

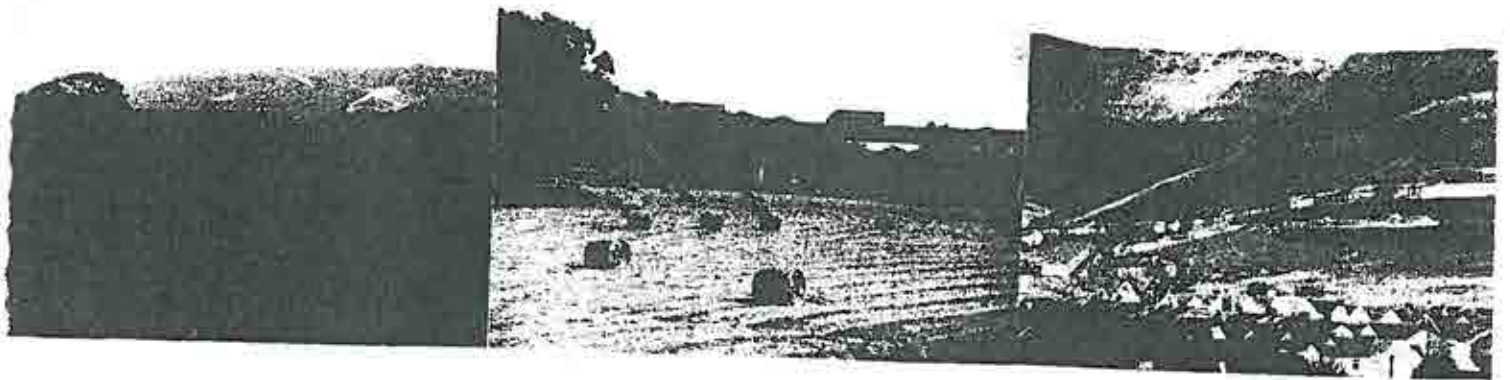


CD-065

*Landscapes Working For
Bridgend County Borough*

Main Strategy Report

Volume 1

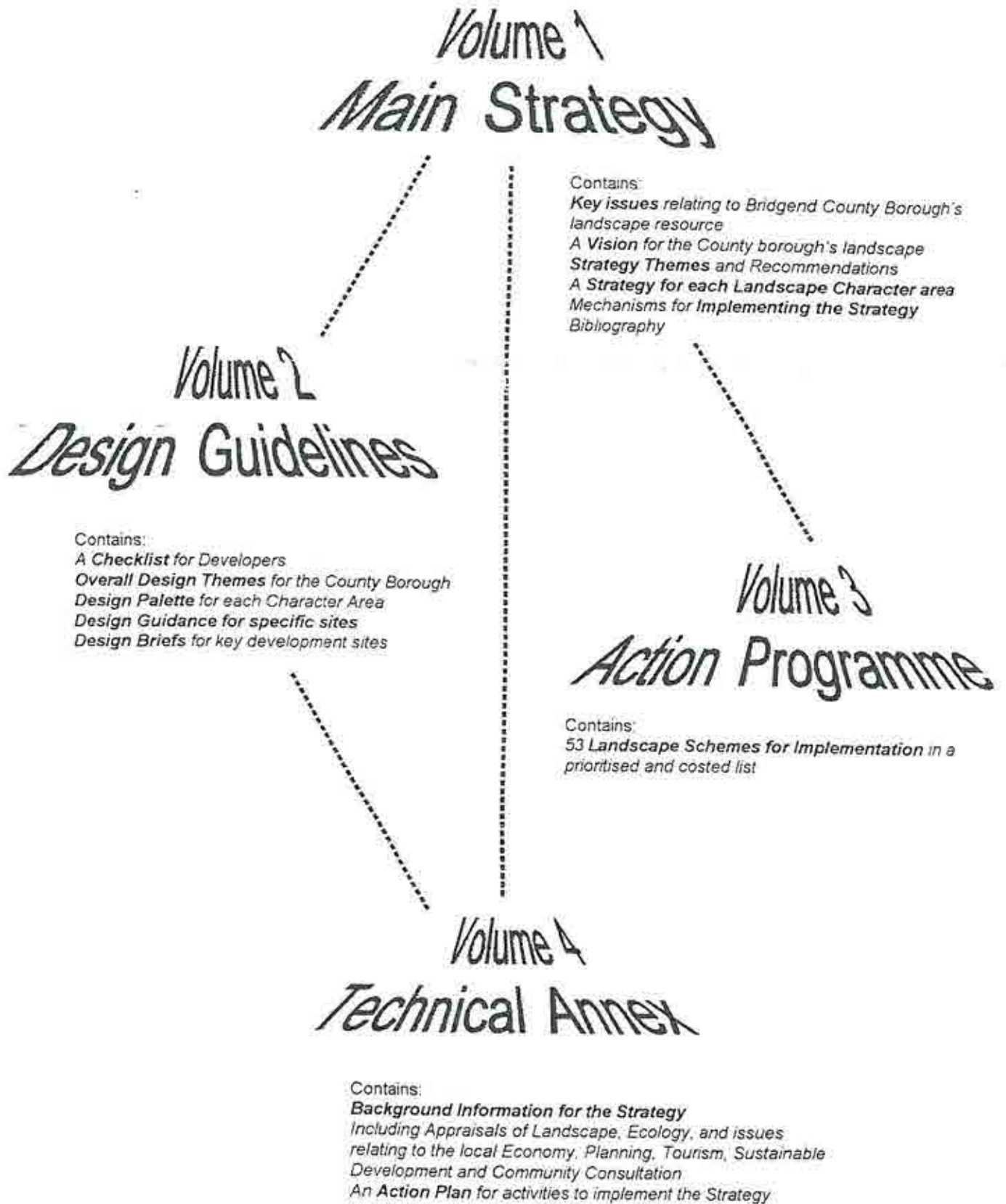


January 1997



GUIDE TO STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Each Volume of the Strategy has a specific function relevant to different people and organisations and all are interrelated



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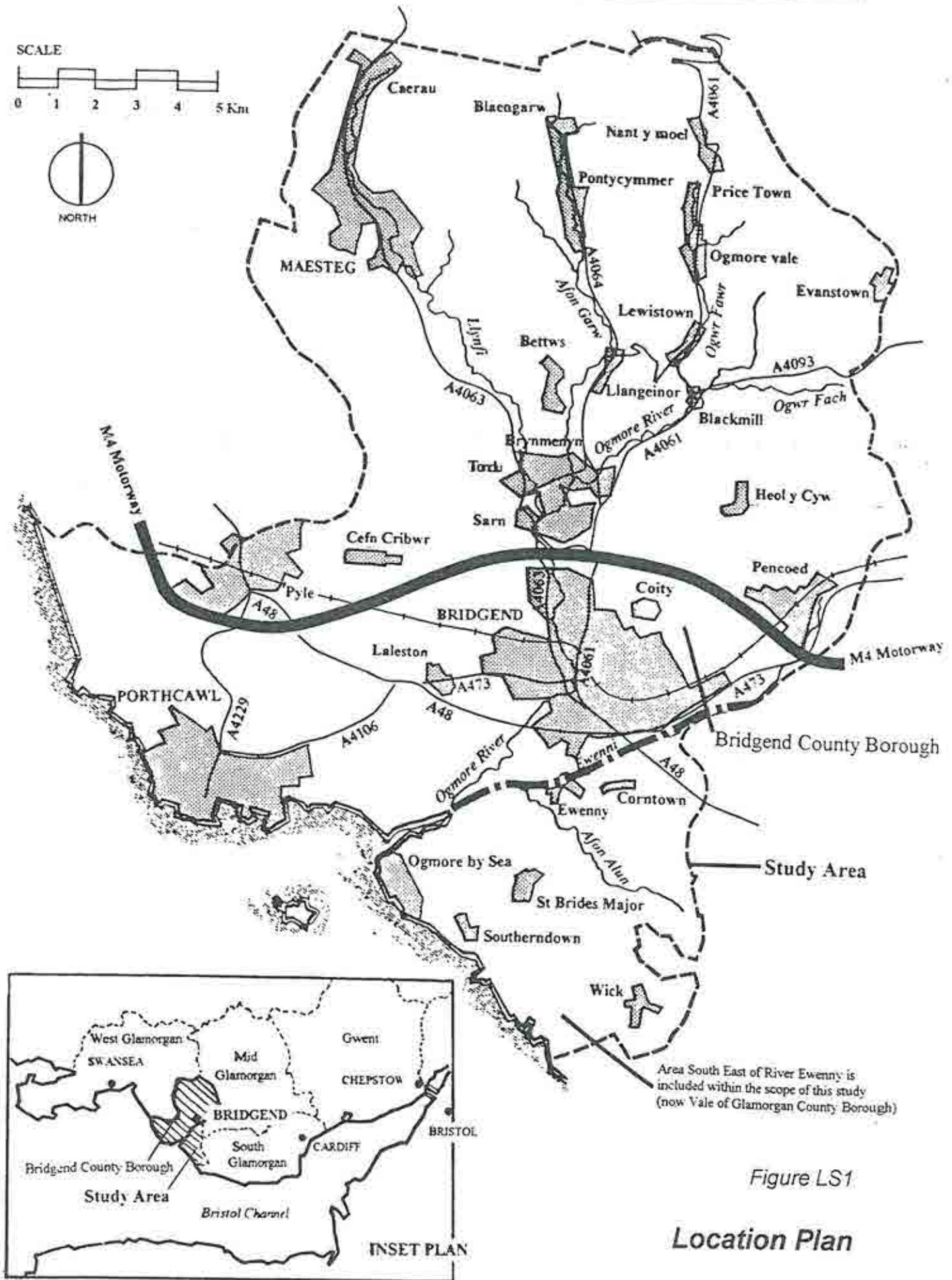
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 *Introduction*

SECTION 1.0

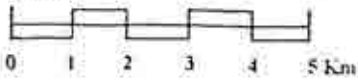


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SECTION 2.0

SCALE



NORTH

THE VALLEYS

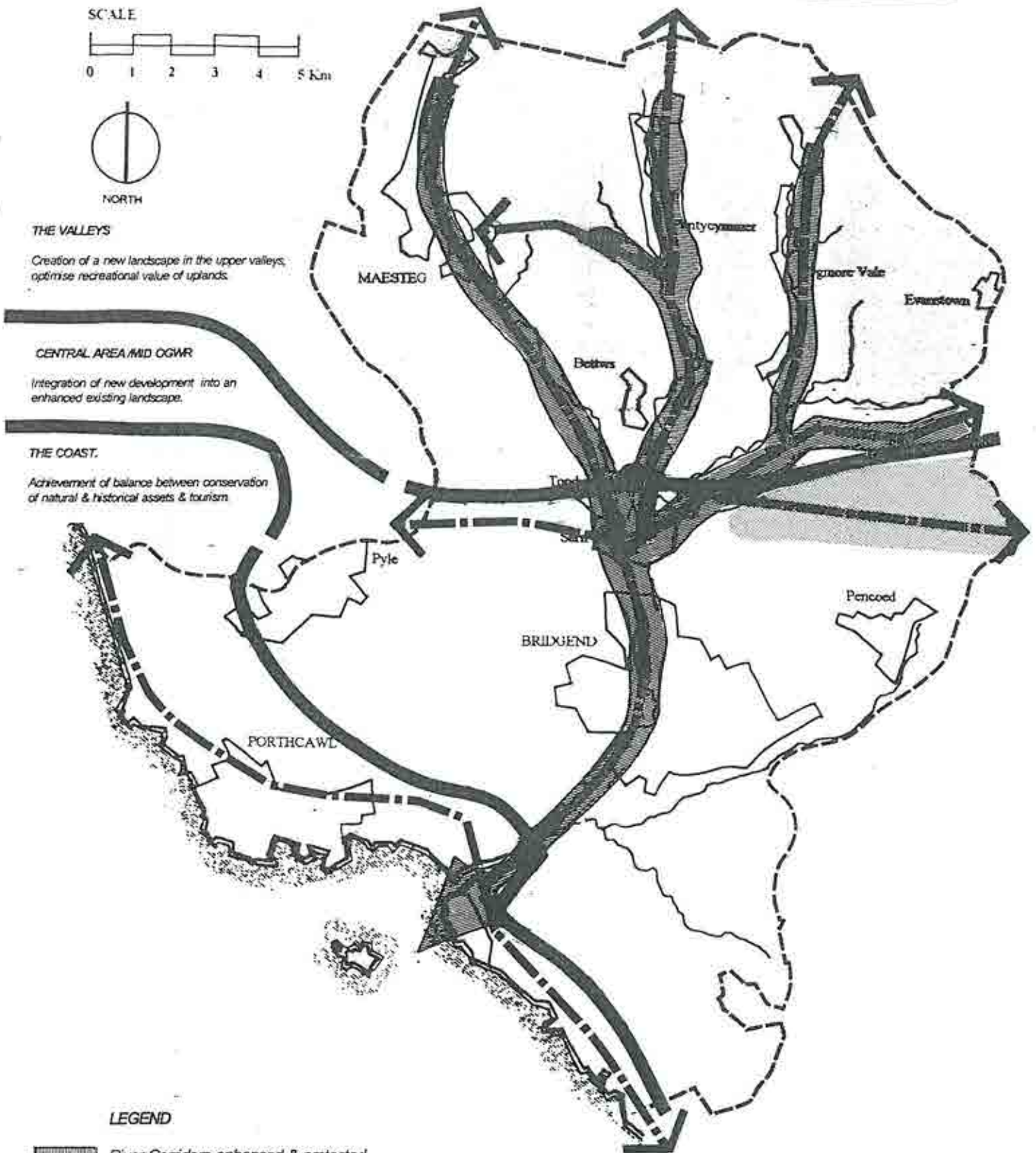
Creation of a new landscape in the upper valleys, optimise recreational value of uplands.

CENTRAL AREA / MID OGWR


Integration of new development into an enhanced existing landscape.


THE COAST.

Achievement of balance between conservation of natural & historical assets & tourism



LEGEND

 River Corridors enhanced & protected to act as primary recreational open space & wildlife links.

 Key recreational links


 Brynmenyn Country Park, Enhance as central node for recreational routes.

