 This assessment's focus is on those areas closest to the Site where the potential for significant effects is greatest. The assessment is structured by distance from the Site, recognising that the magnitude of landscape character effects typically diminishes with increasing distance.

4.1.3 Effects on landscape character were examined for LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas (VSAAs) within 20 km of the Proposed Development, as presented in **Appendix 9.4** (LANDMAP Assessment). The theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development within the GcNP boundary is shown on **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.45** and **ES Volume IV, Figure 9.46**. Areas of the GcNP with no visibility are not considered further.

4.1.4 The assessment uses LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas as the basis for evaluating landscape character, as these represent professionally assessed landscape units with defined characteristics and evaluated importance. The sensitivity of each aspect area is determined by its LANDMAP Overall Evaluation (Outstanding, High, Moderate, or Low), modified where appropriate by designation status, specific landscape characteristics, and the distribution of theoretical visibility as indicated by the ZTV analysis.

Distance-based Approach

4.1.5 The assessment focuses detailed consideration on three distance bands:

- 4-10 km: Nearest areas where significant effects are most likely
- 10-15 km: Middle distance where effects may remain significant in some elevated or open locations
- 15-30 km: Distant areas where significant effects are unlikely even from elevated viewpoints

Spatial coverage within Proposed National Park

4.1.6 The proposed Glyndŵr National Park encompasses approximately 40 LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas across its 620 square kilometre extent. The ZTV analysis (**ES Volume IV, Figures 9.45-9.48**) demonstrates that theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines extends across parts of the proposed National Park, though with considerable variation:

- Nearest areas (4-10 km, western edge): Higher theoretical visibility from elevated locations, though significantly reduced by valley topography and woodland cover in lower-lying areas
- Middle distance (10-20 km): More fragmented theoretical visibility, concentrated on elevated ridgelines and summits
- Distant areas (20-30 km, eastern Clwydian Range): Limited theoretical visibility, turbines would appear small-scale where visible

Assessment Findings

SNPVS093 - Llandderfel and Dee Valley Bottom (4.25 km at closest point, High value):

Sensitivity

Value and Susceptibility

4.1.7 Value: **High** (valued valley landscape within proposed National Park, **moderate** susceptibility to wind energy development due to valley containment).

ZTV Analysis

4.1.8 The ZTV analysis (**ES Volume IV, Figures 9.46** and **9.48**) shows that theoretical visibility within this aspect area is highly variable:

- Valley floor areas (approximately 60% of the aspect area): No or very limited theoretical visibility due to valley containment
- Lower valley sides (approximately 30% of the aspect area): Partial theoretical visibility, though significantly reduced by woodland cover, hedgerows, and settlement
- Upper valley slopes (approximately 10% of the aspect area): Higher theoretical visibility from elevated positions on valley edges

Magnitude of Change

4.1.9 The magnitude of change across this aspect area would be variable:

- Valley floor: Very Low to Low magnitude - The proposed turbines would be largely screened by valley topography and vegetation. Where glimpsed views might occur, turbines would appear on distant skylines beyond the valley sides. The intimate, enclosed character of the valley floor would be retained.

- Lower valley sides: Low magnitude - From lower slopes, partial views of some turbines may occur through gaps in vegetation or from more open locations. However, the turbines would be seen at 4-6 km distance beyond the valley and would not dominate views. The mixed agricultural character with scattered settlement and woodland would remain the dominant influence.
- Upper valley slopes: Low to Medium magnitude - From elevated positions on the upper valley slopes (forming only a small proportion of the aspect area), clearer views towards the turbines may occur. At 4-5 km distance, the turbines would be visible features on the skyline, though the varied valley landscape and intervening features would provide context.

Overall Effect:

4.1.10 Taking account of the variable magnitude across this aspect area, with the vast majority experiencing Very Low to isolated open areas with medium magnitude, the overall effect on SNPVS093 would be **Minor-Moderate** to **Moderate** (**Not significant**).

