



LANDMAP Information Guidance Note 1

LANDMAP and Special Landscape Areas

June 2008

1. Introduction and Context

The Countryside Council for Wales & Landscape Policy

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) champions the environment and landscapes of Wales and its coastal waters as sources of natural and cultural riches, as a foundation for economic and social activity, and as a place for leisure and learning opportunities. CCW aims to make the environment a valued part of everyone's life in Wales. CCW is the Government's statutory advisor on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment in Wales and its inshore waters.

CCW's landscape remit includes:

- Providing a Wales-wide framework of landscape information for planning, management and decision making as advocated by the European Landscape Convention
- Providing advice on identifying statutory and non-statutory national landscape designations
- General duty for the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty of Wales in both areas designated for their natural beauty, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and elsewhere
- As Government's statutory advisors in relation to National Parks and AONBs to provide advice on planning issues, management planning, designation, raising awareness of their purposes; and for National Parks only to provide advice on member appointments and budget allocation
- With Cadw and the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, maintaining and promoting the use of the non-statutory Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales
- Identifying, recording and monitoring the character, qualities and distinct identity of landscapes across Wales through its landscape assessment programme, LANDMAP, and its seascape work
- Providing advice to planning authorities and others on developments that may affect the landscape
- Awarding grants to local authorities and organisations for projects with landscape and access objectives that will improve and enhance the landscape and increase opportunities for enjoying the diverse landscapes of Wales
- To provide opportunities for enjoyment and education in relation to CCW's functions including landscape

This guidance note is the first in a series of CCW guidance notes on LANDMAP and landscape related topics. This particular guidance note presents the national framework and methodology for using LANDMAP to identify the local landscape designation, Special Landscape Area.

2. National Landscape Designations in Wales

Wales hosts national, local, statutory and non-statutory landscape designations. The relationship of a potential SLA should be considered within the context of that wider framework of designations. In brief, the following landscape designations apply within Wales.

National Parks are extensive tracts of country which by reason of their natural beauty and the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation are nationally important landscapes and therefore it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them. The purposes of National Parks are to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities which they were designated for.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are areas whose distinctive landscape character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them. The primary purpose of an AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The needs of agriculture, forestry, rural industries and the economic and social needs of local communities should also be taken into consideration. The demand for recreation can be met but must be consistent with the conservation of natural beauty.

Heritage Coasts in Wales are the most scenically outstanding stretches of undeveloped and unspoilt coast. Of the 14 Heritage Coasts in Wales 11 lie adjacent to a National Park or an AONB.

The Register of **Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales** identifies a selection of 58 of the best surviving examples of different types of historic landscape, of which 28 are partially or entirely within either a National Park or AONB. The Cadw sponsored Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project goes on to record in detail the character of those landscapes on the Register, and will be gradually extended to cover other parts of Wales, including urban areas.

World Heritage Sites (WHS) have 'outstanding universal value' and are designated to protect and preserve sites of cultural and natural heritage around the world. Wales has two outstanding cultural WHS and one submitted on the tentative list.

National Parks and AONBs are designated under national legislation. In landscape and planning terms National Parks and AONBs are equal in status. Heritage Coasts and historic landscapes on the Register are non-statutory designations. However, where Heritage Coasts coincide with a protected landscape (National Park or AONB) they have legal protection and are often integrated into the management for that area. Historic Landscapes identified on the Register have no special protection but the Register, and WHS, are a material consideration in the planning process and detailed guidance on its use is set out in the Guide to Good Practice on using the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales in the Planning and Development Process (2nd revised edition, Cadw, 2007). The aim of the Register is to draw attention to the value of these landscapes when planning applications and developments are considered. WHS have no statutory basis but have comprehensive Management Plans.

3. Local Landscape Designations in Wales

Local Planning Authorities may designate, at their discretion, areas of landscape importance within their county with a local landscape designation (LLD). These LLDs may be included in their Unitary or Local Development Plan (UDP, LDP respectively) to identify areas where special landscape policies apply.

Local Landscape Designations in Wales are frequently known as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) and for the purpose of this paper this term shall be applied.

Special Landscape Areas are a non-statutory designation applied by the local planning authority to define areas of high landscape importance within their administrative boundary. Areas of high landscape importance may be designated for their intrinsic physical, environmental, visual, cultural and historical value in the contemporary landscape. Landscapes designated as a SLA may be unique, exceptional or distinctive to the local authority area.

4. LANDMAP

Each Authority in Wales should be supported by a rigorous and consistent landscape assessment identifying key landscape characteristics and qualities that can be used to aid planning policy and decisions. In Wales, LANDMAP (Box 1) is the formally adopted methodology for landscape assessment and is advocated by Planning Policy Wales (Box 2). LANDMAP is a whole landscape approach that covers all landscapes, designated and non-designated. The major urban areas of Swansea and Cardiff are currently excluded.

Box 1 LANDMAP: the Welsh approach to Landscape Assessment

LANDMAP (CCW, 2003) is an all-Wales GIS based landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. LANDMAP comprises five spatially related datasets known as the Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, the Historic Landscape and the Cultural landscape. LANDMAP Information is collected in a structured and rigorous way that is defined by the LANDMAP methodology. Further information can be obtained from www.ccw.gov.uk/landmap.

LANDMAP is a partnership programme between the Countryside Council for Wales and all of the local planning and national park authorities of Wales. Complete, quality assured, coverage of all five layers within each Authority is expected in 2008 thereby providing a nationally consistent resource for landscape planning and decision making.

National coverage provides an opportunity to use Landmap in identifying or revising SLAs. It also provides the opportunity for SLAs to be regionally contextualised and consistent at planning authority administrative boundaries.

Box 2 Relevant extracts from Welsh Assembly Government “Planning Policy Wales”, March 2002

Section 5.3.11 “Non statutory designations, such as Special Landscape Areas...should be soundly based on a formal scientific assessment of the nature conservation, landscape or geological value of the site. Local non-statutory sites can add value to the planning process particularly if such designations are informed by community participation and reflect community values.....”

Section 5.3.13 CCW’s LANDMAP information system methodology is an important information resource upon which local planning authorities can draw in making the landscape assessments needed to inform local policy, guidance and decision making in this field...they can help inform supplementary planning guidance on landscape assessment (covering, for example, ...special landscape areas...).

5. LANDMAP or LANDMAP plus SLAs?

Significant improvements in landscape policy work can be made by using criteria based policies underpinned by LANDMAP assessments. Comprehensive, consistent and quality assured LANDMAP assessments provide the required evidence needed to inform and support criteria based policies and plans. Criteria based approaches fulfil the whole landscape approach of the European Landscape Convention.