Figure LS2

Vision

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Landscape Issues 3.2
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Key Issues

SECTION 3.0

3.2 Landscape Issues

See Technical Annex 2.0

The key issues arising from the landscape appraisal which includes cultural heritage issues are as follows:

- There are wide range of landscapes in the study area broadly falling into the three zones - the Valleys, Mid Ogwr and the Coast. Within these, there are distinct variations and some landscapes of high quality.
- In the Valleys, positive landscape assets include the upland moorland/common land in visual and ecological terms and upland afforested areas in relation to recreation and productivity. The rural southern parts of the valleys are generally unspoilt by coal related development.
- Upper valley settlements are often not integrated into the valley landscape.
- Disturbed landscapes such as coal tips, reclamation sites, opencast, quarrying and landfill create a poor image of the borough. These are most prominent in the upper valleys [except opencast].
- Forestry is a productive land use which has recreational benefits but has adverse impact on nature conservation value.
- Windfarms on uplands have benefits in terms of renewable energy and should be considered in the context of the Development Plan and relevant guidance.
- River corridors are fragmented and discontinuous in terms of access and wildlife linkage.
- Major road and rail corridors are important to the perception of the borough and are unsightly in places. Orientation and information on main road corridors and gateways are poor.
- Some older employment sites are unsightly. This gives a poor image of the Study Area and has a negative effect on economic investment and prosperity.
- Community and open space linkage within and between settlements and to the countryside is poor although this is being addressed by the community route and access strategy.
- Agricultural landscapes are undergoing gradual degradation through the loss and poor management of field boundaries, hedges and woodlands. Some areas are affected by overgrazing and very intensive agricultural use, while others are suffering neglect and abandonment. A reduced agricultural labour force is a fundamental issue everywhere.
- Commons have limited capacity to accommodate development.
- Development of Mid Ogwr around Bridgend will potentially impinge further on landscapes of good landscape quality, on river valley landscapes or landscapes sensitive to development because of their open character.
- Coalescence of settlement is a threat in some areas particularly

*Landscape Design Associates
[1994]*

3.3 Ecological Issues

See Technical Annex 3.0

The key issues arising from the ecological appraisal are as follows:

- The ecological information base is incomplete in terms of Phase 1 and Phase 2 habitat mapping.
- Habitat continuity along valleys is poor because of development and habitat fragmentation.
- Connectivity of river channel wildlife habitat is weak in sections due to river engineering works and riparian development.
- Attempted conversion of high level grassland to improved pasture with high forage value and inappropriate management has resulted in extension of gorse scrub and bracken. This has resulted in loss of valuable semi-natural grassland wildlife habitats and species.
- Extensive conifer plantation woodland has resulted in marginalisation of upland semi-natural wildlife habitat and species.
- Generally inappropriate woodland management such as over-grazing has resulted in a weak woodland wildlife habitat resource in some localities.
- Habitat continuity in developed areas and associated infrastructure corridors is poor.
- Unimproved lowland grasslands are of nature conservation value, and may be marshy, calcareous, acid or neutral in character. They are under threat from drainage, conversion to more productive uses and inappropriate management leading to spread of gorse, bracken or other scrub.
- Coastal features that comprise and maintain areas of international nature conservation importance including dune systems at Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr. The complex and dynamic coastal system is not being comprehensively addressed by the present organisation of coastal activities, including the advent of off-shore sand dredging and interruption of longshore processes by coastal engineering works.
- Coastal areas suffer from intensive visitor pressure, which can conflict with nature conservation objectives in some areas.

3.5 Planning Issues

See Technical Annex 5.0

Following a study of the Local Plan and proposed Replacement County Structure Plan, the following key issues have been highlighted:

- The recently approved Local Plan provides a sound basis for the development of a complementary landscape strategy.
- The land use proposals for the Study Area as a whole reflect the settlement growth patterns and communications networks that have evolved since the last war, and follow general policy lines that have been in place for a considerable period and are likely to continue.
- Increasing growth pressure will almost certainly be felt in the Mid-Ogwr area and close to the motorway intersections. This will be most keenly felt between Bridgend and Pencoed
- Pressure for growth is not in areas of designated high landscape value but steps need to be taken at an early stage to ensure that sensitive areas are recognised and protected.
- Recreational and housing pressures will also be felt in the environmentally sensitive coastal areas and a careful balance will need to be maintained between economic and ecological needs.
- Existing Valley settlements will continue to perform the role of dormitory residential areas that require improvements in both visual appearance and communications.

3.7 Valleys Issues

The following are the key issues and pointers for the landscape strategy in the Valleys:

- The area is undergoing a period of change in a post-industrial era. The future economic underpinning of the settlements, valleys and uplands is still a subject for debate although the Local Plan supports the objective of maintaining viable and substantial communities.
- The communities are a major source of strength in the valleys and solutions need to consider their needs as a prime concern involving an inclusive decision making process.
- All the valleys have their own distinct character, cultural heritage and communities. This has to be reflected in the strategy.
- Economic potential of most settlements is now local and limited.
- Positive landscape assets are the upland moorland, common land and upland afforested areas and the southern valleys.
- Negative features include the disturbed landscapes and coal related settlements which are not integrated into the landscape. This results in a poor image for the upper parts of the valleys which, as a historical legacy, is hard to shake off.
- River corridors are fragmented and discontinuous in terms of access and wildlife linkage due to development.
- The end use of reclamation schemes has often tended to be employment or formal recreation in the past due to grant criteria. Low key long term economic options such as hardwood forestry need to be considered, where feasible, as well as short term economic uses.
- There is potential for recreation in valleys and on uplands
- There is potential for renewable energy such as windfarms on uplands but this must be assessed in the context of the Development Plan and relevant guidance.
- There is potential for forestry, both coniferous and broadleaf, on the uplands and in the valleys
- Agricultural landscapes are undergoing gradual degradation through the loss and poor management of field boundaries and woodlands. Some areas are affected by overgrazing and very intensive agricultural use, while others are suffering neglect and abandonment. A reduced agricultural labour force is a fundamental issue.
- Conversion of high level grassland to improved pasture with high forage value and inappropriate management has resulted in extension of gorse scrub and bracken. This has resulted in loss of valuable semi-natural grassland wildlife habitats and species.
- Extensive conifer plantation woodland has resulted in marginalisation of upland semi-natural wildlife habitat and species.
- Inappropriate woodland management such as grazing has resulted in a weak wildlife habitat resource. SSSI woodlands are under threat.

3.9 Coastal Issues

The following issues arise in the Coastal area:

- The coast features of areas of international nature conservation importance including the dunes at Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr. It also boasts designated areas of high landscape value in terms of historical and visual quality i.e. the Heritage Coast and Landscapes of Exceptional Historic Interest [Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr].
- Porthcawl is the tourism resource of the borough.
- Visitor pressure is causing visual degradation and management problems in the sensitive coastal landscapes.
- Footpath access along the coast and to and from Porthcawl is not well catered for and can be in conflict with the sensitive landscapes.
- Agricultural landscapes are undergoing gradual degradation through the loss and poor management of field boundaries, hedges and woodlands. Some areas are affected by overgrazing and very intensive agricultural use, while others are suffering neglect and abandonment and set aside is apparent. A reduced agricultural labour force is a fundamental issue everywhere.
- The road approaches to Porthcawl are poor where bordered by housing.
- The issues arising in the complex coastal system are not being comprehensively addressed by the present organisation of countryside and coastal management.

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Towards Sustainable Development 4.2
Planning and Legislative Framework 4.3
Ecology and Nature Conservation 4.4
Disturbed Land 4.5
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Design and Management to Create Identity 4.11



Strategy Themes

SECTION 4.0

4.0 STRATEGY THEMES

4.1 Introduction

Overall themes have emerged from the broad appraisal process and from the detailed landscape analysis. Those applicable to the whole borough are described in this section. Recommendations related to specific areas are discussed in Section 6.0 under Character Area Strategies. The themes could form the basis for supplementary policy guidance if the County Borough wishes, and are set out below with recommendations under the following headings:

- 4.2 Towards Sustainable Development
- 4.3 Planning and Legislative Framework
- 4.4 Ecology and Nature Conservation
- 4.5 Disturbed Land
- 4.6 Integration of Built Form
- 4.7 Recreation, Tourism and Access
- 4.8 Road and Rail Corridors
- 4.9 River Corridors
- 4.10 Woodland and Forestry
- 4.11 Design and Management to Create and Reinforce Identity

The mechanisms for putting these into practice are discussed in Section 5.0.

The following basic principles apply in the development of the study area:

Land:

Landtake for development should be minimised by efficient use of land, building at as high densities as appropriate to location and minimising purely decorative planting with little nature conservation value.

Efficient use of land

Energy:

Energy is consumed both in making materials for building, constructing a development and then running/using the development. Materials should be preferably manufactured/ extracted locally. Buildings should be designed for longevity and flexibility of use or be of energy efficient construction. Developments should be located and designed so need for access by car/lorry is minimised and walking, cycling and public transport maximised. This reinforces the notion of linear development along public transport routes and location of high density development on these routes. Location and design of leisure development is as important as work and shopping uses. Opportunities for renewable energy should be explored including wind energy and biomass. Agencies, such as Bridgend, Ogwr Groundwork, the WDA and CCW, should lead the way in adopting and promoting this approach through the location of their offices and developments.

*See Design Guidelines
Design for longevity and
flexibility*

Location

Materials:

Materials should be extracted and manufactured as locally as possible to minimise transport energy consumption. This also reinforces the sense of place. They should be from sustainable sources. Overall, materials use should be reduced and they should be able to be reused and recycled. Again agencies, such as Bridgend, Ogwr Groundwork and the WDA, should lead the way in adopting and promoting this approach.

Local manufacture

Recycling

Coed Cymru is a good example of good practice. Local officers give advice to landowners on managing, harvesting, processing and selling hardwoods in existing local woodlands. At present the organisation reacts to enquiries but the process could be extended to a proactive approach of offering advice and the planting of new woodlands.

Coed Cymru

Flora and Fauna:

This is discussed in more detail under the nature conservation strategy. Ogwr's natural assets should be ascertained and biodiversity should be conserved and enhanced as part of a Biodiversity Action Plan.

*See Ecology and Nature
Conservation Section 4.4*

Water:

The aquifer, rivers and other water bodies should be protected and managed to ensure a clean and reliable supply on a regional basis is maintained. Catchment Management Plans prepared by the Environment Agency seek to work towards this. Development should avoid aquifers and floodplains.

*Protection of aquifer and
waterbodies*

Soils:

Soil is an important resource and should be conserved. The most energy efficient and appropriate solution is careful conservation of soil on development sites for reuse and the treatment and improvement of existing substrates on disturbed sites. Existing soils are more likely to support local flora successfully than imported soil. In an agricultural context, crop management and cultivation

Conservation of soil on site

4.3 Planning and Legislative Framework

The planning framework is considered under Landscape, Nature Conservation and Coastal Management.

4.3.1 Landscape Planning Framework

The key local planning framework documents for the strategy include the Mid Glamorgan Replacement Structure Plan and the adopted Ogwr Borough Local Plan which work within the framework of Planning Guidance [Wales] and the national environmental and sustainable development policy documents. They are complemented by other documents produced by the local authority, CCW and the EA such as the Ognore and the Afan and Kenfig river catchment management plans. This landscape strategy acts as a central reference for the relevant documents which apply to the borough which are listed in the Bibliography. These are appraised in terms of the need for review in the process of producing a new unitary development plan [UDP] for Bridgend County Borough.

Mid Glamorgan Replacement Structure Plan:

The landscape policies in the document and those expressed in the supplementary Countryside Strategy are sound. The Glamorgan Heritage Coast is the most important landscape designation in the Study Area. Here, strict control on development is imposed. It has a management plan, recently revised, which should be implemented. The Coalfield plateau is accorded county-wide status as an area of landscape value.

It is recommended that the Coalfield plateau and associated valley sides mentioned in EV4 are reviewed at the same time as landscape conservation areas within the new unitary authority plan to produce a consistent designation.

Coalfield Plateau

Ogwr Borough Local Plan:

Environmental Policies on protection of the countryside in the borough are generally sound. With regard to designation of landscapes of second tier value [i.e. below that of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast], it is considered that these are of value in guiding development but should not devalue areas excluded from that designation. There are many areas which are not Landscape Conservation Areas which have value or could be positively improved through sensitive development and landscape management.

It is recommended that the Landscape Conservation Areas should be reviewed with a view to extending them to cover areas of identifiable landscape character.

Landscape Conservation Areas

In EV10, Green Wedges are put forward as restrictive measures to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

The Strategy recommends Green Wedges are retained but further recommends positive countryside management measures within these areas to promote landscape and nature conservation value and community involvement.

Green Wedges

EV27 does not permit development in historic landscapes which would adversely affect that landscape. In the case of Merthyr Mawr Warren and Kenfig Burrows which are referred to in 8.10.1, these

4.3.3 Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Planning

The coastline of Ogwr is a particularly important landscape, nature conservation and heritage resource. It is also used extensively for tourism and recreation with resultant conflicts in some areas. The physical and biological processes that shape the coastline and the administrative and institutional frameworks for its management are extremely complex. They transcend borough administrative boundaries and require consideration at a broader scale which in part is already being done. However, despite this the existing system does not address all the issues satisfactorily.

It is recommended that the coastal zone is identified as a discrete coastal management unit relating to the whole of Swansea Bay for the purpose of integrating the institutional, organisational, legislative and administrative aspects undertaken by the relevant authorities. The County Borough could take the lead in integrating its coastal planning with neighbouring authorities.

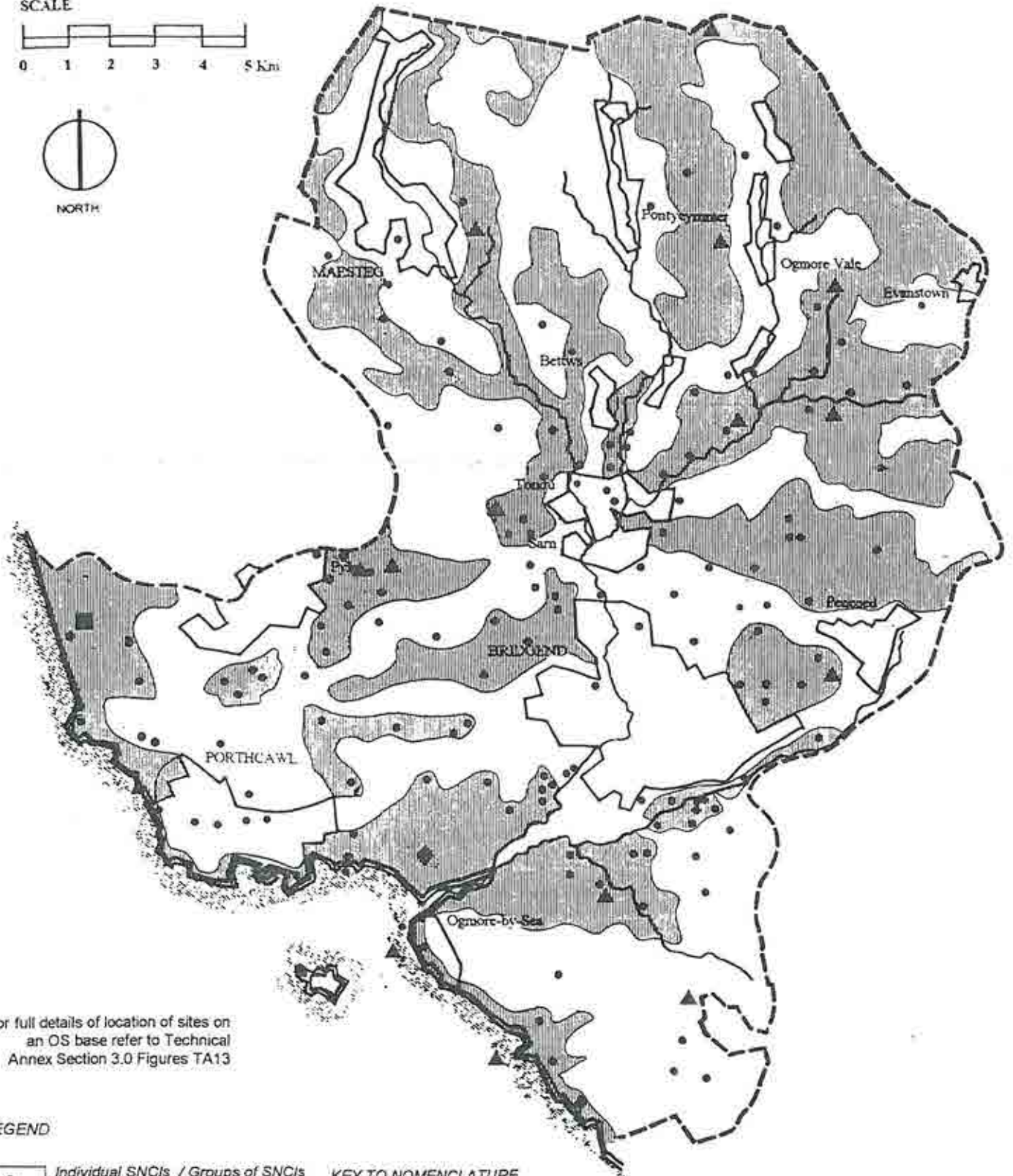
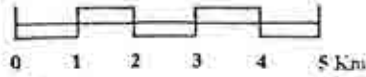
*Integrating coastal planning
with neighbouring
authorities*

It is recommended that coastal zone management plan is developed for the Bridgend coastal zone area, comprising a shoreline management plan and an integrated intertidal-terrestrial management plan, setting out a framework for integration with neighbouring authorities.