This assessment reflects:

- The high value of this valley landscape as part of the proposed National Park
- The variable magnitude of change, with most of the valley experiencing limited change
- The retention of the fundamental valley character and sense of enclosure
- The concentration of any higher magnitude effects to limited elevated positions at valley edges, and
- The continued dominance of the valley's own characteristics (river, mixed agriculture, settlement pattern, woodland)

SNPVS103 - Moel Heulog

Baseline

4.1.11 SNPVS103 - Moel Heulog comprises "*Rolling upper valley side. Rough pasture broken up by conifer plantation & broadleaf woodland clumps"* with Moderate overall evaluation (all criteria moderate). Located approximately 4.6-10 km south-east of the Site, this aspect area lies partially within the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary (GcNP). The eastern portion of the area that falls within the GcNP is predominantly afforested with conifer plantations, which provides substantial visual screening.

4.1.12 The LANDMAP assessment describes the area as having:

- Rolling/undulating topography
- Mixture of landcover (rough pasture with conifer plantation and broadleaf woodland)
- Medium scale
- Open character

- Simple visual character
- Coarse texture
- Weak sense of place
- Moderate scenic quality, character, integrity and rarity

4.1.13 The landscape is classified as "*Upland, exposed plateau, valleys, hillsides and scarp slopes (wooded 20-50%)*" indicating significant woodland cover that would provide screening.

Sensitivity

Value and Susceptibility

4.1.14 The aspect area has a LANDMAP overall evaluation of **Moderate** (all four criteria - scenic quality, character, integrity and rarity - assessed as moderate). While the western portion of the area lies within the proposed Glyndŵr National Park boundary (which elevates landscape value), the eastern afforested portions within the GcNP provide substantial screening and are of lower landscape quality due to conifer plantation character. The moderate LANDMAP evaluation reflects a landscape that, while pleasant, lacks the exceptional qualities found in areas with High or Outstanding evaluations.

4.1.15 The rolling upper valley side character with its mixture of rough pasture and woodland has moderate susceptibility to wind energy development. The presence of conifer plantations (noted as existing features) indicates a managed landscape with some existing modern interventions. The moderate scale and simple character suggest moderate capacity to accommodate change, though the sense of place is noted as "weak" in the LANDMAP assessment.

4.1.16 Overall Sensitivity: Combining moderate value with moderate susceptibility results in **medium** sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change During Construction

4.1.17 Construction activities would be visible from parts of this area, particularly from the western rough pasture portions. However, the theoretical visibility data shows that while 84% of the area might theoretically see all 10 turbine locations during construction, the eastern afforested portions (particularly those within the GcNP) would provide substantial screening. The distance of 4.6-10 km would reduce the perceived scale of construction activities. Where visible from elevated open areas, construction would represent temporary activity on the distant horizon. This would result in a low-medium scale of change experienced across parts of the area, resulting in a low-medium magnitude of change.

Effects During Construction

4.1.18 Overall, the effect is judged to be **minor-moderate** and **not significant**, considering the moderate landscape value, the substantial screening provided by conifer

plantations particularly in the eastern portions within the GcNP, and the distance from the Site.

Magnitude of Change During Operation

4.1.19 During operation, theoretical visibility analysis shows a high proportion of the area could see all 10 turbines. However, this theoretical visibility figure does not account for the substantial screening provided by the conifer plantation and broadleaf woodland clumps that characterize the area, particularly in the eastern portions within the GcNP boundary.

4.1.20 Where visible from the western open rough pasture areas, the turbines would appear as distant elements at 4.6-10 km, seen across the rolling topography. The turbines would introduce new vertical elements but at a distance where they would not dominate the local landscape character. The rolling upper valley side character with its mixture of rough pasture and woodland would be maintained.

4.1.21 The conifer plantations, which are noted as existing visual detractors in some LANDMAP assessments of surrounding areas, provide important context - this is a working landscape with modern forestry interventions rather than a pristine upland environment. This would result in a low-medium scale of change experienced across limited portions of the area (primarily the western open sections), resulting in a low-medium magnitude of change.

Effects During Operation

4.1.22 Combined with medium sensitivity, the operational phase would result in a moderate and not significant effect. This assessment recognises that:

- The eastern portions within the GcNP are predominantly afforested and would have limited actual visibility due to woodland screening;
- The 4.6-10 km distance substantially reduces influence;
- The moderate LANDMAP evaluation indicates this is not a landscape of exceptional quality;
- The existing conifer plantation character demonstrates this is a managed working landscape; and
- The turbines would be distant features rather than dominant elements in views from this area

4.1.23 Taking account of the variable magnitude across this aspect area, with the eastern afforested portions experiencing very low magnitude due to woodland screening while elevated western areas experience low-medium magnitude, the overall effect on SNPVS103 would be **Moderate** (**Not significant**).