However, some authorities may consider that their landscapes can be managed more effectively by adopting a dual approach to landscape management. In this dual approach, all landscapes will be underpinned equally by LANDMAP, but in addition to this, some landscapes of county importance will be specifically identified as a SLA with additional guidance being produced for these key landscapes.

The key issue for each local planning authority is whether to apply a SLA Designation. It is important that the local planning authority makes an individual choice.

6. Special Landscape Areas

A SLA may be designated for one or more reasons but the role of the SLA must be clearly aligned with the original need for the SLA in order to fulfil the objective of the designation. It is important that the role of a SLA has been carefully considered in conjunction with what a local planning authority is trying to achieve with its other policies for the authority.

Potential role of SLAs

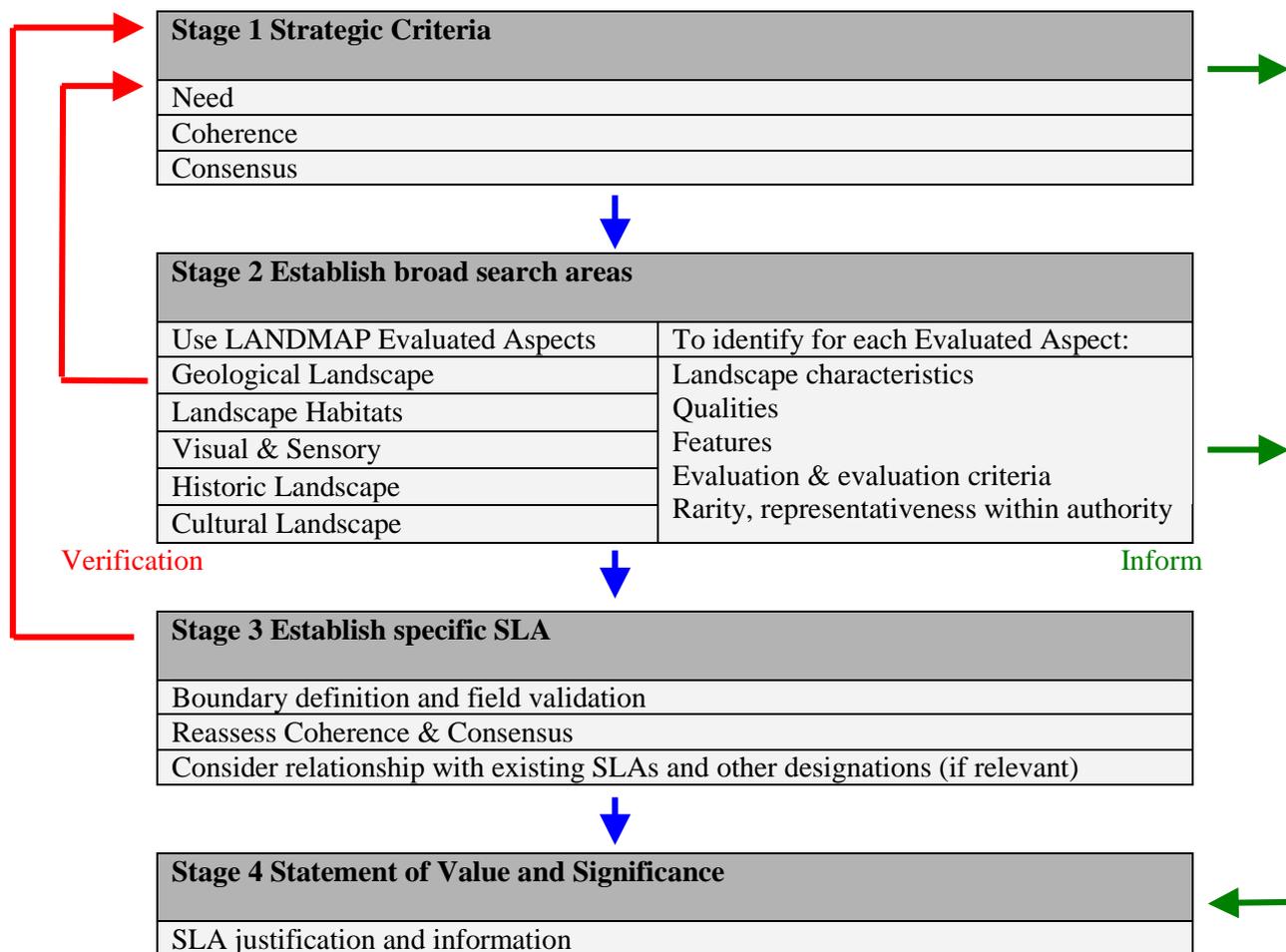
- Raise understanding and recognition of locally valued landscapes important for their distinctive character, qualities and sense of place/bro
- An additional development control measure specific to landscape protection where the policy objectives for an SLA could be used as a primary reason for refusal for inappropriate developments
- To influence positive landscape planning within the SLA. For example to produce design guidance for developments to be in keeping with or enhance landscape character or to target grants towards conservation of special landscape features

7. SLA Methodology for Local planning Authorities

A pre-requisite to identifying SLAs is a complete LANDMAP study for the local authority as much of the information required depends upon this information being readily available. The LANDMAP SLA methodology has four stages, these are summarised in figure 1 and detailed in the following sections. The model is an iterative process, it is expected that the findings at each stage should be reassessed back through Stage 1 to ensure continued validity of the proposed SLA. The Stage 1 Strategic Criteria “coherence” and “consensus” will have greater weight/significance after the SLA areas are drafted but they should be considered from the outset of the process.

Figure 1 Model for identifying potential SLAs using LANDMAP

Source: TACP (2007)



8. Stage 1 Strategic Criteria

Stage 1 Strategic Criteria
Need
Coherence
Consensus

Planning Policy Wales, March 2002, Section 5.3.11, states “Local planning authorities should apply these (SLA) designations...where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection...” Therefore SLAs must demonstrate a need for this designation that is above and beyond existing policies for landscape management and protection.

Need is identified as a Strategic Criteria in Stage 1 of the model to distinguish potential SLAs, SLAs can be reviewed and reassessed against need at stages 2 and 3. Need must relate to purpose, but need may vary between authorities, as may purpose between SLAs. Within a Special Landscape Area the conservation of the visual, ecological, historic, cultural and geological landscape must be the primary consideration or purpose. Identification of a valid, defensible and clearly justified need for a SLA is paramount to an effective designation.