*Coastal Zone Management
plan*






These are discussed in Technical Annex 3.0 more fully.

SCALE



For full details of location of sites on an OS base refer to Technical Annex Section 3.0 Figures TA13

LEGEND

-  Individual SNCIs / Groups of SNCIs
-  SSSI
-  SSSI + pSAC + pNNR
-  SSSI + NNR + LNR + pSAC
-  Suggested Key Biodiversity Areas

KEY TO NOMENCLATURE

- SNCI = Sites of Nature Conservation Interest
- SSSI = Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- pSAC = Proposed Special Area for Conservation
- SAC = Special Area for Conservation
- pNNR = Proposed National Nature Reserve
- LNR = Local Nature Reserve

Figure LS3

Ecology and Nature Conservation

4.5 Disturbed Land

Disturbed land in the borough comes from two main sources - coal extraction - both deep mine and opencast, and limestone extraction. Other disturbed sites are Pennant sandstone quarries, none of which are active or significant detractors, iron works, which are small scale and are of industrial archaeology interest, and the Llynfi Power Station site.

Deep mining has been discontinued in the upper Ogwr valleys. Much of the coal related disturbed sites have been reclaimed within the upper valleys area primarily with the funding of the Welsh Development Agency. There are a number currently underway such as The Washery, Ogmere Vale, the Upper Garw Scheme and Caerau. The Tondu site is awaiting reclamation and potential development which would need to accommodate the Iron Works Industrial Heritage site.

Coal

See Figure LS4

There is no doubt that the reclamation programme has significantly improved the environment and greened the valleys. However, due to the constraints of space, budget, and a policy which requires an economic or formal recreation after use, reclaimed sites often take the form of flat plateaux with steep slopes with some vegetation which do not fit into the valley landscape comfortably. Often these development plateaux stay vacant for prolonged periods of time, such as at Pen Llwyn Gwent Industrial Estate [Wyndham]. If it is required to develop such sites for development, then considerable care is needed in the design to create a site that fits into the Valley landscape. There is still, therefore more work to be done to improve the image of the valleys.

Reclamation Programme

Some areas of disturbed land have developed vegetation which is visually attractive and of some nature conservation value such as at The Washery. Others remain detractors which have not been reclaimed due to cost and/or ownership problems.

Vegetation Regeneration

Opencast is ongoing at Park Slip with reclamation approved by the planning authority following in phases. There is no outstanding strategy action required on restoration of this land use.

Some limestone quarries where work has been discontinued have revegetated in part such as at Cornelly. These often offer positive wildlife habitats although some may be committed for future stockpiling or removal of chattles.

Quarry habitats

The following are recommended and are illustrated by FigureLS4:

The strategy recommends that the current reclamation programme is completed with the following modifications and additions to ensure that the schemes exhibit a good fit into the landscape and contribute to the urban areas in which some are situated:

Modifications to Reclamation Programme

- *Caerau - further planting around watercourse.*
- *Upper Garw - Provision of a high quality town park at Pontycymer.*
- *The Washery, Ogmere Vale - retention and enhancement of revegetated areas on valley floor for nature conservation.*

See DG12

See DG14

Twmpath Mawr, in the Llynfi Valley, is not in the programme and should be considered for low cost reclamation, conserving vegetation of value. Uses could include hardwood forestry and low key recreation.

Twmpath Mawr

See DG12

Design of the schemes should be directed to fit into the surrounding valley landscape through semi-natural vegetation, agricultural or woodland

Better Fit

See DG8, DG14

patterns as appropriate. Landform should also be considered.

Features of industrial archaeology interest which have cultural significance should be conserved and interpreted where appropriate, such as at Tondy Iron Works.

**Safeguard Industrial
archaeology**
See DG5, DB3a,b

Quarries of nature conservation or geological value should be retained and enhanced by serving prohibition orders where appropriate.

Quarry Conservation

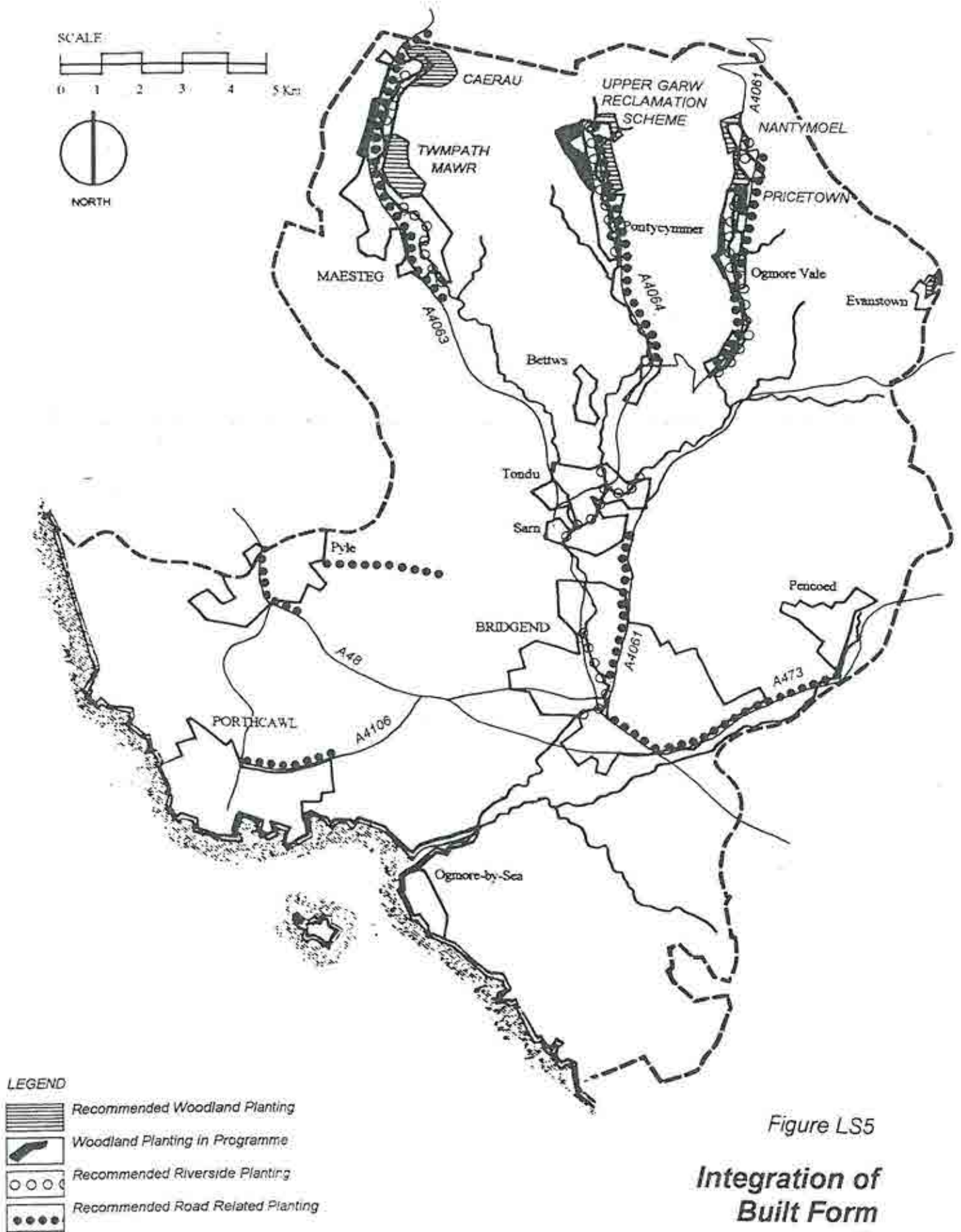


Figure LS5

**Integration of
Built Form
Strategy**

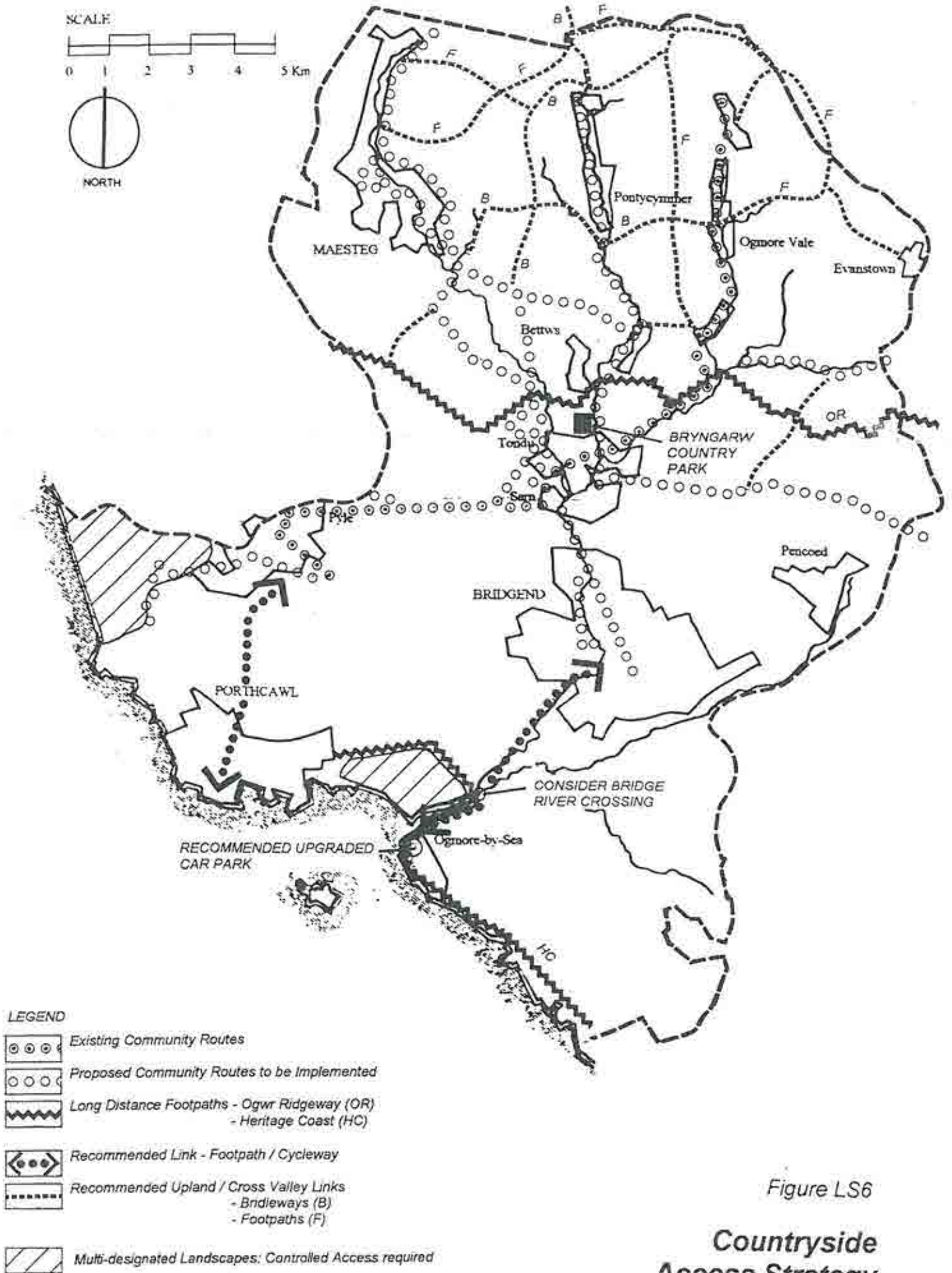


Figure LS6

Countryside Access Strategy

4.8 Road and Rail Corridors

The major road corridors are from where the majority of residents, visitors and inward investors view the landscape of the Study Area. The landscape treatment and management, signage and information on these routes are important to a visitor's first impressions of an area. The M4 passes through the positive rural hinterland of Bridgend but glimpses of the mouths of the valleys and the Rock Wool plant at Wern Tarw are possible from the road. The motorway junctions are key points for giving first impressions of the borough as gateways and are obvious magnets for development. Sony, with its extensive structure screen planting is visible at Junction 35 and development will be prominent at the Pines at Junction 36. Junction 37 at Pyle is at present rural in nature although there is a LAW site on the north east quadrant awaiting development. The A473 is the main route and major development corridor into Bridgend although the A4061 when improved will also be important, associated with substantial proposed development.

M4 and Junctions

The approach roads to Porthcawl are important to promote a positive impression of the resort.

Porthcawl

The roads north to the Valleys, the improved A4063 and the A4061, have to negotiate the Sam, Tondy and Brynmenyn area. The general impression is poor because of poor urban fringe pasture which borders the roads from the M4, the exposure of unsightly backs of development and poor frontages in places. Signage is also poor. Once in the respective valleys, the routes are generally positive and rural in the southern stretches but poor views, street furniture and frontages are present in places in the post-industrial settlements to the north.

Valley mouths

The Valleys

Some key employment sites address road accesses in a positive way such as the Brynmenyn Estate. Others, such as the Brackla/Litchard estate give a very poor impression. Landscape works tend to feature decorative shrubs and trees where native species may be more appropriate to integrate the development and be of some nature conservation value.