DNBGHVS100 - Berwyn Mountain (7.5 km - 30 km south-east)

Baseline

4.1.24 DNBGHVS100 - Berwyn Mountain is located primarily beyond 10 km, however a small part extends to within 7.5 km, to the south-east of the Site. This separate part covers the landscape around Cefn Llystyn where some visibility of the Proposed Development would be possible, but with lower lying areas having no visibility due to topographic screening. The larger extent of the elevated part of the more elevated Aspect Area beyond 10 km is located around 10.5 km from the nearest turbine at its closest point and extends to around 30 km away. Due to its elevated nature clear long-distance views are available from the area, which would include views of the Proposed Development. However, the distance from the Proposed Development serves to limit the potential for impacts to the overall character of the landscape.

Sensitivity

4.1.25 DNBGHVS100 - Berwyn Mountain has a LANDMAP overall evaluation of High, reflecting its value as an important upland mountain landscape. The area comprises *"high mountain landscape with elevated mountain character providing good long-distance visibility"*. With the emerging National Park designation adding further value, this results in high sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change During Construction

4.1.26 For the portion within 7.5 km (around Cefn Llystyn), construction would have limited visibility due to topographic screening in lower lying areas. The elevated areas would have some views of construction activities, but at sufficient distance to limit prominence. For the main part of the aspect area beyond 10 km, construction would be visible from exposed mountain slopes but at considerable distance. This would result in a very low magnitude of change.

Effects During Construction

4.1.27 For the area within 7.5 km, this would result in at worst minor and not significant effects, recognising that the nearby surrounding landscape would remain the primary influence on character. For the main area beyond 10 km, effects would be **minor** and **not significant**.

Magnitude of Change During Operation

4.1.28 For the portion within 7.5 km, where some visibility would occur from elevated areas, the turbines would appear as new but distant elements in the landscape. The mountain character around Cefn Llystyn would be largely maintained with the surrounding landscape remaining the primary influence on character. For the main part of the aspect area beyond 10 km, turbines would be visible from exposed slopes but at considerable distance (10.5-30 km), where they would appear as distant elements in panoramic views. This would result in a low magnitude of change.

Effects During Operation

4.1.29 For the area within 7.5 km, combined with high sensitivity, this results in **moderate** and **not significant** effects. For the main area beyond 10 km, effects would be minor and not significant. The distance from the Proposed Development serves to limit the potential for significant impacts to the overall character of this important mountain landscape.

Overall Significance

4.1.30 Taking account of the variable magnitude across this aspect area, with the majority beyond 10 km experiencing very low magnitude due to distance while the elevated portion within 7.5 km around Cefn Llystyn experiences low magnitude, the overall effect on DNBGHVS100 would be **Minor-Moderate** (**Not significant**).

4.2 Effects on Other Areas Within Proposed National Park

10-15 km Distance Band:

4.2.1 Within this zone, effects on landscape character areas within the proposed National Park would range from **Minor** to **Minor-Moderate** (**not significant**). The increased distance provides effective mitigation, with the turbines appearing progressively smaller in scale. Valley topography and woodland continue to provide screening in lower-lying areas. Even on elevated moorland areas (such as DNBGHVS082 - Llantysilio Mountain), the 10-15 km distance means effects would be limited.

15-30 km Distance Band (Including Clwydian Range):

4.2.2 At these substantial distances, effects would be **Minor** to **Negligible (No Effect)** and **not significant**. The turbines would appear as distant, small-scale elements. The landscape character and special qualities of these more distant parts of the proposed National Park would be retained. This includes all four LANDMAP areas assessed as Outstanding value (DNBGHVS089, DNBGHVS094, MNTGMVS389, MNTGMVS897), which are all located 20+ km from the Site.

4.3 Summary of Landscape Character Effects

4.3.1 The assessment of landscape character effects within the proposed Glyndŵr National Park demonstrates that there would be no significant effects.