The following questions should be asked when assessing need. Are normal countryside development controls and design policies adequate to protect the character and features that make the landscape special? If a need is identified for added landscape protection, what will the SLA offer in addition to Town and Country Planning Policies? What would be the added value? Are SLAs robust and justifiable in relation to other policies within an authority? Can existing SLAs still be justified? Is the

SLA locally distinct enough to be included in the Local Development Plan? Authorities should determine what guidance will accompany the designation.

Examples of potential circumstances resulting in a need for a SLA

Identification for protection of intrinsic value

- A locally important landscape has visual, cultural, historical, geological or ecological characteristics and qualities of such significance in the local context as to be worthy of identification as a Special Landscape Area. No statutory landscape designations protect the landscape yet evidence from a landscape assessment justifies the requirement of effective protection to safeguard the locally important and locally valued landscape characteristics and qualities.
- A particular landscape type is locally or regionally rare. There is therefore a requirement to safeguard the conservation of a landscape of notable rarity that adds to local or regional distinctiveness and diversity.
- An opportunity to safeguard a locally significant landscape valued for its proximity to settlements and is therefore under pressure for development. The landscape in question has a limited capacity for change or further cumulative change without significantly deteriorating in character, quality and therefore local landscape value.
- A locally important landscape has its own significant visual, cultural, historical, geological or ecological characteristics and qualities but would also protect the settings and views to and from other statutory landscape designations and would therefore contribute to and enhance the landscape policies of an adjacent designation.

Need for clarity in policy constraints

- A Special Landscape Designation is required to focus planning policy objectives, identify policy constraints relevant to a particular area and to give greater weight to landscape considerations in decision making. Where appropriate, the SLA designation should be a material consideration for refusal of planning applications. Clarity must be given as to why a SLA designation could be used a basis to refuse a proposal in addition to existing policies.
- The range and purpose of other designations does not duplicate the SLA designation. The scope of existing designations and existing open countryside and development control policies is deemed to not adequately protect/enhance landscape interests. The designation of areas as SLAs adds extra protection/guidance/information. However, SLAs should not be designated to prevent a perceived threat of development when other planning policies (e.g. green belt/wedges) may be more appropriate.
- To highlight to decision makers the need for landscape change that is in keeping with the distinctive local landscape character and qualities, thereby safeguarding distinctiveness and landscape value whilst allowing appropriate change.
- To produce policy guidance for an SLA that is clear and easily conveys a landscapes special characteristics, qualities and local value without the need for specialist knowledge thereby making it easily understood by planning officers, developers and land managers (agriculture and forestry).

Focused Management and Promotion

- The SLA designation is intended to raise awareness of the special characteristics, qualities and importance of a locally valued landscape so that it can be promoted as a positive management tool for targeted landscape management guidelines and grant bids.
- Raise awareness and recognition for valued landscapes outside of nationally designated areas.
- Development proposals can benefit from design guidance that is produced for an SLA to enhance development quality and to encourage developments that are in keeping with local character.
- For some authorities, it may be found that SLAs are not the most appropriate course as they may be difficult to distinguish from the wider landscape or that a clear, robust and defensible need can not be established. In these circumstances the whole landscape policy approach underpinned by criteria based policies may be more appropriate. Likewise if the coverage of other statutory, national designations is significant within an authority, careful consideration must be given as to whether it is appropriate to add more designations.

Stage 1 Strategic Criteria
Need
Coherence
Consensus

A SLA will be designated for its intrinsic value; as such the size, scale and boundaries will be determined by the landscape character displaying the values for which it is designated. There is no minimum size. However, the area that is designated must be large enough to allow landscape policy and management objectives to be developed and fulfilled.

In some SLAs, a coherent and defensible boundary for an SLA may encompass *small* parts of the local landscape that does not display the same high landscape importance. It is the prerogative of the local planning authority to make the decision to include areas of lower landscape importance as long as a clear and defensible justification is made, and can be made at an Inquiry, and they form a *minority* part of the SLA. Circumstances when this may occur may be:

- To include an integral area of similar topography or land cover that could be enhanced
- A proportionately small area of active mineral or other workings that could be restored to a high quality landscape
- A SLA is identified across an adjacent local authority boundary and a case can be made for continuity including provision for landscape improvement of the “mutually shared” landscape.

In some instances, there may be a part of the landscape that is significantly affected by existing or planned new development or is characterised by significant detractors or damage so that a case may be made to exclude the area from the SLA.

Coherence should be considered when drafting the broad search areas and reassessed at the specific SLA stage.

Stage 1 Strategic Criteria
Need
Coherence
Consensus

Consultation on the Local Development Plan or other Landscape Policy Plans provides the opportunity for input into the SLA designation. The LANDMAP approach includes opportunities for

participation and input from professionals and stakeholders through the Local User Information Groups, and these groups could be reconvened for this purpose. Local communities could potentially input through the LANDMAP public perception studies. These studies can help identify what is of local importance and in identifying a sense of place/identity or bro.

Where need is clearly identified and coherence and consensus taken into account, the following sections will guide authorities through the identification and justification of a SLA.

9. Stage 2 Establish Broad Search Areas

Stage 2 Establish Broad Search Areas	
Use LANDMAP Evaluated Aspects (5 spatial datasets in GIS format)	To identify for each Evaluated Aspect:
Geological Landscape	Landscape characteristics
Landscape Habitats	Qualities
Visual & Sensory	Features
Historic Landscape	Evaluation & evaluation criteria
Cultural Landscape	Rarity, representativeness within authority

This stage identifies broad search areas that are then refined at Stage 3. The broad search areas are determined from the five LANDMAP Evaluated Aspects: the Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, the Historic Landscape and the Cultural Landscape. The LANDMAP overall evaluation score and LANDMAP evaluation criteria for each evaluated aspect layer will be particularly informative at this stage.

In LANDMAP each Evaluated Aspect (spatial layer) is divided up into discrete geographical units (polygons in GIS) referred to as aspect areas. Each aspect area is distinctly defined by its unique landscape characteristics and qualities. Every aspect area has a unique survey record which details the aspect areas classification, important or dominant characteristics and qualities, management recommendations and evaluation. For any given authority, there will be five evaluated aspect GIS layers, each with their own collection of aspect areas and survey records.

By using the classification, evaluation and landscape information for the aspect areas within each evaluated aspect, broad SLAs can be drafted and refined. Examples of this follow in this section.

Understanding LANDMAP Evaluation Scores

All aspect areas have a single overall evaluation score. The overall score is calibrated from a local to an international scale of importance, their definition is summarised in table 1 below.