Employment Sites

The main Swansea to London intercity railway line passes through Bridgend. This carries a significant proportion of business travellers. The station and Bridgend Industrial Estate could be improved. The Maesteg branch line runs from Bridgend through Tondy and acts as a commuter line. It passes by Llynfi Power station site which is a detractor.

Rail

The following are recommended and are illustrated by Figure LS7:

Implement a comprehensive programme of landscape treatment to the major road approaches throughout the borough focussing on Bridgend, the Valley mouths and Porthcawl.

Improvement on road approaches

Action Programme Volume 3 and DG1 and DG2

Implement a comprehensive programme of improvement to key industrial sites on road and rail approaches.

Industrial sites

Action Programme Volume 3

Upgrade street furniture, signage and interpretation on the key routes.

Street furniture and signage

See DG3 and DG4

Upgrade the key frontages and station on the main line railway.

Rail improvements

4.9 River Corridors

The River Ogmore catchment drains the majority of the study area with the Afan and Kenfig catchment to the west. The rivers of the Ogmore, Ogwr Fach, Ogwr Fawr, Garw, Llynfi and Ewenny link the uplands with the coast and pass through the major settlements. Access to and along the rivers is restricted in parts due to private land ownership and uses. Development alongside the rivers has significantly modified the river course in places creating man-made channels. Development has often ignored or turned its back on the river with the result that the river corridor has become a rubbish tip with litter as a major problem on the upper stretches of the rivers in particular. The Friends of the River Ogmore [FROG] are a local organisation supported by Keep Wales Tidy who are making progress improving access and tidying up the river banks and making them safe.

The rivers and their tributaries have physical, ecological and recreational significance which is not used to best advantage at present although the community routes are planned and some implemented adjacent to the rivers in places. The rivers are cleaner now than for some time and fish stocks are generally improving. Otters are found on some stretches of river. Action Plans for each catchment are being pursued by the Environment Agency. Natural river corridors and flood plains are threatened by new development particularly around Bridgend

The following are recommended and are illustrated by Figure LS8:

Optimise the recreational linkage on each river with footpath/cycleway/bridleway links where appropriate to ensure continuous convenient links between the uplands and the coast. This should include the community routes programme and borough access strategy.

**Optimise recreational linkage
of river corridors**

Continue and increase funding for FROG and expand their activities to make quicker progress on improving the upper reaches of the rivers.

Improve the nature conservation value of the rivers as wildlife habitats and corridors through river bed, bank and corridor modification and planting. Access to be restricted where river habitats are sensitive to disturbance.

**Optimise value of rivers as
wildlife corridors**

Introduce riverside planting to create green corridors particularly in the upper valley areas.

Modify the river bed where in a man-made channel to improve recreational access and improve visual amenity.

Ensure the natural river corridor and rivercourse is retained and enhanced in visual, ecological and access terms wherever possible where new development occurs adjacent to rivers.

**Accommodate natural river
corridor through new
development**

4.10 Woodland and Forestry

Forestry is confined to the valleys area on the uplands and valley sides. Forestry Enterprise is the key landowner. The conifer plantations are predominantly Norway Spruce and Larch with some Corsican Pine which form a prominent presence in the valleys area. The key characteristics of the forest are straight edges, rides and with some glades. Some softening of edges is apparent using larch and broadleaves. The forests are of limited nature conservation value. The forests fall within the Forest Enterprise Valleys Forest Initiative area and are well used for recreation including trails, bridleways and footpaths with car parking and picnic sites such as in the Garw Valley. An Indicative Landscape Strategy has yet to be prepared for the Study Area.

Coniferous forests with straight edges

The main constraints to forest expansion is ownership and the extensive common land on Mynydd Llangeinor, Mynydd y Gaer and Cefn Hirgoed.

Woodland is predominantly in private ownership. It is found on the lower valley sides and in the lowland and plateau areas of the study area. There are some important ancient woodlands of high nature conservation value such as in the Ognore valley south of Blackmill. Many woodlands are grazed. This is preventing regeneration and some woodlands are dying out due to this management regime particularly in the upper valleys. A rotational grazing regime is being introduced where possible.

Woodlands of high nature conservation value

Grazing of woodlands

Coed Cymru are playing an important role in providing advice to owners on management to increase the productivity while improving nature conservation and recreational value in some woodlands. Coed Cymru are only able to provide advice on a reactive basis due to limited resources. There are no local sawmills for hardwoods despite local demand for the product which restricts the economic viability of the product.

Coed Cymru's role

The following are recommended and are illustrated by Figure LS9:

An Indicative Forestry Strategy should be prepared by the Forestry Authority for the Study Area to define the future for the resource.

Indicative Forestry Strategy

Conifer plantations should be managed to optimise their nature conservation and recreation value. As they are felled they should be replanted in line with best practice to soften their impact on the landscape including using a mix of broadleaves on edges.

*Optimise nature conservation, recreational and landscape value of coniferous forests
See Forestry Commission [1994]*

Any expansion of coniferous forestry should be confined to limited areas on Mynydd Maesteg and Moel Cynhordy in order to maintain landscape and ecological diversity.

In the upper valley areas which have suffered from extensive coal extraction broadleaf woodland should be planted to create a new landscape structure and possibly form part of a community woodland. Existing woodland in these areas should be managed to allow regeneration and be productive.

*New broadleaf woodland for the Valleys
See LS11, LS13, LS15, DG8*

Broadleaf woodlands should be managed to optimise productivity while enhancing their nature conservation and recreation value. In order to help achieve this, Coed Cymru should be adequately resourced to take strategic and proactive action in areas of need in addition to their current reactive role.

Support Coed Cymru to take pro-active role

The potential for a local sawmill and local markets for hardwoods should be further pursued by Coed Cymru and others to support broadleaf woodland management and planting.

Introduction 5.1
Achieving the Strategy Objectives 5.2
Raising Standards 5.3
An Integrated Approach 5.4
Landscape Implementation 5.5
Countryside Management Service 5.6
Environmental Information Management 5.7
Character Area Approach 5.8

Implementing the Strategy

SECTION 5.0

5.2 Achieving Strategy Objectives

The strategy objectives can be achieved in the following ways:

Bridgend County Borough Council would be able to use the strategy to guide the formulation of the landscape aspects of the Unitary Development Plan. The strategy has been prepared on the basis that it could be taken forward by BCBC through a consultation process in order to develop it as supplementary planning guidance. It is hoped that key strategy aims will become adopted as planning policy. This will enable the strategy and the design guidelines to influence the planning process and thus the pattern and quality of development in the County Borough.

*Landscape Strategy as
Supplementary Planning
Guidance*

It is intended that the document will guide planners on a day to day basis and be a source of information for both planners and developers alike. The use of the document allows a constructive dialogue to be entered into between planner and developer prior to submission of a planning application. The amount of guidance available varies depending on the significance of the site, the critical development sites having specific design briefs. The design guidelines include guidance for each landscape character area as well as on a topic basis. This enables local distinctiveness in development to be emphasised. The topic based themes promote best practice on a County Borough-wide basis. This proactive approach is likely to reduce conflict, result in a higher quality of development and also encourage private investment in the landscape which contributes to the overall strategy. Developers would benefit from increased likelihood of gaining planning permission while working within the landscape framework.

*Landscape Strategy informs
planning process*

*Local distinctiveness
Best practice
Proactive approach to
planning*

The Council's own programme of development could be refined using the strategy as landscape guidance. The Action Plan could be used to support applications for funding from various agencies for further studies while the Action Programme Volume 3 could be used as a basis for raising funding to improve the key environmental improvement sites.

*Action Plan Volume 4
Section 9.0
Strategy as support for
funding applications*

5.4 An Integrated Approach

The implementation of the strategy will require a contribution from a range of organisations: governmental and non-governmental, educational, voluntary, private sector and the public. The central focus will be Bridgend County Borough Council with the support of the Welsh Development Agency [WDA], Countryside Council for Wales [CCW], Forestry Authority, Welsh Office, Environment Agency [EA] and Wales Tourist Board [WTB]. Groundwork Ogwr, Coed Cymru and Glamorgan Wildlife Trust and a range of other conservation fora all play important roles within the borough. It is important that all organisations work together to achieve agreed objectives. The continuation of the landscape steering group will help achieve this objective.

Integration of all relevant organisations

Local Agenda 21 requires local government to act as the major contributor to sustainable development and to have a coordinating role in the process. It also requires the preparation of State of the Environment reports which are reviewed every 5 years. This requires a structure and programme to ensure that the process can be managed and specific demands are met. An overall unifying Bridgend County Borough Local Agenda 21 Forum/Steering Group should be formed and serviced by the local authority and a Local Agenda 21 officer. Related and secondary groups can report and feed into this body in order that a holistic and integrated approach can be taken.

See Section 4.2

Local Agenda Forum

To inform decisions, easy access to comprehensive information is vital. A revised Geographic Information System needs to be set up to hold information on planning, socio-economic and environmental issues.

Comprehensive GIS

As part of the management of the Study Area landscape there is a need to have a Countryside Service to coordinate and take a proactive role. There is also a need to start the process of gathering further information on the State of The Environment. This is also discussed further below. The essential idea is that there is a coordinated programme with objectives which involves all stakeholders and they identify and take responsibility for their own areas of influence.

*Countryside Service
See Section 5.5*

- Other sources for voluntary and other schemes e.g. Princes Trust, Coed Cymru.

significant biodiversity conservation problems such as implementation of species action plans and rehabilitation programmes for wildlife habitats that are in decline. Information and expertise to guide this work may be sparse, and will require experimental applications of existing knowledge and techniques. In cases, experience gained from this work is likely to be of wider benefit, and it would be appropriate to take a more structured approach to planning, design and implementation of management trials. It is proposed that a Research Liaison Officer should be nominated within the Countryside Management Service. This person would be responsible for definition and coordination of a research agenda, maximising the use of existing links with academic support and developing new links.

Research Liaison Officer

The Countryside Service should work with Coed Cymru in supporting positive woodland management throughout the Study Area.

5.8 Landscape Character Approach

The landscapes of the Study area are of diverse character. Their character is a product of both physical and social processes described in more detail in the Technical Annex. While the overall strategy themes discussed in Section 4.0 are relevant to the whole study area they do not promote or give specific guidance on local identity. Landscape Character Areas therefore have been defined which are based on local distinctiveness of a landscape and its communities.

*See Landscape Appraisal
Technical Annex Section 2.0*

These Landscape Character areas form the basis of strategy and design guidelines at a local level which enables local identity to be retained and enhanced. The next section 6.0 focusses on a strategy for each of the fifteen areas in turn. Design Guidelines for each area can be found in Design Guidelines Volume 2.

Introduction 1.0
Upper Llynfi Valley Figure LS11
Lower Llynfi Valley Figure LS12
Upper Garw Valley Figure LS13
Lower Garw Valley Figure LS14
Ogwr Fawr Figure LS15
Ogwr Fach Figure LS16
Cefn Cribwr Ridge Figure LS17
Brynmenyn Confluence Figure LS18
Hirwaun Common Figure LS19
Lowland Valleys Figure LS20
Western Limestone Plateau Figure LS21
Vale Limestone Plateau Figure LS22
Kenfig Dunes Figure LS23
Porthcawl Hinterland Figure LS24
Heritage Coast Figure LS25

*C*haracter Area Strategies

SECTION 6.0

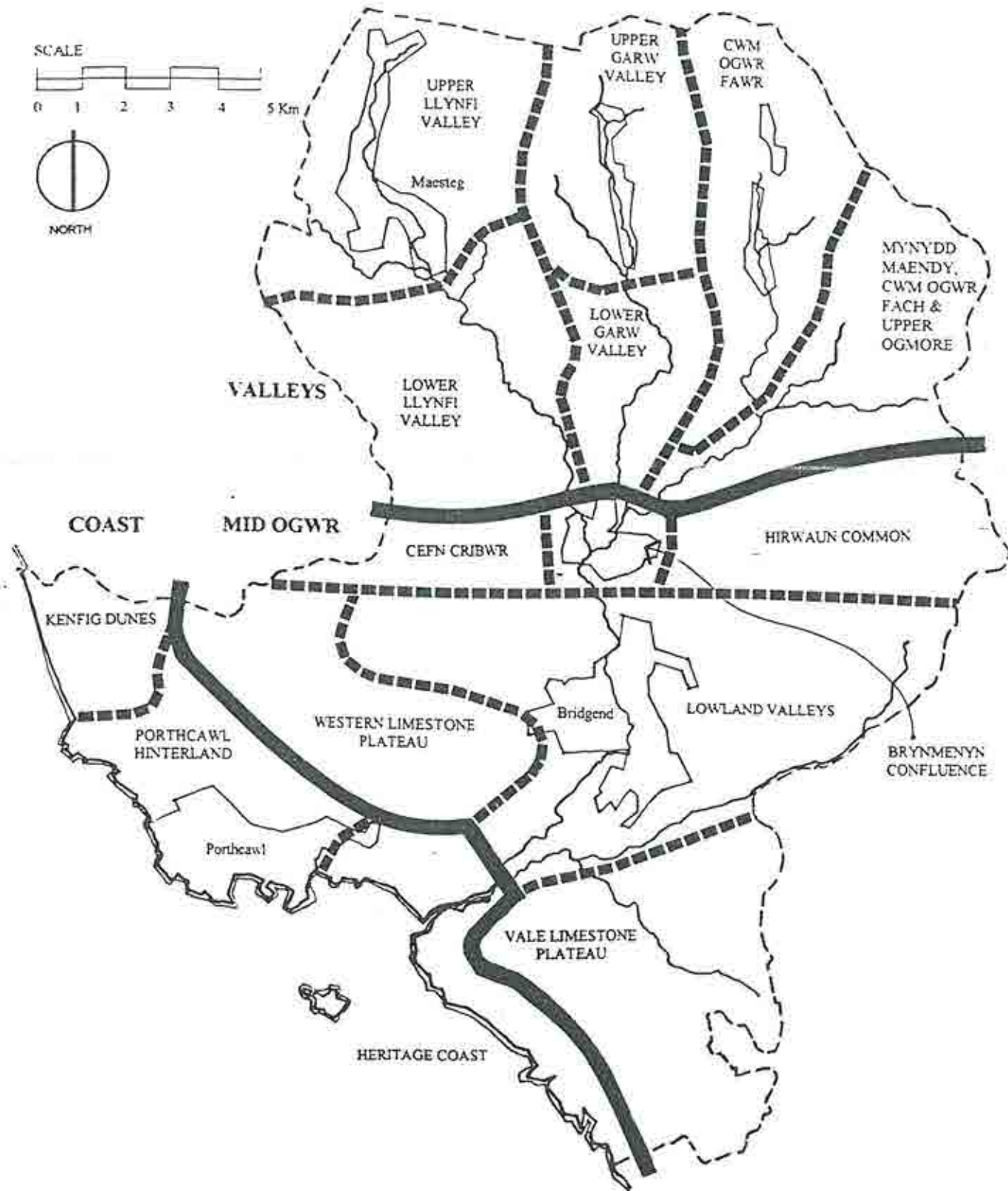


Figure LS10

Landscape Character Areas

6.0 CHARACTER AREA STRATEGIES

6.1 Introduction

The Landscape Assessment of the Study Area has led to a two stage process of categorisation of the landscape: the definition of landscape types and the definition of landscape character areas.