4.3.2 Distance-Related Effects:

- 4-10 km (Nearest areas): Effects range from **Minor** to **Moderate** (**Not significant**) in the most sensitive valley landscapes, with substantial topographic and vegetation screening reducing actual visibility in many locations
- 10-15 km (Middle distance): Effects limited to **Minor** to **Minor-Moderate** (**Not significant**), with distance providing effective mitigation

- 15-30 km (Distant areas including Clwydian Range): Effects reduced to **Minor** to **Negligible** (**No Effect**) and **not significant**, with turbines appearing as distant, small-scale elements

4.3.3 Key Assessed Areas:

- SNPVS093 (Llandderfel and Dee Valley Bottom, 4.25 km): **Minor-Moderate** to **Moderate** (**Not significant**) - valley containment provides substantial screening with effects concentrated on limited elevated positions
- SNPVS103 (Moel Heulog, 4.6-10 km): **Moderate** (**Not significant**) - conifer plantation screening significantly reduces actual visibility, particularly in eastern portions within the National Park
- DNBGHVS100 (Berwyn Mountain, 7.5-30 km): **Minor-Moderate** (**Not significant**) - distance and topographic screening limit effects despite high landscape value

4.3.4 All four LANDMAP areas assessed as Outstanding value within the GcNP are located 20+ km from the Site, where effects would be negligible and not significant.

Conclusion

4.3.5 The assessment demonstrates that the fundamental landscape character and special qualities of the proposed Glyndŵr Candidate National Park (GcNP) would be preserved. Effects are not significant , with the greater effects being highly localised to small portions of the western edge where topographic and vegetation screening would substantially reduce actual visibility compared to theoretical visibility indicated by ZTV analysis.

5 EFFECTS ON VIEWS FROM WITHIN THE CANDIDATE NATIONAL PARK

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section reviews the effects on views experienced from within the GcNP looking beyond the boundary of the Candidate National Park towards the Site, as presented in the visual receptor group assessment (**Appendix 9.8**) and viewpoint assessment (**Appendix 9.9**).

5.1.2 Six assessed viewpoints fall within or represent views from within the GcNP boundary:

- VP9 B4391 South of Rhandir (10.2 km) - within southern portion of GcNP
- VP14 Green Lane, Corwen (13.3 km) - within Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/National Landscape, overlapping with GcNP
- VP15 Offa's Dyke Path (14.1 km) - within Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/National Landscape, overlapping with GcNP
- VP16 Castell Dinas Brân (27.2 km) - within Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/National Landscape, overlapping with GcNP
- VP20 Moel Morfydd (21.4 km) - within Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/National Landscape, overlapping with GcNP
- VP21 Moel y Plas (25.9 km) - within Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/National Landscape, overlapping with GcNP

5.2 Effects from Representative Viewpoints

5.2.1 The following text summarises the assessments of the representative viewpoints within the GcNP:

Viewpoint 9: B4391 South of Rhanneg (9.2 km, edge of Eryri NP)

- Very High sensitivity (tourists and B road users within edge of Eryri National Park) and would also be on the boundary of the GcNP
- Medium magnitude - All 10 turbines would be visible within the Site viewed as 3 defined clusters of towers forming new vertical focal points across the Site's exposed ridges and rolling conjoined upland landform. At 9+ km distance on similar elevation to towers, the turbines would appear as medium-scale elements covering a modest proportion of the wide panoramic view. Six towers would be backclothed by landform, limiting skyline impacts.
- **Moderate-Major effect (significant)**
- The valued upland character of this potentially shared boundary of the existing and candidate new National Parks location would be affected to some degree. While the turbines would be prominent vertical focal points, the wide panoramic context and the backclothing of towers by landform would

limit the overall impact. The open upland character and views towards Eryri mountains [and back into the core of the GcNP would be retained].

Viewpoint 14: Green Lane, Corwen (13.3 km, within CRDVNL)

- High sensitivity (users of promoted recreational route within existing National Landscape and GcNP)
- Very Low magnitude - Theoretical visibility of up to 5 turbines on the distant western skyline at over 13 km, with only upper portions of T04 and T10 theoretically visible along with partial blades of T03, T06 and T09. Mainly blade tips of 4 turbines which would intermittently appear above the horizon in optimal visibility conditions. T01, T02, T05, T07 and T08 almost entirely screened. At this distance with intervening topography, turbines would appear as very small-scale, distant features, often difficult to discern at long range (13 km+). The valued characteristics of the National Landscape and GcNP in the immediate vicinity (Dee Valley character with hedged fields, woodland, meandering river) would remain unchanged and fully appreciated.
- **Minor effect (not significant)**
- The characteristic Dee Valley landscape with its time-depth evident in field patterns and settlement would be entirely retained. The turbines would be barely perceptible distant elements.