Table 1 LANDMAP Overall Evaluated Score

Overall evaluation score	Definition of importance to the evaluated aspect...
Outstanding	International or national
High	Regional or county
Moderate	Local
Low	Little or no importance

The overall evaluation scores for each aspect area are derived from the individual scores attributed to each evaluation criteria for a specific evaluated aspect. The same scale of importance is applied as identified in table 1. The evaluation criteria for each Evaluated Aspect is summarised in table 2 below and an example of how this all comes together in table 3.

Table 2 LANDMAP Evaluated Aspects Evaluation Criteria

Geological Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Visual & Sensory	Historic Landscape	Cultural Landscape
Research Value Educational value Historical Value Rarity/uniqueness Classic Example	Priority habitats Significance Opportunity Decline rates Threat Fragmentation Importance for key species	Scenic quality Integrity Character Rarity	Integrity Survival Condition Rarity Potential	Recognition/transparency Period Rarity Documentation Group value Survival Vulnerability Diversity Potential

Table 3 Evaluation Criteria and Overall Evaluation Score for Gelligaer Common Aspect Area CynonVS404 of the Visual & Sensory layer, Caerphilly

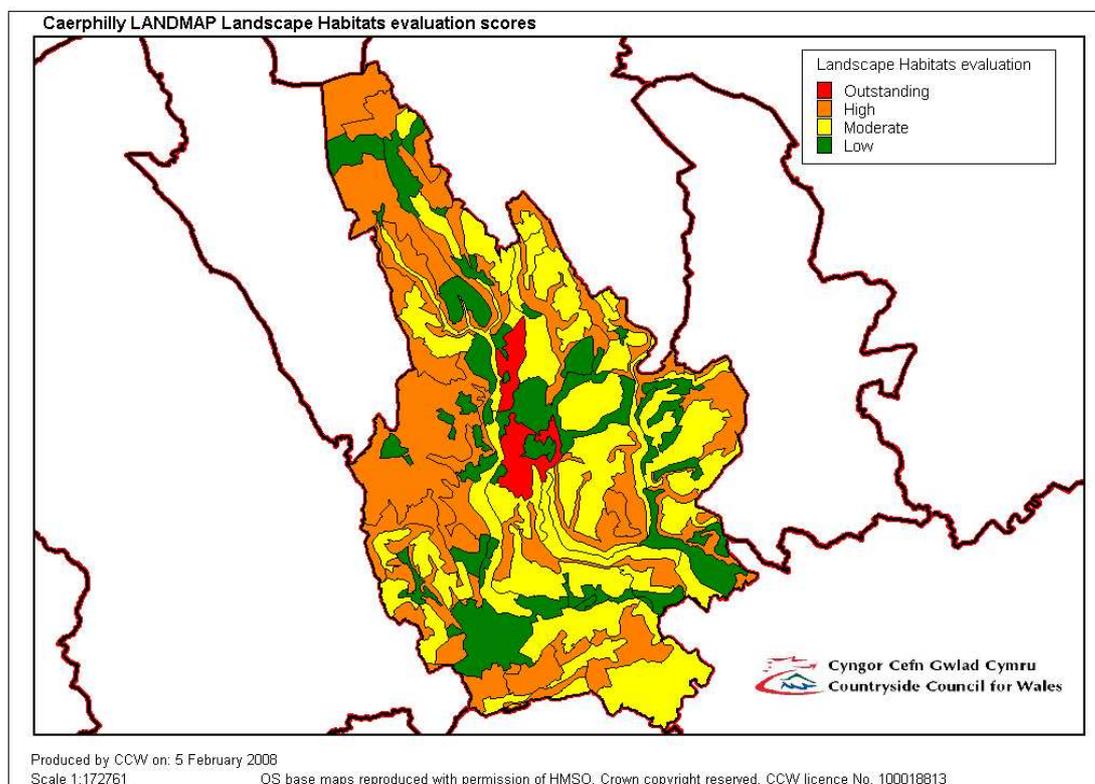
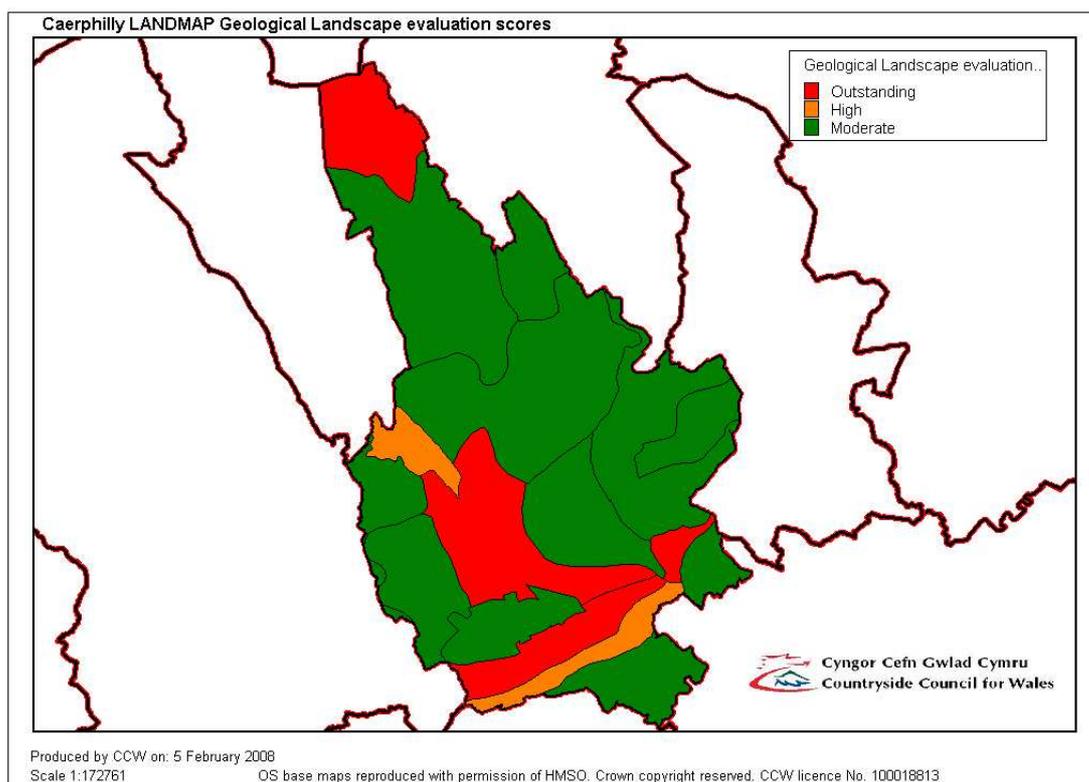
LANDMAP Classification: Upland/Exposed Upland/Plateau/Upland Grazing (Level 3)			
Visual & Sensory Evaluated Aspect	Individual Evaluation Criteria Score	Overall evaluation	Justification
Scenic quality	High Largely unspoilt.	High Views with exposed, open feel.	Both high and moderate criteria, area is quite open and wild with some attractive views.
Integrity	Moderate Moderate sense of place.		
Character	Moderate		
Rarity	High Attractive largely unspoilt upland area with good views		

The overall evaluation score and evaluation criteria can be spatially mapped to aid in the identification of potential SLAs.