Landscape Types are derived from geological, topographic, drainage and land cover characteristics. This is explained in more detail in the Technical Annex.






See Technical Annex 2.0

Landscape Character areas are derived from the application of the following criteria:

- Area associated with dominant landform e.g valley
- Area associated with dominant settlement/land cover pattern e.g. Bridgend
- Area with consistent cultural or historical character
- Community perceptions of their area
- Current political or designation boundaries where the above do not apply

There are fifteen Character Areas as shown on Figure LS10. Each is discussed in terms of it's Character, Key Issues arising, a Vision for its future and a Strategy for the achievement of that vision.

KEY TO STRATEGY PLANS

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Character Area Boundary
-  Character Area Strategy Reference number
-  Area related to Strategy Reference above
-  Site No.1 Action Programme Volume 3 Site No. Reference

CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Broad steep sided upland valley, ranging from 350m AOD to 140m AOD with strong linear features cut into the Upper Coal Measures with glacial deposits on valley floors.

Valley bottom dominated by post-industrial iron and coal related settlement with strong linear character along roads, railway lines (some dismantled such as the Dyffryn, Llyni and Porthcawl Railway) and river.

River highly modified by and surrounded by valley bottom development for most of its length.

Valley sides dominated by disturbed post-industrial land uses including large areas of grassed spoil tips and engineered reclamation sites.

Coniferous woodland on upper slopes and plateau has abrupt obtrusive linear edges adjoining agricultural land.

Upland valley side farmland mainly exposed Grade 1 improved grassland and Grade 5 rough grassland for sheep grazing with deteriorating boundaries and few fragmented remnants of semi natural woodland.

KEY ISSUES

Disturbed land creates poor image and is a non-productive land use. However, the tip sites do have historical and cultural significance as the reason for development of the area.

Settlement particularly at Caerau and Nantyllyllon, is poorly integrated into the valley landscape and offers a poor environment with few areas of vegetated attractive open space on the valley floor.

The A4063 road approaches provide a poor image of the valley despite some improvements through the Upper Llynfi strategy. Alternative routes also are sought in places.

The River Llynfi corridor is generally at back of development and is poorly maintained, has a major litter/dumping problem and has poor access. The river course is highly modified and canalised or in culvert in places with little nature conservation interest. This also applies to a lesser extent to the tributaries.

Straight coniferous woodland edges form a disruptive visual element in the landscape.

Upland farming displays characteristics of marginal agriculture in an urban fringe location with little investment and a decline in standards of management and infrastructure.

Broadleaf woodland is virtually absent in this area and that which exists often has poor structural diversity due to grazing.

Forestry, agricultural grassland improvement and development have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest to localised fragments.

Inappropriate grassland management has resulted in bracken invasion and structural uniformity.



VISION

The strategy seeks to create a new valley floor landscape and into the valley sides on areas of disturbed land such as Twmpath Mawr. It seeks to optimise their nature conservation value by retention of existing vegetation where appropriate, and balance this with recreation needs and economic potential of woodland management. It seeks to visually and physically integrate the settlements of Caerau, Nantyllyllon, Maesteg and Gorth into the valley landscape. The nature conservation value of present fragments of landscape both in the valley and tops within forestry will be enhanced by proposed planting, seeding and appropriate management and linkage of patches.

STRATEGY

- 1 Create positive use on areas of disturbed land optimising nature conservation value including creation of broadleaf woodland for cropping and habitat creation [e.g. Twmpath Mawr, Caerau]
- 2 Implement river course improvements on length of River Llynfi (improving riparian habitat) and access along and to river edge (in conjunction with water quality improvements and major rubbish clearance), linking open space and undertaking knotweed control.
- 3 Improve nature conservation value and continuity of habitats on valley sides including woodland planting on marginal agricultural land.
- 4 Soften coniferous woodland edges by management and replanting with hardwoods. Optimise value of habitat fragments within forestry glades and rides.
- 5 Enhance landscape character of side valleys and nature conservation value especially relating to watercourses and woodland, e.g. Cwm Cerdyn.
- 6 Integrate settlements into valley landscape by tree planting on valley sides, by the river, on community routes and on roads.
- 7 Implement all proposed community routes and undertake subsidiary route improvement into settlement and as cross valley links [see Volume 3 Site no.48]
- 8 Support Iron Works conservation, interpretation and signage.
- 9 Improve A4063 road approaches.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: D3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12

Bibliography:

- Forestry Authority and Forestry Commission [1995]
- Forestry Commission [1992]
- Forestry Commission [1994]
- Hibberd [1989]
- Moffat [1994]
- WDA [1987]

Figure LS11
UPPER LLYNFI
AREA STRATEGY



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Indistinct broad steep sided valley, ranging from 355m AOD to 50m AOD, with strong side valleys cut into Upper Coal Measures to form rounded spurs. Alluvial deposits on valley floors.

Rural character of mainly Grade 4, some Grade 5 improved pasture with scattered settlement. Hedged and fenced field boundaries. Semi-natural woodlands occur mainly on side valley slopes.

River Llynfi and tributaries run on natural course for the majority of their length. They are bounded by significant riparian vegetation.

Significant isolated industrial development at Bridgend Paper Mills and the now disused Llynfi Power Station are located in the valley bottom.

Upland and upper valley sides to west are of historical and cultural significance with iron age remnants and remains of medieval castle [Llan] and house platforms. The village is a popular local recreation attraction with pubs.

Coniferous woodland on upper slopes have abrupt linear edges adjoining agricultural land.

KEY ISSUES

The landscape structure of hedgerows and woodlands is declining through current management practice.

Straight coniferous woodland edges form an abrupt disruptive visual element in the landscape not responding to landform.

Forestry, agricultural grassland improvement and farming practices have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest to localised fragments.

Inappropriate grassland management has resulted in bracken invasion to the east and structural uniformity to the west of the area.

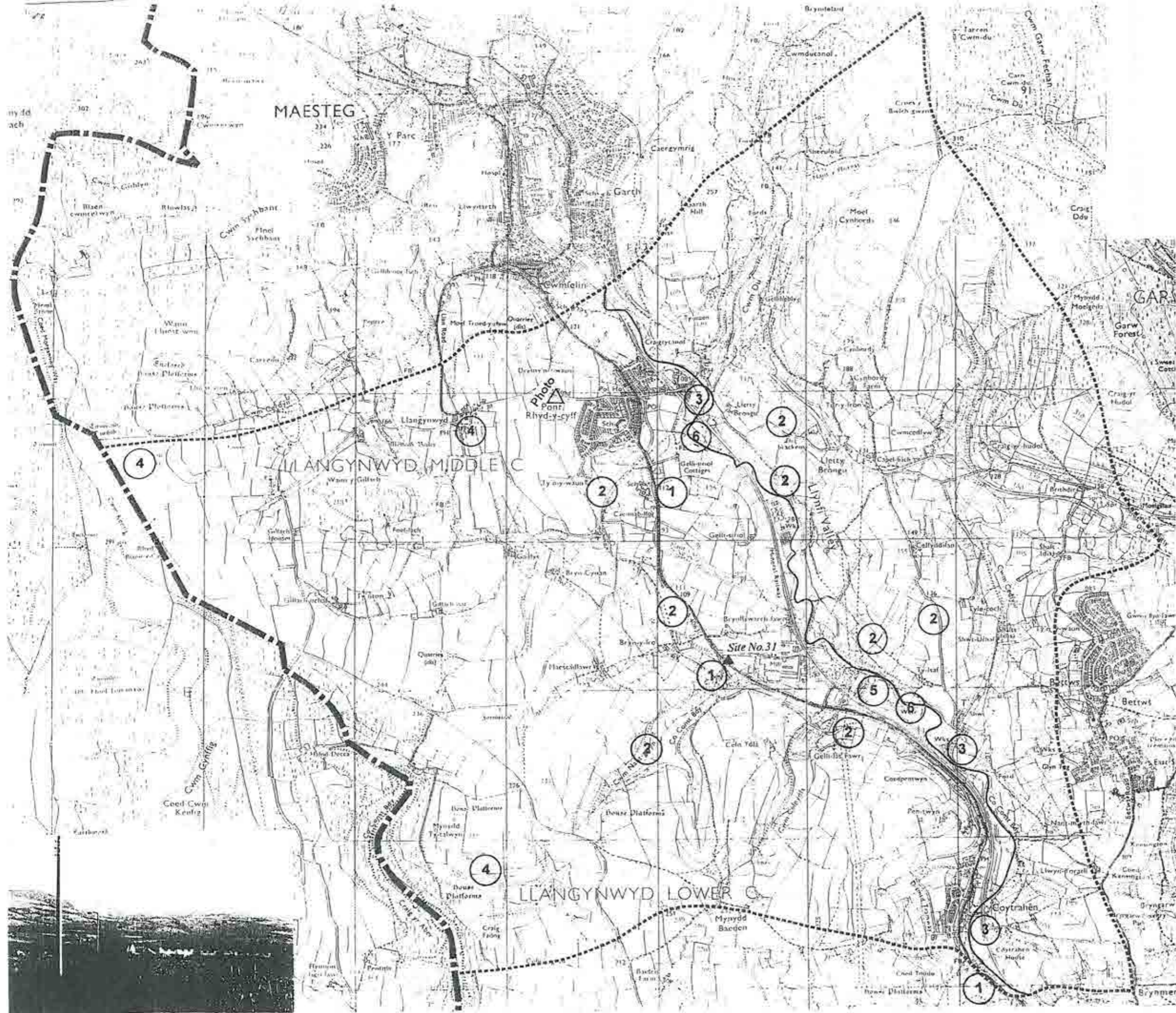
Generally positive road approaches on A4063 are spoilt in places by local insensitive frontages such as at Bridgend Paper Mills and Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff and by localised hedge management.

Access for walkers and cyclists, including along river corridors, is poor at present which limits the recreational potential for the area.

Llynfi Power Station site is an eyesore when viewed from railway and other side of valley and awaits a positive use. It is not visible from the A4063 so is not a major detractor.

River Llynfi is spoilt in places by knotweed and litter thrown from upstream.

The positive image of the valley and its cultural and historic identity around Llan and Twmpath Diwlith are not positively exploited.



VISION

The strategy seeks to enhance the pleasant rural landscape character of the valley by promoting positive rural land management to conserve hedges, woodlands and optimise their nature conservation value. Watercourses will be harnessed as key wildlife corridors and habitat diversity maximised. Sites on the A4063 will be improved to fit within the landscape. Access along the watercourses (where there is not a conflict of interest) and to the uplands will be supported. Interpretation of the rich cultural and historical significance of the Llangynwyd area will be harnessed.

STRATEGY

General

Encourage farm management for nature conservation in partnership with WOAD, Coed Cymru, CCW and other relevant bodies. Measures to include hedgerow planting and management, grassland diversification and bracken control, woodland management and planting. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors.

Specific sites/areas

- 1 Improve road approaches in key locations such as Bridgend Paper Mills, by school at Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff and improve signage (e.g. layby at Tondul) to aid sense of identity. Encourage highway authority and adjacent farmers to lay hedging on roadsides and discontinue flail cutting.
- 2 Access for walkers and cyclists (on community and subsidiary routes) along river corridors and to uplands to be improved by agreement and management.
- 3 Opportunities for canoeing to be investigated on lower reaches of Llynfi
- 4 Exploit the valley's cultural and historic identity with interpretation and signage centred on Llangynwyd.
- 5 Llynfi Power Station site to be allowed to regenerate with minimum disturbance until a positive use is found.
- 6 Clean up River Llynfi removing knotweed and litter once similar initiatives upstream are nearing completion.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: 10.1, 2, 9, 10, 13

Figure LS12
**LOWER LLYNFI
AREA STRATEGY**



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the character are:

Narrow steep-sided blind upland valley, falling from 400m AOD at source to 125m AOD between Certhfield Plateau uplands of Mynydd Llanginwyr to the east (Werfa 568m AOD) and Mynydd Caernu to the West (Hwydyr Lawr 555m AOD). Boulder clay deposits on valley floor.

Constricted valley bottom dominated by post industrial coal related settlements of Pontycymer and Blaengarw with strong linear character along roads, railway line and river.

Forestry (thin forest) dominant on western upland and valley sides with gaps mainly of reclamation site (Upper Garw).

Valley sides to east dominated by post industrial land uses including large areas of reclamation and engineered reclamation sites interspersed with Grade 5 rough grazing. Lower valley sides are Grade 4 improved pasture. Deteriorating field boundaries and few remnants of semi-natural woodland with regeneration suppressed by grazing.

Semi natural grassland with some bracken dominate the Common on Mynydd Llanginwyr.

River highly modified by and surrounded by coal extraction, reclamation, railway line and lined with rock armour for most of its length. It is in culvert in places.

KEY ISSUES

Current Upper Garw reclamation scheme creates a poor image but has potential to give added value to the valley if funded and designed to maximise benefit to the community.

Coniferous forestry offers a positive recreational resource as well as enhancing the image of the valley and acting as a productive land use. The straight forest edges form an abrupt visual element in the landscape in places.

Settlement is poorly integrated into the valley landscape and with the valley side forestry. It also offers a poor environment with few areas of vegetated attractive open spaces on the valley floor.

Fragment woodland is limited and that which exists often has poor structural diversity due to grazing.