Viewpoint 15: East of Cynwyd (14.1 km, within CRDVNL)

- High sensitivity (users of promoted recreational route within existing National Landscape and GcNP)
- Low magnitude - From this promoted recreational route within the National Landscape GcNP, the proposed turbines would appear subservient to the distant peaks of Eryri NP (Snowdonia) and the host upland landscape areas. Other existing wind farms are seen more prominently in the view, providing established context. The turbines would be distant elements that would not dominate the extensive panoramic view available from this location.
- **Minor effect (not significant)**
- The scenic qualities of the existing National Landscape and GcNP and views towards the more distant peaks of Eryri National Park would be retained. The proposal would add to the existing wind energy context but would not fundamentally change the landscape experience from this recreational route.

Viewpoint 16: Castell Dinas Brân (27.2 km, within CRDVNL)

- High sensitivity (tourists and footpath users at this iconic castle viewpoint within existing National Landscape and GcNP)
- Very Low magnitude - This iconic viewpoint from the historic castle provides panoramic views across the Dee Valley and surrounding landscapes, including views of Llangollen below, the meandering River Dee, and the surrounding pattern of fields, woodland and settlement. Distant views extend in all directions including west towards the Welsh uplands. At approximately 27 km distance, the proposed turbines would appear as very distant, barely perceptible elements on the western horizon, visible only in the clearest

conditions. They would occupy a very small portion of the extensive 360-degree panoramic view and would be subservient to the immediate landscape qualities and more prominent landscape features. The exceptional scenic and cultural value of this viewpoint would be entirely retained.

- **Minor effect (not significant)**
- This is one of the most visited viewpoints in North Wales with exceptional scenic and cultural value. The proposal at 27+ km distance would not compromise any of the qualities that make this such an important viewpoint. The immediate Dee Valley landscape, the historic context, and the panoramic views in all directions would be fully retained.

Viewpoint 20 – Moel Morfydd (CRDVNL)

- This viewpoint is located at an elevation of 543m AOD, approximately 21.4 km west of the nearest turbine. The viewpoint is within the existing National Landscape and GcNP, within LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Area DNBGHVS089 - Llantysilio Mountain (Outstanding evaluation).
- This elevated viewpoint provides panoramic views across the surrounding landscapes from within the existing National Landscape and GcNP. The elevated position and Outstanding LANDMAP evaluation reflect the high scenic value of this location. Views extend across the varied landscapes of northeast Wales, including distant views toward the Site area.
- Receptor Sensitivity: Hill walkers at elevated viewpoints within existing National Landscape and GcNP have very high sensitivity due to the Outstanding landscape value and recreational purpose.
- Magnitude of Change: At 21.4 km distance, the Proposed Development would be visible as very distant features on the horizon. While visible, the considerable distance would limit their prominence and they would not materially affect the overall character of views from this location. This results in a low magnitude of change.
- Effects: Combined with very high sensitivity, this would result in **moderate** and **not significant** effects during operation, recognising that the distance limits prominence despite the high sensitivity of the receptor.

Viewpoint 21 – Moel y Plas (CRDVNL)

- Baseline: This viewpoint is located at grid reference 316762, 355523 at an elevation not specified, approximately 25.9 km north-east of the nearest turbine. The viewpoint is within the existing National Landscape and GcNP, within LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Area DNBGHVS047 - Clwydian Hills-South (Outstanding evaluation).
- Description: This viewpoint from Moel y Plas offers elevated views from the northern section of the Clwydian Range. The summit area, characterized by its moorland vegetation, forms the foreground. Panoramic vistas extend across the surrounding landscapes, including the Vale of Clwyd, the Dee Valley, and the distant Welsh mountains (Eryri National Park). The Proposed Development would occupy a very small portion of the distant views to the west/south-west.

- Receptor Sensitivity: Hill walkers within existing National Landscape and GcNP at scenic viewpoint have high sensitivity due to the Outstanding landscape value and recreational purpose.
- Magnitude of Change: At 25.9 km distance, the Proposed Development would be visible as very distant features, occupying only a small portion of the panoramic view. The considerable distance would ensure minimal prominence and no material effect on the overall scenic quality. This results in a very low magnitude of change.
- Effects: Combined with high sensitivity, this would result in **minor** and **not significant** effects during operation.