The thematic maps in figure 2 define the *overall evaluation score* for four individual layers in the County Borough of Caerphilly giving an overall picture of the LANDMAP evaluation scores and their distribution.

The thematic map in figure 3 takes into account *both the LANDMAP overall evaluation and the evaluation criteria*. In this instance, all 5 evaluated aspects and all 30 evaluation criteria are considered, all evaluation criteria have equal weighting. In the final calculations, account is taken of the circumstances where there may be an inequality in the number of evaluation criteria between the evaluated aspects (i.e. some have four criteria, others nine) and where some criteria are unassessed (i.e. not evaluated). Final maps can be viewed as images or as thematic maps in a GIS environment where the underlying database containing the overall evaluation and evaluation criteria can be interrogated and viewed. The example in figure 3 is taken from the LANDMAP studies for 6 of the South Wales local planning authorities, the deeper the red or higher the value then the higher the recorded evaluations.

Figure 2 Overall Evaluation Scores for the Geological landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory and Cultural Landscape in Caerphilly



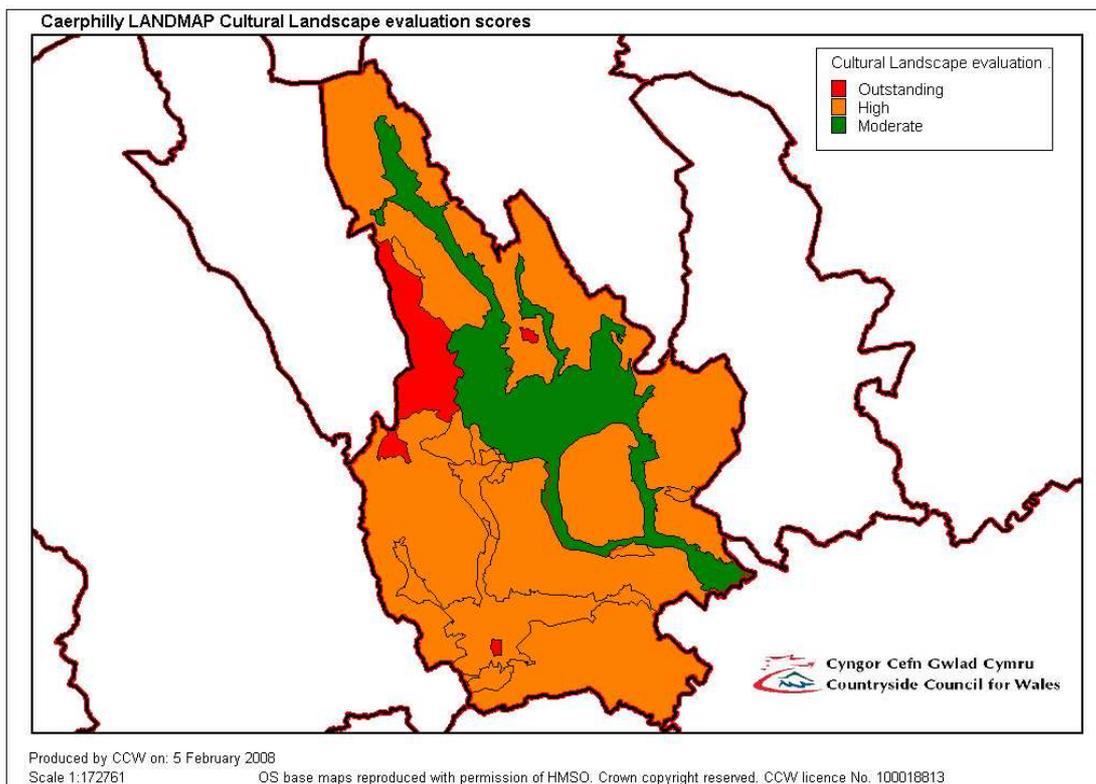
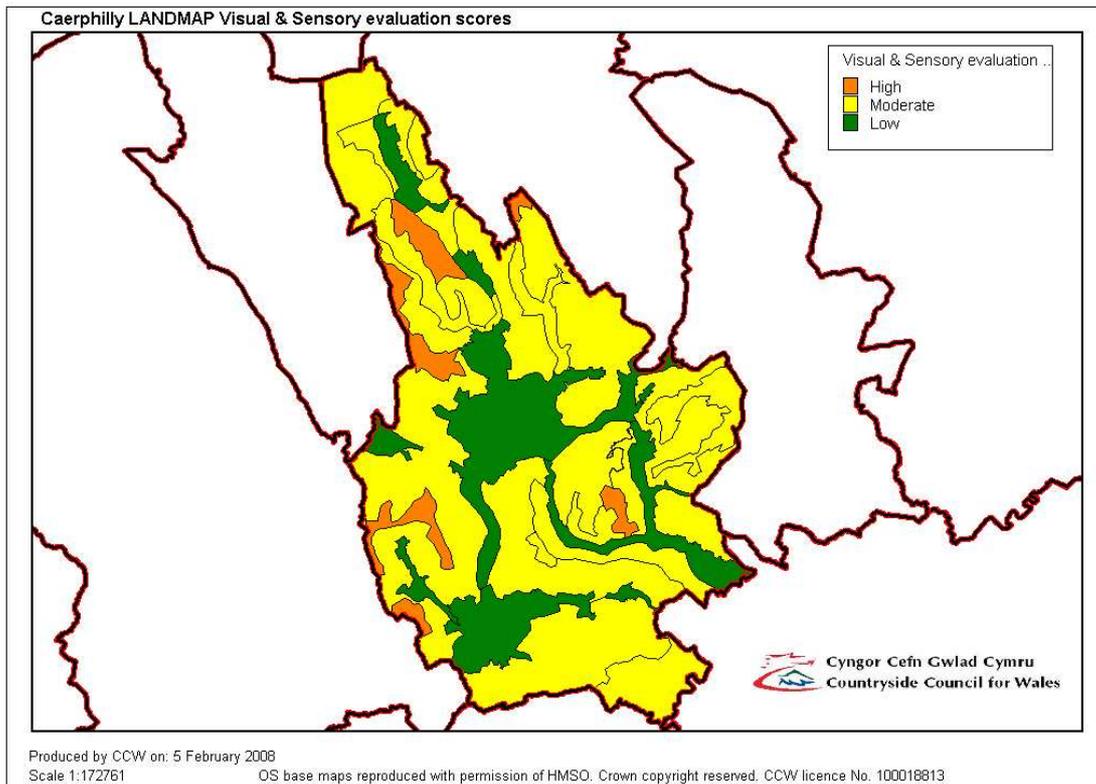
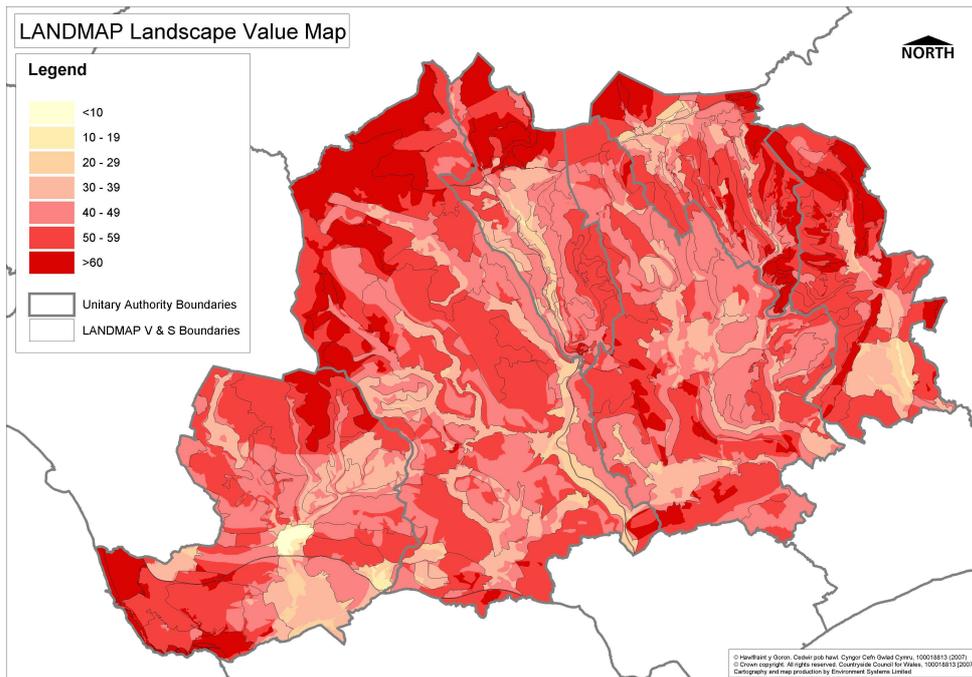
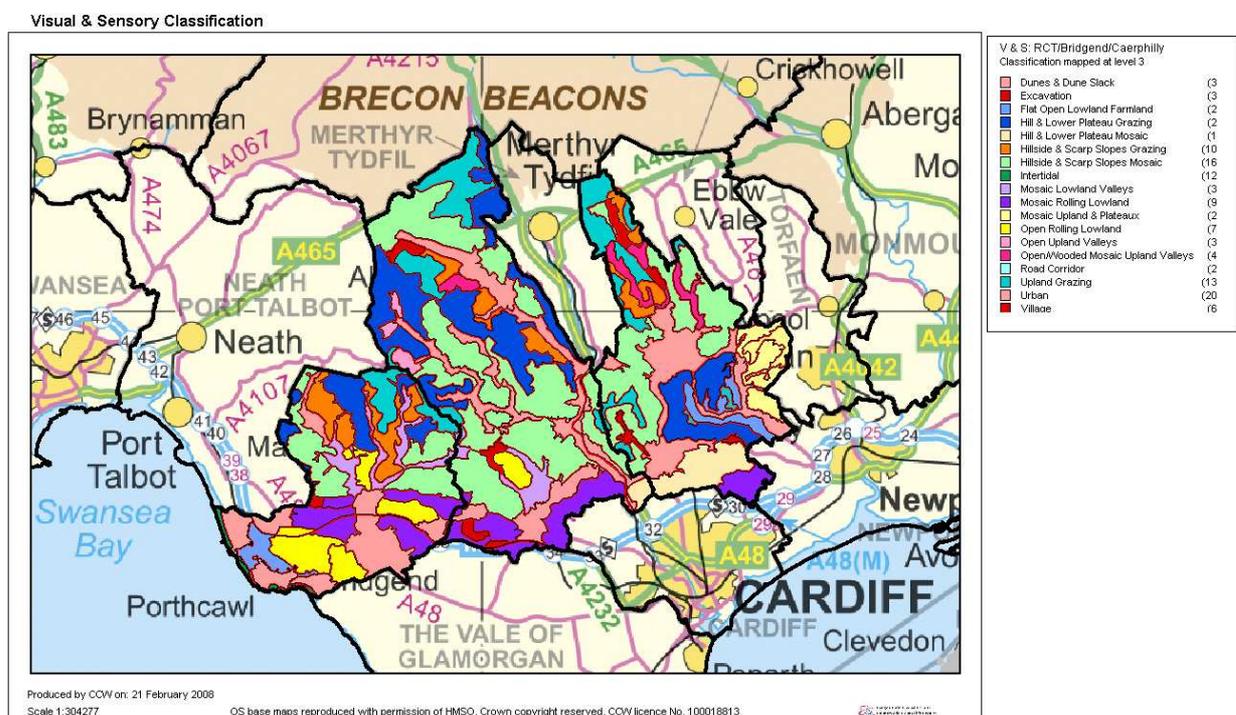


Figure 3 Landscape value map showing the combined evaluation scores for all 5 aspects, (incomplete coverage for the historic layer) Source: Environment Systems 2007



Rarity, representativeness and landscape type for all five evaluated aspects should be included in the identification of SLAs. One way to effectively illustrate rarity, representativeness and landscape type using LANDMAP Information is to create thematic maps using the hierarchical classification unique to each evaluated aspect. An example is shown in figure 6 of the Visual & Sensory classification for Caerphilly, landscape types are colour coded and spatially mapped across the authorities.