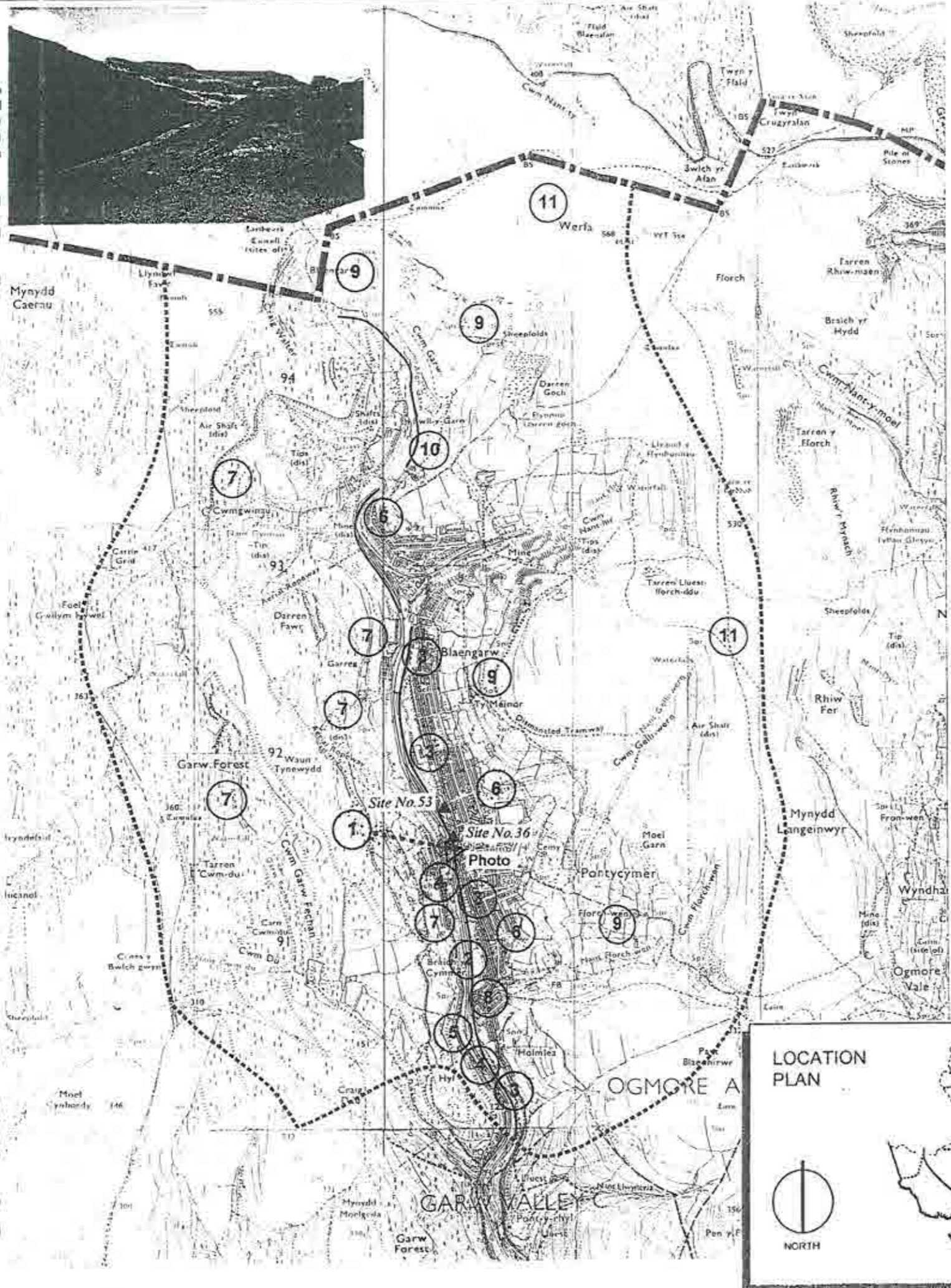
The A106 provides a poor image of the valley while the western secondary route is more pleasant and links into the recreational routes to the Garw Forest.

The river has been significantly modified and suffers major litter/dumping problem.

Upland farming displays characteristics of marginal agriculture in an urban fringe location with little investment and a decline in standards of management and infrastructure.

Forestry agricultural grassland improvement and development have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest to localised fragments, the most significant of which are at the head of the valley at Cwm Garw and Bwlch Garw.

Inappropriate grassland management has resulted in bracken invasion and structural uniformity. Woodfarm development is planned on Mynydd Llanginwyr.



VISION

The strategy seeks to create a new valley floor landscape which will help transform the area from a post industrial area in decline to a positive place to live and to visit. The Upper Garw reclamation scheme needs to be sufficiently resourced to create a town park in Pontycymer near the proposed rail head, create positive valley floor open space around an exciting river course and establish forestry with recreation on the valley sides. The strategy seeks to visually and physically integrate the settlements of Pontycymer and Blaengarw into the valley landscape by planting on the lower valley sides, by the river, on the community route/railway and on roads. Once this has been achieved the recreational potential of the area will be able to be exploited. The nature conservation value of present fragments of landscape both in the valley and uplands, both afforested and grasslands, will be enhanced by appropriate management and linkage of patches.

STRATEGY

- 1 Resource the Upper Garw reclamation scheme to provide an exciting town park at Pontycymer and upgrade the townscape particularly at the northern end of the settlement to create a square. The river should be treated to optimise recreational value.
- 2 Support and resource associated landscape works with proposed community route and railway (Volume 3 Site nos 48 and 49).
- 3 Improve the A1065 with planting on roadside and localised improvements such as in Oxford Street, Pontycymer.
- 4 Improve the western secondary route up the valley for visitors by providing signage and visitor facilities, such as upgraded laybys.
- 5 Enhance access and interpretation of forestry areas and signage from A1065 to encourage visitor use.
- 6 Integrate settlement into the valley landscape and with the valley side broadleaf woodland. (See Volume 2 Figure 10G.8).
- 7 Soften forest edges with broadleaf planting. Optimise value of habitat fragments within forestry glades and rides.
- 8 Implement river course improvements improving riparian habitat diversity and access along and to river edge (in conjunction with water quality improvements and major rubbish clearance), linking open space and undertaking knotweed control.
- 9 Improve nature conservation value and continuity of habitats on uplands and valley sides by protection, improved management, control of bracken on marginal agricultural land, control of grazing in woodland and planting where appropriate.
- 10 Celebrate the blind head of the valley with a feature and information of how to reach upland of Werfa and Mynydd y Gelli.
- 11 Retain open moorland vegetation cover.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DGI 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14.

Bibliography: Groundwork Cwm Garw Valley Green Strategy

Figure LS13
**UPPER GARW
AREA STRATEGY**



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are

Narrow steep sided upland valley, falling from 125m AOD north of the Garw Fechan confluence to 100m AOD at Bryngarw Country Park. The higher Coalfield Plateau uplands of Mynydd Llangeinwyr to the east [Pen y Foel 356m AOD] and Craig-yr-Hudol to the West [355m AOD] are terminated by an east/west fault line with lower lying undulating hills to the south above Llangeinor [200m AOD] and around Bettws [160m AOD]. Alluvial deposits occur on valley floor.

The area can be divided along fault line north of Llangeinor

North of Llangeinor:

The most dramatic and scenic part of the valley

Forestry [Garw Forest] dominant on western upland plateau and valley sides with straight abrupt edges. Dominant land use in Garw Fechan side valley.

Heathland and acid grassland on east valley sides and uplands with some Grade 5 rough pasture.

Highly constricted valley bottom with room only for river [with minor modifications to course], road[s] and railway

Llangeinor and to the south:

More gentle and less dramatic enclosing topography. Valley bottom wider with development at Llangeinor but poorly drained and undeveloped to the south.

Valley sides and floor generally well wooded with broadleaved species. Grazed Oak/Ash on slopes and Alder on valley bottom

River course mainly natural with locally poorly drained area particularly around Bryngarw

Grade 4 improved pasture on undulating higher ground with small scale fields and wooded hedgerows.

Overspill settlements based around old rural village cores at Llangeinor and Bettws are unsightly and intrusive. The latter is sited on a hilltop highly visible from the lower Llynfi valley. Cae Abbot is a distinctive hamlet on the edge of Mynydd Llangeinwyr.

KEY ISSUES

Forestry offers a positive recreational resource as well as enhancing the image of the valley and acting as a productive land use

The forest edges form an abrupt visual element in the landscape particularly just North West of Llangeinor

The settlement of Bettws is prominently positioned and poorly integrated into the agricultural landscape. It has socio-economic problems and has a poor housing environment.

Development adjacent to the A4064 at Llangeinor is unsightly in parts

Bryngarw Country Park, though proposed as hub of the access wheel in the borough, is poorly connected and poorly signed. Visitor facilities look tired and have a basic landscape setting although some upgrading is in process

The A4064 does not have any appropriate signage, interpretation or roadside laybys to support any recreational potential

The Ogwr ridgeway passes through the area South of Llangeinor. The recreational potential of the uplands to the west need to be exploited from Cae Abbot towards Mynydd Llangeinwyr.

The river requires easier access and needs to be expressed to the benefit of road users and visitors.

Broadleaf woodland is fairly extensive but poorly managed in places.

Upland farming displays characteristics of decline in standards of management of hedgerows.

Forestry, agricultural grassland improvement and development have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest in the northern area.



VISION

The strategy seeks to conserve and enhance the positive landscape character and nature conservation value of the area. It will focus on the river courses of the Garw and Garw Fechan and seek to unlock their recreational potential. Coniferous woodland edges will be ameliorated. The recreational potential of Bryngarw Country Park as hub of the recreational access wheel in the valley's will be enhanced by upgrading and better connections. The strategy seeks to visually and physically integrate the settlements of Bettws and Llangeinor into the landscape by planting on edges and within the settlements and on roads. The nature conservation value of present fragments of landscape both in the valley and tops within forestry will be enhanced by appropriate management, planting and linkage of patches.

STRATEGY

General

Encourage farm management for nature conservation in partnership with WOAG, Coed Cymru, CCW & other relevant bodies. Measures to include woodland management and planting, hedgerow planting and management, grassland diversification and bracken control. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors.

Specific sites/areas

- 1 Improve road approaches in key locations such as Llangeinor and improve signage to Garw Fechan to exploit positive recreational potential of valley.
- 2 Bryngarw Country Park to be improved to become recreational node for countryside access and gateway to the valley. Signage to the park to be improved and direct access to A4064 to be implemented.
- 3 Support and resource associated landscape works with proposed community route and railway [see Volume 3 site nos. 48 and 49]. Ensure there is a halt at Bryngarw Country Park.
- 4 Implement improvement strategy of Bettws with community initiatives
- 5 Access to uplands [such as from Garw Fechan] to be improved by agreement and management.
- 6 Clean up river removing knotweed and litter once similar initiatives upstream are nearing completion.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15
 Bibliography:
 Groundwork Ogwr: Garw Valley Green Strategy
 Groundwork Ogwr: Green Strategy for Bettws
 Countryside Council for Wales [1994]: Good Practice for Country Parks

Figure LS14
**LOWER GARW
 AREA STRATEGY**



CHARACTER

The key characters are:

Upland valley with undulating valley sides and narrow bottom enclosed by Mynydd Llangeinor [568m AOD] to the west and Mynydd Mezrick to the east [513m AOD] falling to Blackmill at 85m AOD to the south. Series of incised re-entrant valleys such as Cwm y Fawch and Cwm Cyflog create high level spurs such as Mynydd yr Aber. Uplands and valley sides dominated by Upper Coal Measures with boulder clay on lower valley sides and alluvial deposits and glacial sands and gravels in valley floor.

Superb head of valley upland landscape at the Bwlch [520m AOD] with views to Brecons and to the Bristol Channel.

Constricted Orley bottom dominated by post-industrial coal related settlement and disturbed and reclaimed land with strong linear character south of Ogmere Vale along road, community route and river. Reclaimed sites are used for recreation or limited industrial development.

Forestry is a significant land use at Ogmere Forest and at the head of the valley north and west of Nant-y-Moel. The coniferous woodland's straight edges are abrupt and do not respond to landform.

Valley sides consist of rough grazing and marginal pasture, predominantly Grade 5 with limited Grade 4 north of Nant-y-Moel and south of Ogmere Forest. Deteriorating hedge boundaries and few remnants of semi-natural woodland, such as Craig yr Aber, with regeneration suppressed by grazing. Bracken covers large areas of valley side.

Acid grassland and some bracken dominate the edges of the common on Mynydd Llangeinor.

River south of Nant-y-Moel is highly modified by disturbed land, reclamation and rock armour for most of its length. In culvert beneath recreation ground on reclamation at Price Town.

South of Pant-yr-awel the valley narrows and becomes essentially rural in character. The uplands reach 290m AOD south of the fault line and consist of undulating pasture [Grade 4] with small fields and hedgerows.

KEY ISSUES

The valley has an interesting and diverse landscape character but still suffers the scars of the coal industry which are being tackled by reclamation and community-based environmental improvements [Groundwork Ogwr].

The Washery site is a detractor with a harsh forestry edge and modified river course. The proposed reclamation scheme including playing fields on the valley floor is unpopular with the local community forum.

Wyndham Industrial Estate [Pen-llwyn-gwent] is a detractor in the valley, though this will be ameliorated by recent Groundwork Ogwr planting. Much of the land allocated for industry is not used.

The community route footpath/cycleway opens up new unsightly views of the valley exposing backs of property, smallholdings and the river bank.

The Bwlch is a superb asset at the head of the valley which is not used by the borough. Rhondda Borough Council are building a car park and information point focussing on views to the north.

Clipping is an unsightly problem noticeable on the road to the head of the valley.

Coniferous woodland offers a positive recreational resource as well as enhancing the image of the valley and acting as a productive land use. The forest edges form an abrupt and awkward visual element in the landscape in places.

Settlement is poorly integrated into the valley landscape and with the valley side forestry.

Broadleaf woodland is limited and that which exists often has poor structural diversity due to grazing.

The road approach provides a poor image of the valley with poor frontages [Lewistown], poor street furniture [bus shelters etc] and views of the Washery.

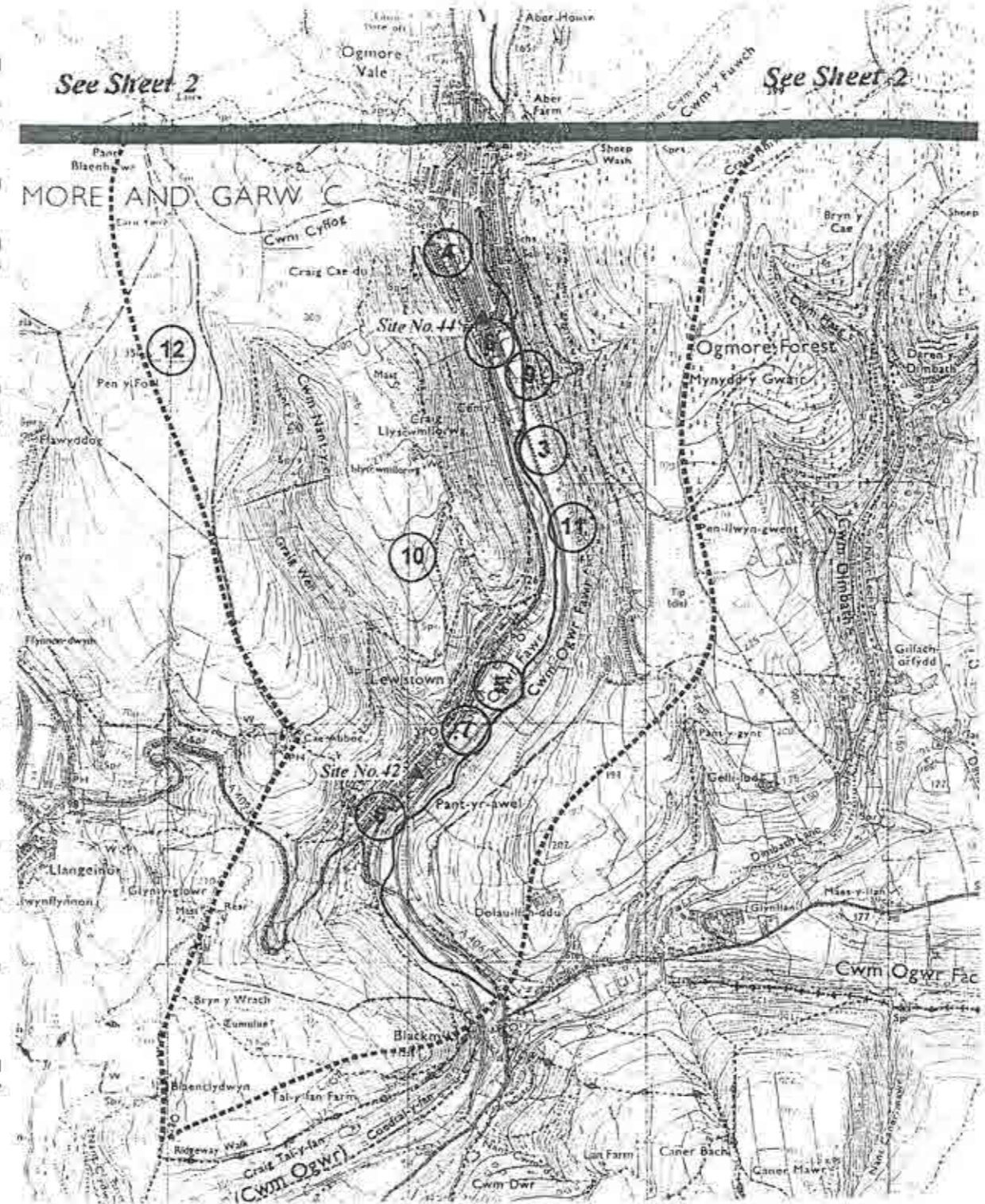
The river has been significantly modified and suffers a major litter-humping problem and knotweed infestation.