Assessment Distance bands:

- 6-10 km: Significant effects at elevated locations (VP 9 only)
- 10-15 km: Not significant effects (VPs 14, 15) even from elevated locations, with moderate effects being not significant at distance (VP 20 at 21.4 km)
- 15-30 km: Not significant effects throughout (VPs 16, 21), turbines appear distant and diminished

5.3 Concluding Statement

5.3.1 The visibility pattern represented by the six viewpoints within the extant National Landscape (Dee Valley and Corwen) and GcNP demonstrates clear distance attenuation, with significant effects concentrated in the nearest western areas (6-10 km zone). The addition of these viewpoints confirms that beyond 13-14 km from the Site, visual effects within the proposed National Park would not be significant, with the valued characteristics of the National Landscape fully retained at these distances.

6 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON SPECIAL QUALITIES

6.1.1 This section assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the six identified Special Qualities that justify the proposed Glyndŵr National Park designation.

6.2 Assessment of Effects on Each Special Quality

SQ1: An inspiring space that promotes mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellbeing

6.2.1 **Baseline**: The nearest areas of the candidate National Park (4.25 km from the Site) include parts of the Dee Valley and surrounding uplands that provide opportunities for walking, cycling and outdoor recreation. Key recreational routes include sections of promoted walks and public rights of way that cross the rolling countryside.

6.2.2 **Effects Assessment**: The Proposed Development would be visible from some elevated recreational areas within the nearest parts of the candidate National Park, particularly from higher ground around Llandderfel and Corwen areas (Viewpoints 14 and 15). However, the turbines would be seen at distances of 12-15 km where they would appear as relatively small-scale features in the wider landscape view. The majority of valley bottom recreational areas would have no or very limited visibility due to topographic screening. The visual presence of turbines (particularly at such distances) would not in any way effect the availability of any spaces and facilities.

6.2.3 **Conclusion**: While there would be some visual intrusion from elevated recreational areas, there would be no direct impacts to the availability of or access to such resources and the scale of visual change would not significantly compromise the area's overall ability to provide inspiring settings for recreation and wellbeing. The special quality would be maintained. **Effect: Minor adverse (not significant).**

SQ2: A place with cohesive communities and distinctive settlement patterns

6.2.4 **Baseline:** Traditional settlements within the nearest areas of the candidate National Park reflect historic patterns of development in river valleys and on sheltered slopes. Communities maintain strong cultural identities and connections to the surrounding agricultural landscape.

6.2.5 **Effects Assessment:** The Proposed Development would not directly affect settlement patterns or community cohesion within the candidate National Park. Views of the turbines from settlements would be limited due to the intervening distance (minimum 12 km), with the closer settlement of Llanderfel benefitting from a lower valley location and substantial woodland and topographic screening provided by the

rolling terrain. The development would not affect the physical fabric of historic settlements or their immediate landscape settings.

6.2.6 **Conclusion:** No significant effects on community cohesion or distinctive settlement patterns within the candidate National Park. **Effect: Negligible (not significant).**

SQ3: A story of human interaction with the landscape over millennia

6.2.7 **Baseline**: The candidate National Park contains extensive evidence of human occupation from prehistoric times to the present, including ancient monuments, historic field systems, industrial heritage sites, and traditional farming landscapes that demonstrate evolving relationships between people and environment.

6.2.8 **Effects Assessment**: The introduction of wind energy infrastructure represents a contemporary chapter in the continuing story of human adaptation to environmental challenges, including climate change. The turbines would be visible as distant features from some parts of the candidate National Park, alongside various other relatively modern features including trunk roads, electricity transmission pylons, telecommunications infrastructure etc., but would not directly affect historic sites or landscapes within the designated area. The development could be interpreted as part of the ongoing evolution of the human-landscape relationship in response to 21st century environmental challenges.

6.2.9 **Conclusion**: The development would not harm the historic narrative embedded in the landscape and could be viewed as a continuation of the adaptive relationship between people and environment. **Effect: Minor adverse (not significant).**

SQ4: A home to internationally and locally important species and habitats

6.2.10 **Baseline:** The diverse habitats within the candidate National Park support a range of species adapted to upland, woodland, and riverside environments. Ecological connectivity exists between different habitat areas within the proposed designation.