Figure 4 Visual & Sensory Classification Caerphilly/RCT/Bridgend



Before progressing to Stage 3 of the model, the broad SLAs should be verified by reassessing them in the context of Stage 1 Strategic Criteria. If they are upheld, progress to Stage 3.

Stage 3 Establish Specific Special Landscape Area

Stage 3 Establish Specific SLA
Boundary definition and field validation
Coherence & Consensus
Consider relationship with existing SLAs (if relevant)

SLAs are further refined in Stage 3 by more detailed work on the information resources outlined in Stage 2 and by field verification of the desk based emerging SLAs. At this stage the boundary definitions and the coherence and consensus of the SLA should be assessed.

Boundaries should be precisely drawn based upon the information from Stage 2 and professional judgement. Boundaries should be drawn to coincide with permanent physical features that are identifiable on the ground and can be clearly mapped. Suitable physical features could include roads, rivers, field boundaries or topographical features. Coastal boundaries should be referenced to the CCW Seascape work (White, 2008) within Wales. Boundaries should be drawn based upon landscape information at that point in time and should be drawn to include those features that give the SLA its special qualities. Boundaries should be fully justified and defensible at Public Inquiry.

SLA's may form part of an Authority's Local Development Plan or be integrated with their Planning GIS system. It will therefore be important to capture defensible SLA boundaries to a common base map (e.g. OS derived data or Master Map) to ensure subsequent integration and compatibility.

Where a SLA encompasses or overlaps with other national, local, statutory or non-statutory designations then the statement of value should clearly reference these designations and differentiate between the reasons for designation.

Where a SLA boundary meets a local planning authority boundary, a consensus between the two authorities on the designation of the SLA would be appropriate and promotes regional consistency of local landscape designations.

Stage 3 Establish Specific SLA
Boundary definition and field validation
Coherence & Consensus
Consider relationship with existing SLAs (if relevant)

Reassess against coherence and consensus (Strategic Criteria)

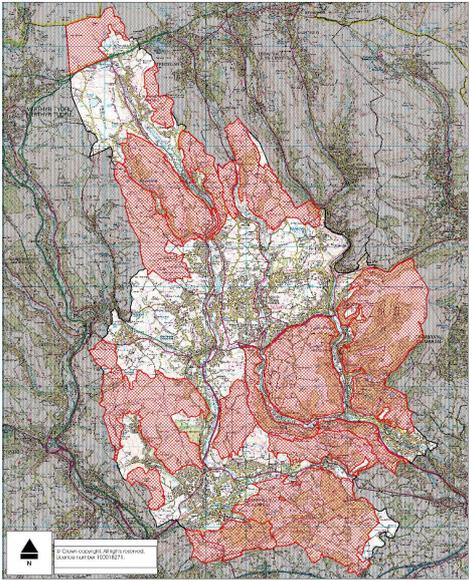
Stage 3 Establish Specific SLA
Boundary definition and field validation
Coherence & Consensus
Consider relationship with existing SLAs and other designated sites (if relevant)

In identifying SLAs, consensus with or divergence from, existing SLAs may occur. The purpose of the review of a local landscape designation is to re-examine the case for SLAs in the context of updated and consistent LANDMAP information. Existing SLAs cannot be automatically lifted into a new LDP. A review of existing SLAs is recommended for inclusion in a LDP.

Caerphilly County Borough Council carried out a review of their SLAs in 2007, the review has recommended six SLAs. Table 4 highlights the change from the original position in 1996 through stages 2 and 3 of the 2007 review to the final proposed SLAs in 2008.

Table 4 Relationship of existing SLAs to proposed SLAs 2008

Source: TACP (2008)

Existing SLAs in Caerphilly (~1995/96)	Stage 2 Broad Search Areas	Stage 3 Specific Search Areas & Areas recommended for SLA designation 2008
	<p>Northern Rhymney Valley</p> <p>Gelligaer</p> <p>Common/Deri Valley</p> <p>Aberbargoed</p> <p>Caerphilly environs</p>	<p>Upper Rhymney Valley</p> <p>Gelligaer Common</p> <p>Mynydd Eglwysilan</p> <p>North Caerphilly</p> <p>South Caerphilly</p> <p>Mynydd y Lan</p>

10. Stage 4 Statement of Value & Significance

Stage 4 Statement of Value

SLA justification and information

The SLA Statement of Value is the primary information source for designated SLAs. All SLAs for a local authority area should be mapped in a GIS environment and a technical report should draw together all the Statements of Value for the identified SLAs.

Table 5 Suggested headings for inclusion in the SLA Statement of Value & Significance

Title	Name of SLA should reflect its location and be locally recognisable perhaps reflecting a sense of place/bro
Location map	Location map at 1:25,000 scale setting the SLA in a landscape context
Boundary justification	Clear explanation for basis of SLA boundaries including identification and explanation of any other designations wholly or partly within the SLA
Photographs	Convey the key characteristics, qualities and features defining the SLA
Relevance against Strategic Criteria	Statement and reasoned justification
Primary landscape qualities and features	Summary description to encapsulate the essence of the SLA in terms of its landscape value and contribution from the physical, environmental, visual, cultural and historical landscape. This information can be drawn from the summary descriptions of the LANDMAP Aspect Areas included in the SLA. The written statement of characteristics and qualities should define the relationship between what is important to warrant "special" status
Key policy and management issues	Local authority policy and planning and development documents should be used to inform priorities and develop policies for SLAs. The recommendations from the LANDMAP Aspect Areas are an additional

	information resource. This section should highlight to decision makers what is important and what local features need to be enhanced and protected. The document could also be used to promote awareness and understanding
LANDMAP	List aspect areas that form the SLA from all five Evaluated Aspects

Table 6 Extracts from the Statement of Value “Relevance against Strategic Criteria” for Gelli-gaer Common, Caerphilly Source: TACP (2008).