Upland farming displays characteristics of marginal agriculture in an urban fringe location with little investment and a decline in standards of management and infrastructure.

Forestry, agricultural grassland improvement and development have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest to localised fragments mainly at the head of the valley.

Inappropriate grassland management has resulted in bracken invasion and structural uniformity.

Woodland development is planned on Mynydd Llangeinor.



VISION

The strategy seeks to create an improved valley floor landscape which will build on existing initiatives to transform the valley from a post industrial area in decline to a positive place to live. The core of the valley needs an integrated plan including the open space at Pricetown, Wyndham Industrial Estate and the Washeries to create a bold, visually exciting series of spaces sub-dividing the valley floor with strong lines of vegetation to create variety and screen detractors. The spaces will be linked by the spines of the river and community route. This will build on the Ogwr Groundwork masterplan. The strategy seeks to visually and physically integrate the valley settlements into the valley landscape by planting on valley sides, by the river, on the community route and on roads. The natural asset of the Bwlch will be utilised to create a viewpoint to observe the continuing transformation of the valley. The nature conservation value of present fragments of landscape both in the valley and tops within forestry will be enhanced by proposed planting and appropriate management and linkage of patches.

STRATEGY

- 1 Build on Groundwork Ogwr masterplan for core valley spaces to create vision of linked spaces in grand design visible from the Bwlch.
- 2 Develop a viewing platform and bridge at the Bwlch with interpretation.
- 3 Modify the Washeries reclamation scheme to create a naturalistic valley floor open space using the extensive regeneration and developing an accessible yet ecologically valuable river course. Soften conifer plantation edges with broadleaves in places.
- 4 Carry out improvements to properties and smallholding boundaries visible from the community route footpath/cycleway.
- 5 Improve access to the community route with footpath/cycleways and bridges where necessary.
- 6 Improve signage, interpretation and street furniture on road approaches.
- 7 Implement environmental improvements to Lewistown and Pant-yr-awel housing and community facilities as part of a community initiative and improving the roadside image.
- 8 Integrate settlement into the valley landscape and with the valley side forestry.
- 9 Implement river course improvements improving riparian habitat and access along and to river edge [in conjunction with water quality improvements and major rubbish clearance], linking open space and undertaking knotweed control.
- 10 Improve nature conservation value and continuity of habitats on valley sides in conjunction with CCW, WOAD and Coed Cymru including improved management of grassland and hedgerows, control of bracken on marginal agricultural land, control of grazing in woodland and planting where appropriate.
- 11 Soften forest edges with broadleaf planting. Optimise value of habitat fragments within coniferous woodland glades and rides.
- 12 Retain open moorland vegetation cover.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG11, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16.

Bibliography: Groundwork Ogwr, Ogmere Valley Community Parkway

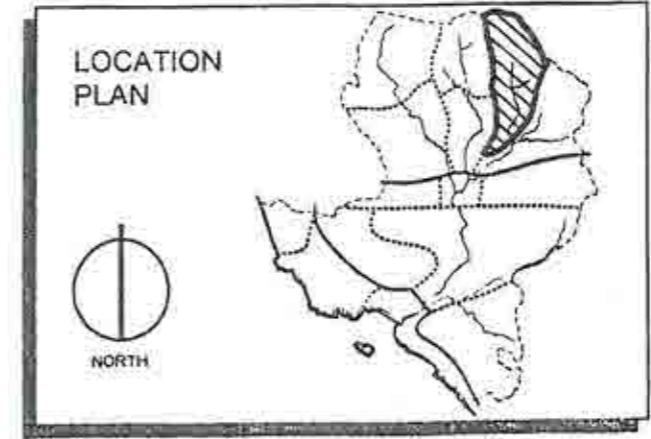
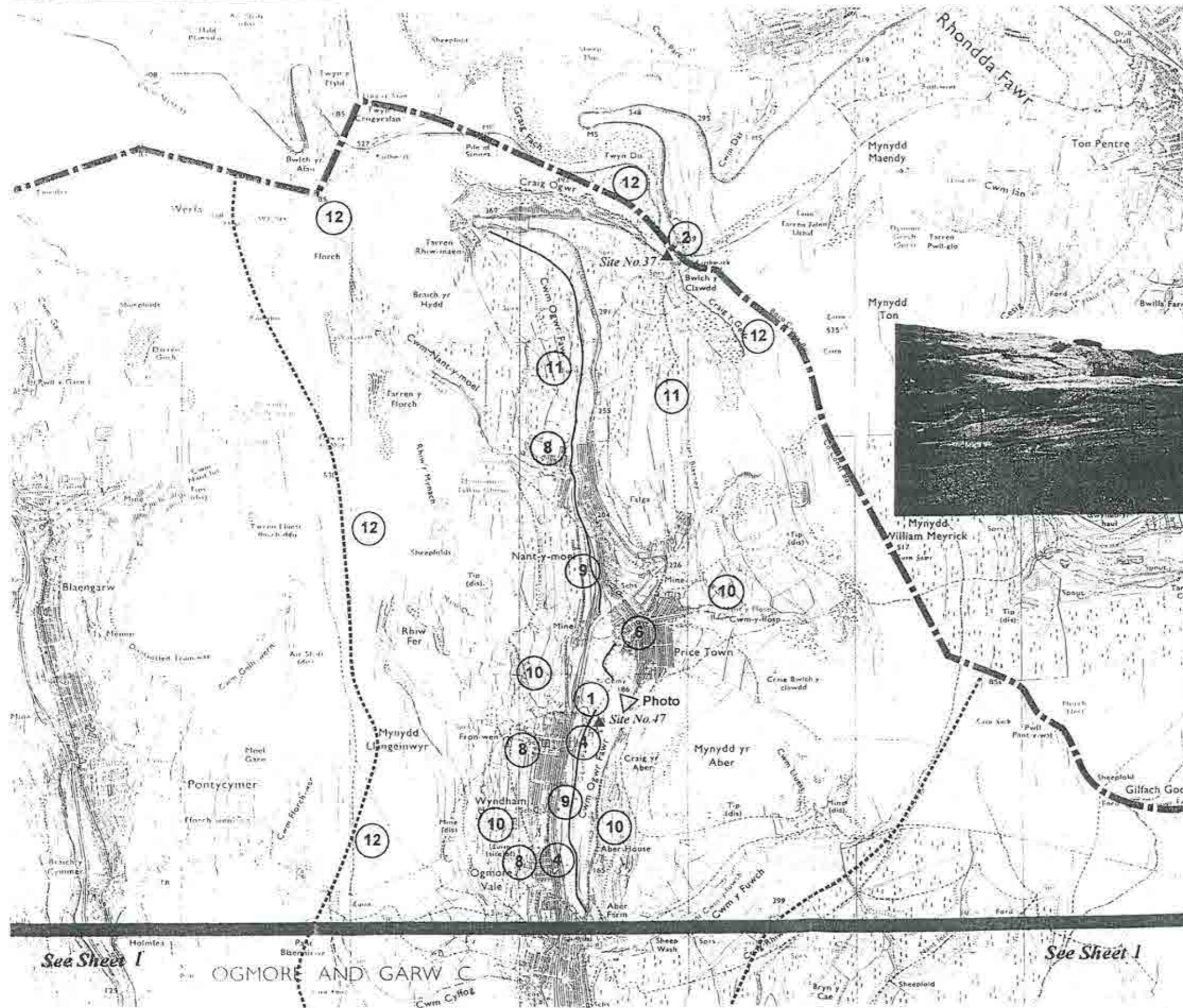


Figure LS15 - (Sheet 1)
**OGWR FAWR
AREA STRATEGY**





VISION

The strategy seeks to create an improved valley floor landscape which will build on existing initiatives to transform the valley from a post industrial area in decline to a positive place to live. The core of the valley needs an integrated plan including the open space at Pricetown, Wyndham Industrial Estate and the Washeries to create a bold, visually exciting series of spaces sub-dividing the valley floor with strong lines of vegetation to create variety and screen detractors. The spaces will be linked by the spine of the river and community route. This will build on the Ogwr Groundwork masterplan. The strategy seeks to visually and physically integrate the valley settlements into the valley landscape by planting on valley sides, by the river, on the community route and on roads. The natural asset of the Bwlch will be utilised to create a view point to observe the continuing transformation of the valley. The nature conservation value of present fragments of landscape both in the valley and tops within forestry will be enhanced by proposed planting and appropriate management and linkage of patches.

STRATEGY

- 1 Build on Groundwork (Ogwr masterplan for core valley spaces to create vision of linked spaces in ground design visible from the Bwlch
- 2 Develop a viewing platform and bridge at the Bwlch with interpretation
- 3 Modify the Washeries reclamation scheme to create a naturalistic valley floor open space using the extensive regeneration and developing an accessible yet ecologically valuable river course. Soften conifer plantation edges with broadleaves in places.
- 4 Carry out improvements to properties and smallholding boundaries visible from the community route footpath/cycleway
- 5 Improve access to the community route with footpath/cycleways and bridges where necessary.
- 6 Improve signage, interpretation and street furniture on road approaches.
- 7 Implement environmental improvements to Lewistown and Pant-yr-awel housing and community facilities as part of a community initiative and improving the roadside image
- 8 Integrate settlement into the valley landscape and with the valley side forestry
- 9 Implement river course improvements improving riparian habitat and access along and to river edge [in conjunction with water quality improvements and major rubbish clearance], linking open space and undertaking knotweed control.
- 10 Improve nature conservation value and continuity of habitats on valley sides in conjunction with CCW, WOAD and Coed Cymru including improved management of grassland and hedgerows, control of bracken on marginal agricultural land, control of grazing in woodland and planting where appropriate.
- 11 Soften forest edges with broadleaf planting. Optimise value of habitat fragments within coniferous woodland glides and rides
- 12 Retain open moorland vegetation cover



REFERENCES

- Design Guidelines Volume 2: 10, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16.
 Bibliography: Groundwork Ogwr, Ogmore Valley Community Parkway

Figure LS15 - (Sheet 2)
**OGWR FAWR
 AREA STRATEGY**



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Steep sided valleys of Ogwr Fach and Ogmore [60m AOD] run to the south of upland Coalfield plateau of Mynydd Maesteg and Mynydd Maendy [400m AOD]. Steep re-entrant valley of Dimbath runs into Ogwr Fach. Mynydd y Gaer lies to the south [295m AOD]. Glacial deposits occur on upper valley sides with alluvial and glacial sand and gravel deposits on main valley floors.

Attractive rural character of predominantly improved pasture, Grade 4 on valley sides and bottom, with scattered settlement. Hedged field boundaries and high quality woodlands [Blackmill]. Uplands are acid grassland Grade 5.

Significant bracken cover on Mynydd y Gaer.

River Ogwr Fach, Ogmore and Dimbath run on natural courses for the majority of their length although flood defence work has been carried out on Ogwr Fach. Significant riparian vegetation including wetland and woodland in places.

Post-industrial settlement at Evanstown creates a poor quality environment. Other settlements are essentially rural in character although there is small scale but intrusive industrial development at Blackmill.

Coniferous woodland on upper slopes with abrupt linear edges adjoining agricultural land.

KEY ISSUES

The area is a very attractive landscape with pleasant settlement.

The landscape structure of hedgerows and woodlands are declining through current management practice.

Woodlands are grazed by sheep leading to lack of understorey and regeneration. However, in the woodland SSSI's south of Blackmill grazing is an essential part of the woodland's character and bird, lower plants and oak dominance is retained. Here Coed Cymru are liaising with the commoners and owners to enclose parts of the woodland for defined periods of time to allow regeneration.

Straight coniferous woodland edges form an abrupt and disruptive visual element in the landscape.

Forestry, agricultural grassland improvement and farming practices have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest.

Inappropriate grassland management has resulted in bracken invasion and structural uniformity. On Mynydd y Gaer this supports one of only 5 populations of High Brown Fritillary butterfly [a protected species]. Therefore bracken should be retained in this area.