6.2.11 **Effects Assessment:** The Proposed Development is located outside the candidate National Park boundary (minimum 4.25 km distance) and would not result in direct habitat loss or fragmentation within the designated area. There may be some visual effects on the setting of natural areas, but these would not affect the ecological function or species populations within the candidate National Park.

6.2.12 **Conclusion:** No significant effects on species or habitats within the candidate National Park due to the external location of the development. **Effect: Negligible (not significant).**

SQ5: A distinctive, complementary, and contrasting landscape

6.2.13 **Baseline**: The candidate National Park encompasses a diverse range of landscape types including the Berwyn uplands, Dee Valley, and parts of the Clwydian Range.

This creates a mosaic of contrasting character areas that contribute to the overall distinctiveness and scenic quality of the area.

6.2.14 **Effects Assessment**: The Proposed Development would introduce new vertical elements into distant views from some elevated areas within the candidate National Park. However, the turbines would be seen at distances of 12-30 km where they would appear as relatively minor features in the context of the extensive and varied landscapes both within and outside of the designation. The fundamental character and distinctiveness of landscape areas within the candidate National Park would not be compromised.

6.2.15 **Conclusion**: While there would be some visual change in distant views, the distinctive landscape character areas within the candidate National Park would retain their essential qualities and contrasts. **Effect: Minor adverse (not significant).**

SQ6: A landscape providing benefits beyond its borders

6.2.16 **Baseline:** The candidate National Park area contributes to regional ecosystem services, supports tourism and recreation industries, and provides cultural and heritage experiences that benefit wider areas of north Wales.

6.2.17 **Effects Assessment:** The Proposed Development would contribute to renewable energy generation, supporting climate change mitigation which aligns with environmental stewardship objectives. Any minor visual effects on tourism and recreation would be limited to distant views from some elevated locations. The area would continue to provide ecosystem services and support local economies.

6.2.18 **Conclusion:** The development would not significantly affect the ability of the landscape to provide benefits beyond its borders and would contribute positively to climate change objectives. **Effect: Minor beneficial/neutral (not significant).**

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 This assessment has evaluated the potential effects of the Foel Fach Wind Farm on the landscape and visual resources of the proposed Glyndŵr National Park, and on the Special Qualities that justify its designation.

7.2 Landscape Character Effects

7.2.1 The assessment of landscape character effects shows that:

- **No significant adverse effects** on landscape character would occur within the proposed National Park boundary
- The nearest areas (4-10 km from Site) would experience **minor-moderate** effects that are **not significant**
- Areas at greater distances (10 km+) would experience **minor** or **negligible effects**
- The LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas within the proposed National Park would retain their essential character and value

7.3 Visual Effects

7.3.1 The assessment of visual effects from representative viewpoints shows:

- Viewpoint 9 is the only representative view (1 of 6) that would experience **moderate significant** effects, although its host landscape character area Berwyn Mountain is an extensive LANDMAP area ranging from 7.5-30 km and as a result the underlying character would remain with much of the area subject to lower visual and landscape effects
- Other viewpoints within the proposed National Park would experience **moderate or minor** effects that are **not significant**
- The distance from the Site (4.25 km minimum) ensures that visual effects are limited in extent and prominence

7.4 Special Qualities Effects

7.4.1 The assessment of effects on Special Qualities shows:

- All six Special Qualities would experience **minor adverse** effects or **no significant effects**
- No Special Quality would be significantly compromised by the Proposed Development
- The essential characteristics that justify National Park designation would be maintained

7.5 Overall Conclusion

7.5.1 The Proposed Development would not result in effects on the proposed Glyndŵr National Park (GcNP) that would compromise its suitability for National Park designation. While some effects would occur, particularly from elevated viewpoints, including one significant visual effect at the boundary of the GcNP, these would be limited by the minimum 4.25 km separation distance and would not fundamentally alter the landscape character or Special Qualities that justify the National Park designation.

7.5.2 The assessment recognises that the proposed National Park represents one of Wales' most important landscape areas, deserving of the highest level of protection. However, the effects of the Proposed Development would be appropriately limited by distance and topographic and woodland screening, ensuring that the National Park's statutory purposes could be fulfilled effectively.

7.5.3 Should the National Park designation proceed, appropriate consideration should be given to the cumulative effects of renewable energy development in the surrounding area, but the Foel Fach Wind Farm alone would not present a barrier to achieving the conservation and enhancement objectives that would underpin the National Park's management.