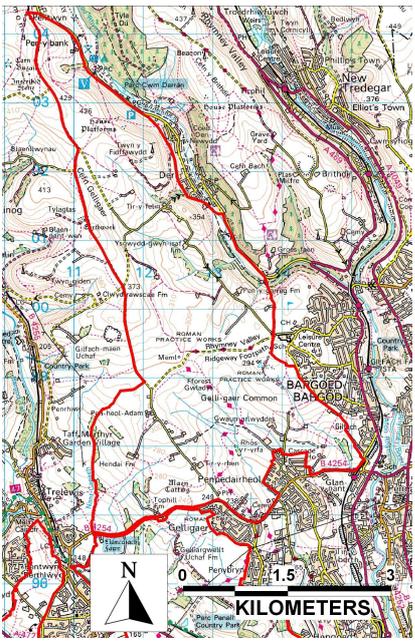
Gelligaer Common SLA 2008	Primary landscape qualities and features
	<p>An extensive, increasingly rare upland landscape in south east Wales, exhibiting numerous examples of continuity of land use from prehistoric times. An open exposed landscape, it has distinct visual and sensory characteristics with extensive views over the coalfield plateau and up to the Brecon Beacons, together with the sense of wind noise and disturbance. Designated as common land, the majority of the area exhibits typical upland heath vegetation. There are a number of statutory and non-statutory environmental designations. Its western edge is formed by the boundary with Merthyr Tydfil Borough along the Cefn Gelligaer and further south the Nant Caiach. The remainder of its boundary is established by the road network and settlement pattern around Penpedairheol and Bargoed, and along the Bargoed Rhymney Valley around Deri and Parc Cwm Darran. The eastern flank of the SLA is typified by more rolling landscape pattern interspersed with woodland blocks, spinneys and hedgerows. Many of the fields are improved grassland. There are a number of vegetation lined minor streams. Physically it is a characteristic glaciated upland landscape and includes at its southern end part of the fault bounded ‘col’, formed by glacial melt waters and linking the Taf and Rhymney Valleys. Today this is used by the cross valley B4254 road.</p>
Need	<p>The core of the area - Gelligaer Common - represents an important and increasingly rare upland landscape within south east Wales exhibiting continuity of land use over many centuries. This is reflected in the archaeological remains from pre Roman times. The area offers extensive opportunities for recreation and access although there are signs of degradation and loss of quality through fly tipping and litter in general. The surrounding, more lowland areas above Penpedairheol, Bargoed and Deri form both physical and visual buffer zones to the core SLA.</p>
Coherence	<p>The area is based upon a distinct, upland landscape unit. The western boundary is formed by the boundary with Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council, along Cefn Gelligaer, however the landscape unit continues into the Merthyr Tydfil area. The other buffer zones are included to establish appropriate, defensible boundaries and reflect the intervisibility between the two landscape units.</p>
Consensus	<p>It relates closely to an existing SLA designated under the Rhymney Valley Landscape Strategy. Professional Stakeholders have supported the designation.</p>

Table 7 Extracts from the Statement of Value Evaluation Validation for Gelli-gaer Common, Caerphilly. Source: TACP (2008).

Evaluated Aspect	Aspect Area Identifier	Overall Evaluation Score	Individual Evaluation Criteria & Score								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Geological	GL 008	Moderate	M	L	L	L					
	GL 009	Moderate	M	L	L	L					
	GL 051	High	H	M	H	H					
Landscape Habitats	LH 112	High	H	H	M	M	M	M	H	U	
	LH 116	High	H	H	M	M	M	M	H	M	
	LH 123	Moderate	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	
	LH 128	Moderate	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	
	LH 133	High	H	M	M	H	M	H	H	H	
	LH 142	High	H	M	M	M	M	M	H	H	
Visual and Sensory	VS 114	Low	L	L	M	L					
	VS 143	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
	VS 308	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
	VS 404	High	H	H	M	M					
	VS 785	Moderate	M	M	M	M					
Historical Landscapes	HL 602	Unassessed									
	HL 634	Unassessed									
	HL 831	Unassessed									
Cultural	CL 045	High	M	O	L	U	H	M	M	H	U
	CL 051	Outstanding	M	O	H	H	H	H	L	H	U
	CL 056	High	H	H	L	L	O	H	L	H	U

Key to Table 7 LANDMAP evaluation criteria

Geological Landscape	Landscape Habitats	Visual & Sensory	Historic Landscape	Cultural Landscape
1. Research Value Educational value 2. Historical Value 3. Rarity/uniqueness 4. Classic Example	1. Priority habitats 2. Significance 3. Opportunity 4. Decline rates 5. Threat 6. Fragmentation 7. Habitat evaluation 8. Importance for key species	1. Scenic quality 2. Integrity 3. Character 4. Rarity	Unassessed (Gelli-gaer Common is on the Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales)	1. Recognition/transparency 2. Period 3. Rarity 4. Documentation 5. Group value 6. Survival 7. Vulnerability 8. Diversity 9. Potential
Each of the evaluation scores in table 7 are colour coded as follows: Red - Outstanding Green - High Blue - Moderate Yellow - Low White - Unassessed				

11. References & Further Information

Countryside Council for Wales (2003) LANDMAP Methodology Chapters. Countryside Council for Wales Policy Research Reports

Chris Blandford Associates (2006) Review of Local Landscape Designations: Main Findings of the Study. Briefing Note to Countryside Agency.

Environment Systems (2007) LANDMAP Evaluation Map for SLA Search Areas (CD) Countryside Council for Wales Policy Research Work.

Natural Heritage Management (2004) Management Guidance on Local Landscape Designations. ISBN: 185397 447 1

Scott, A. & Bullen, A. (2004) Special Landscape Areas: Landscape conservation or confusion in the town and country planning system?

TACP (2007) Development of Criteria for Special Landscape Area Designation for South East Wales Local Authorities. Project No. 8241

TACP (2008) Caerphilly County Borough Council Designation of Special Landscape Areas. Project No. 8247

Welsh Assembly Government (2002) Planning Policy Wales ISBN 0 7504 2854 6

White, S (2008) Regional seascape assessment for Wales. Countryside Council for Wales Policy Research Report No. 08/3.

12. Monitoring and Review

As a non-statutory landscape designation, SLAs should be subject to monitoring and review. The timing and frequency of this will be determined by the local planning authority. Reviews of SLAs could be timed to coincide with any monitoring and updating of LANDMAP Information and/or an authority's Local Development Plan review.

13. Contact

Jill Bullen
Cydlynnydd LANDMAP Cymru/LANDMAP Wales Coordinator
Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru/Countryside Council for Wales
Plas Gogerddan, Aberystwyth, SY23 3EE
ffon/tel: 01970 821107
e-bost/e-mail: j.bullen@ccw.gov.uk

Jenny Kamp
Swyddog Data LANDMAP/ LANDMAP Data Officer
Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru/ Countryside Council for Wales
Maes y Ffynnon, Penrhosgarnedd
Bangor, LL57 2DW
Ffon/Tel: 01248 387283
e-bost/e-mail: j.kamp@ccw.gov.uk

www.ccw.gov.uk/landmap