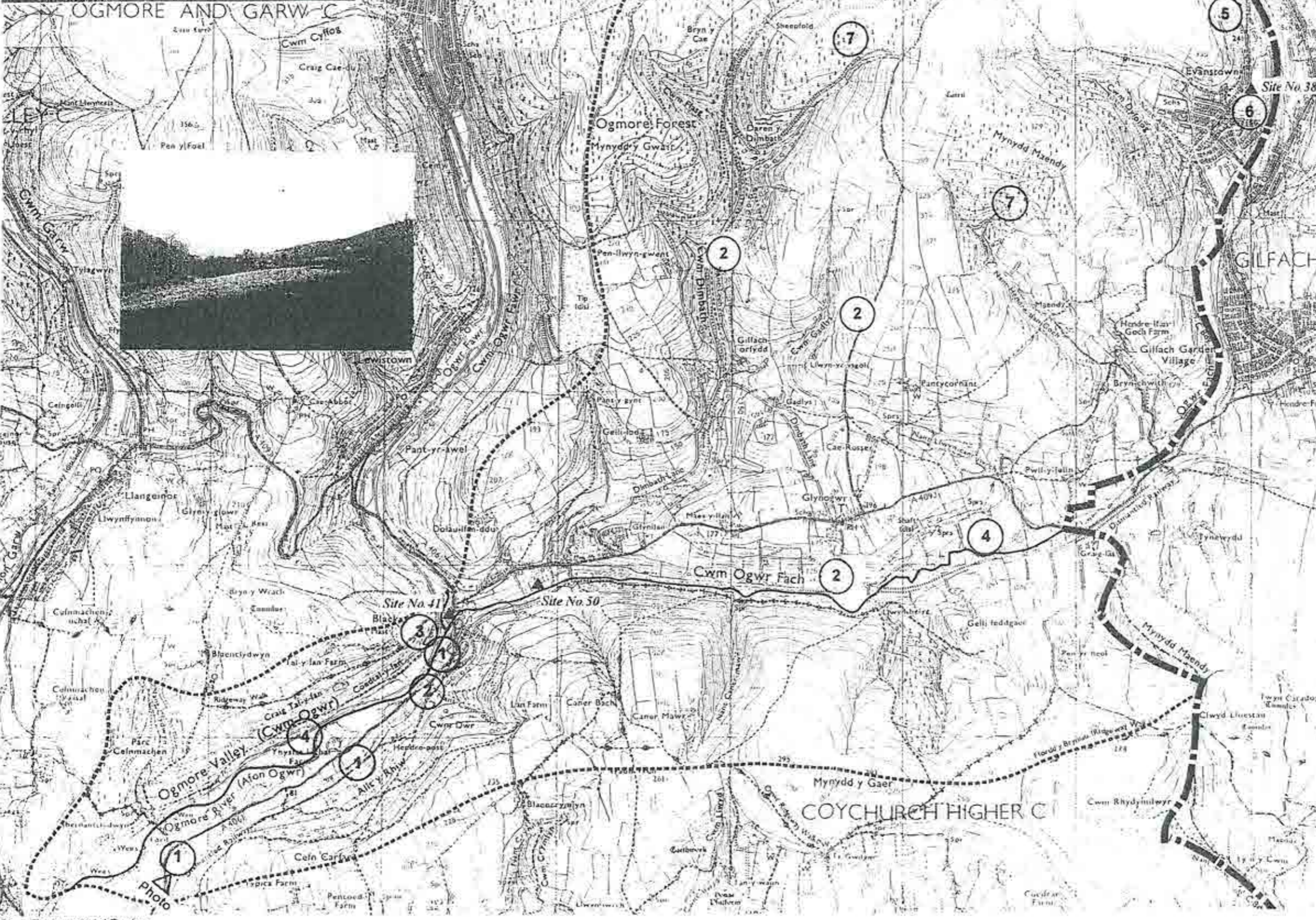
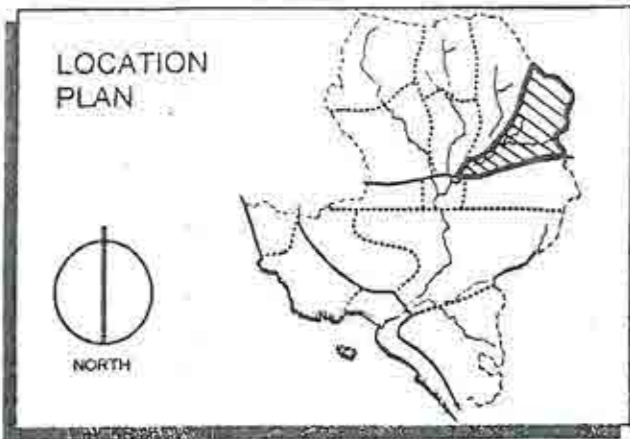
Road approaches are generally positive. Industrial Estate on A4093 at Blackmill is a detractor and laybys are untidy.

The rivers are generally on their natural courses and are used for fishing. Canoeing is possible on the Ogmore. The courses are affected by knotweed and litter from upstream.

The Ogwr Ridgeway passes through the area reaching the valley floor at Blackmill. The village does not exploit its assets or potential for low key recreation.

Evanstown has socio economic and environmental problems and a marginal position in the borough.

Figure LS16
OGWR FACH
AREA STRATEGY



VISION

The strategy seeks to conserve and enhance the landscape quality of the area and promote positive rural land management in woodlands and enhancing field boundaries. It seeks to optimise the nature conservation value of the river valleys and upland forestry and acid grassland areas. Recreational access along the watercourses (where there is not a conflict of interest) and to the uplands will be supported. Blackmill will be improved as gateway to the valley and a recreational node for countryside access. Evanstown will be improved through treatment of its setting and spaces.

STRATEGY

General

Conserve the enclosed landscape character of the area through woodland and hedgerow management and planting in partnership with Bridgend County Borough, farmers and landowners.

Encourage farm management for nature conservation. Measures to include hedgerow planting and management, positive woodland management and enclosure, grassland diversification and bracken control. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors.

Specific sites/areas

- 1 Improve road approaches in key locations such as Blackmill and improve signage to aid sense of identity.
- 2 Access for walkers and cyclists (on community and subsidiary routes) along river corridors and to uplands to be improved by agreement and management. [See Volume 3 Site no.48]. Opportunities for canoeing to be investigated.
- 3 Blackmill to be improved to become recreational node for countryside access and gateway to the valleys.
- 4 Clean up rivers removing knotweed and litter once similar initiatives upstream are nearing completion.
- 5 Consider hardwood and softwood forestry on the slopes of Mynydd Maesteg to improve the landscape setting of Evanstown.
- 6 Implement improvement strategy of Evanstown with community initiatives.
- 7 Diversify conifer plantation structure and accommodate broadleaves to improve visual appearance and enhance nature conservation value.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2 DGI 2.7, 8, 9, 10, 17

Figure LS16
**OGWR FACH
 AREA STRATEGY**

CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are

Broad valley at the southern edge of the Coalfield plateau falling from east to west [70m AOD] towards Pyle and dominated by opencast coal workings. Mynydd Baeden to the north rises to 243m AOD while, to the south, the Millstone Grit ridge on which Cefn Cribwr perches reaches 132m. The reclaimed spoil tip of Park Slip nature reserve terminates the valley to the east rising to 119m AOD.

The valley bottom consists of reclaimed or current open cast workings. Recently completed reclaimed areas seek to mirror an agricultural landscape of pasture, hedgerows and woodland belts.

The valley sides consist of Grade 4 improved grassland enclosed by a network of hedgerows and broadleaf woodland strips with some conifer plantations. Some extensive areas of species rich marshy grassland and wet heath, both of high nature conservation value, are present. The incised side valley of Craig yr Aber is well wooded.

The semi-urban linear settlements of Cefn Cribwr and Kenfig Hill are prominent on ridge top. Other settlement is rural and scattered.

The industrial archaeological remains of the Bedford ironworks and coke ovens on the Dyffryn, Llynfi and Porthawl Railway [DLPR] are of significant interest and have recently been restored.

KEY ISSUES

The opencast site though unsightly, has permission and will be restored to reflect the surrounding pastoral landscape.

Cefn Cribwr and Kenfig Hill are highly visible settlements and are unsightly in parts.

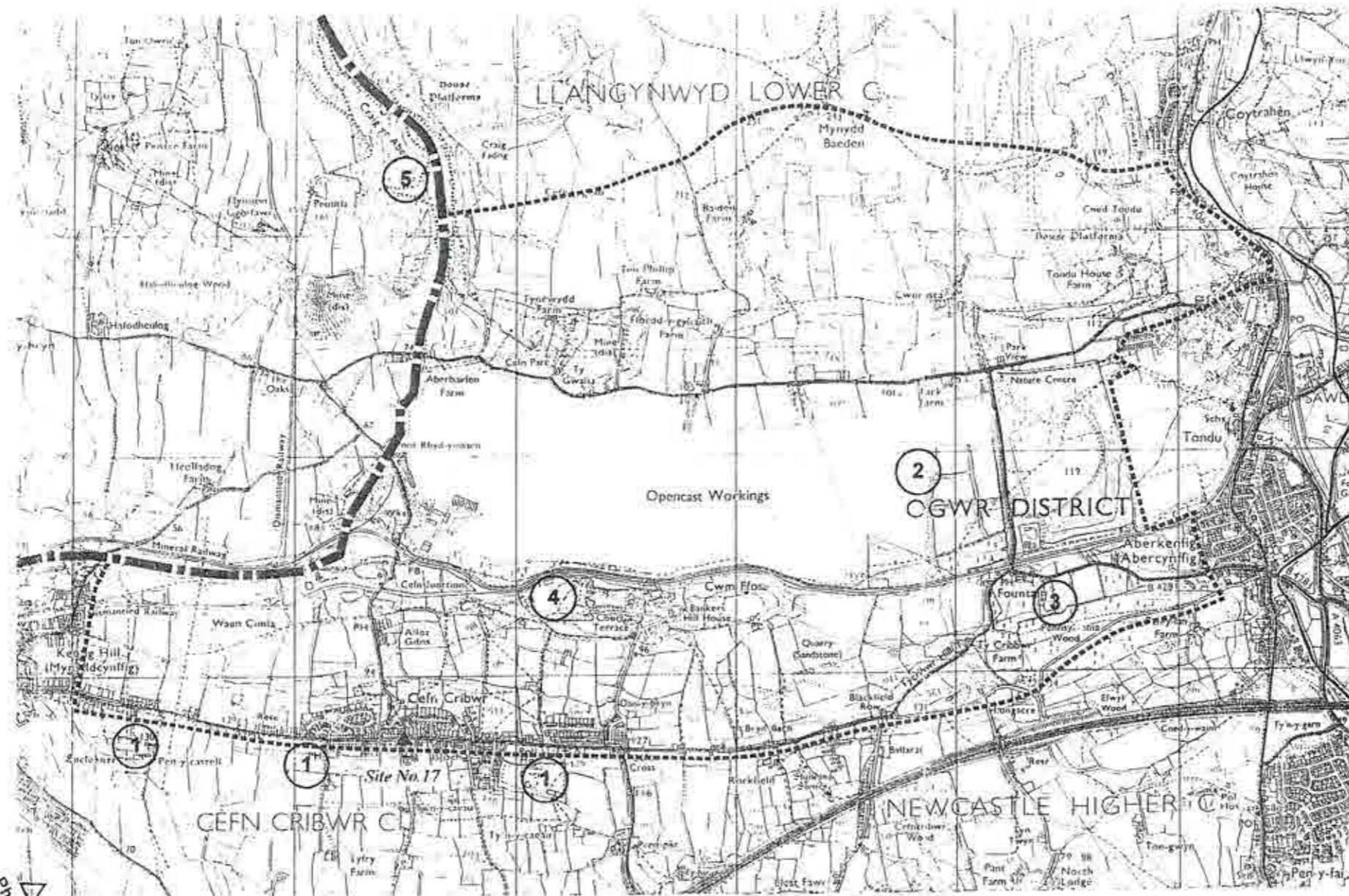
Agricultural grassland improvement and farming practices such as grazing of woodland and intensive hedgerow management have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest.

The lowland semi-natural wet grassland and wet heath are of significant ecological value.

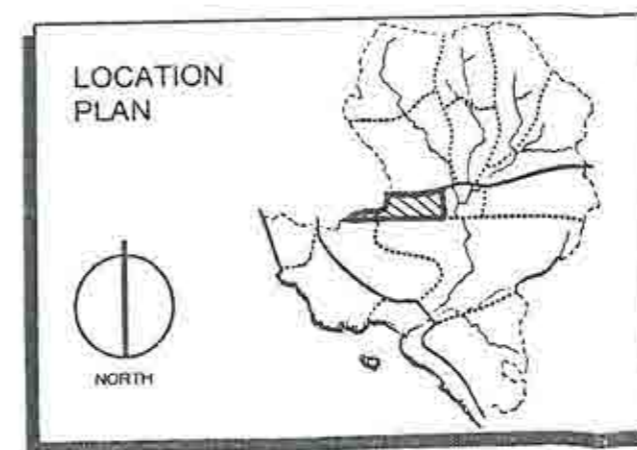
East-west access for walkers and cyclists is good along the new community route on the DLPR line but poor north-south because of the open cast workings. Improved links are desirable across the reclaimed area.

Nant Craig yr Aber is polluted by unsightly ferruginous deposits from the disused workings to the north [not in borough] resulting in poor water quality.

Positive assets include the Park Slip Nature Reserve and restored Bedford Works.



Photo



VISION

The strategy seeks to promote positive rural land management to create a strong landscape structure to integrate settlements and other disparate unsightly elements. It will optimise nature conservation value of field boundaries, woodlands and poorly drained grassland. Areas of value will be conserved.

STRATEGY

General

Improve the landscape character of the area to create a robust landscape structure through woodland and hedgerow management and planting in conjunction with BCBC, farmers and landowners.

Encourage farm management for nature conservation. Measures to include hedgerow planting and management, positive woodland management and enclosure, grassland diversification and wet area conservation. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors in consultation with BCBC, farmers and landowners.

Specific sites/areas

- 1 Integrate ridgetop settlements including Cefn Cribwr.
- 2 The strategy supports the approach of the open cast coal reclamation of reflecting the pattern of the surrounding landscape.
- 3 Diversification of conifer plantation with other habitats.
- 4 The strategy supports community route provision on the DLPR line [see Volume 3 Site no.48].
- 5 Clean up Nant Craig yr Aber to become a landscape asset.

REFERENCES

- Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG8, 9, 10, 18.
- Bibliography: British Coal/Opencast Executive [1989]

Figure LS17
CEFN CRIBWR RIDGE
AREA STRATEGY



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Confluence of three rivers: the Ogmore, Garw and Llynfi at around 10m AOD at the southern edge of the Coalfield Plateau. The rivers join before flowing through a gap in the prominent, narrow East/West running Millstone Grit Ridge which rises to 130m AOD on either side. The valley bottom consists of alluvial deposits adjacent to rivers and glacial sands and gravels and boulder clay on valley sides.

The valley sides and bottom are dominated by sprawling post 70's development either residential [Sarn, Bryncthin] or industrial [Brynmwyn, Abergarw] which swamps the older 19th Century village pattern leaving residual urban fringe pasture in gaps.

The pasture is poorly drained with deteriorating field boundaries. There is horse and sheep grazing. The characteristics of the common of Cefn Hirgoed to the east is reflected in the pasture north of Sarn Services.

The rivers run along the backs of development and are separated from much of the road network. Riparian vegetation and localised floodplain farmland does occur and is most prominent close to the M4.

Significant industrial heritage site at Tondy Ironworks which lies on the Dyffryn Llynfi Porthcawl railway [DLPR]. The important junction at Tondy is still operational.

There is disturbed land awaiting reclamation and development at Tondy.

KEY ISSUES

The area projects a very poor image as gateway to the valleys when viewed from approach roads. This includes:

- Views of backs of housing at Sarn and Aberkenti from A4063
- Poor frontages and roadside treatment on the A4061 to the Ogmore and Garw
- Poorly managed pasture adjacent to both roads

Sprawling settlement, the indirect road system and poor signage makes the legibility of approaching the valleys indistinct and leads to confusion of direction.

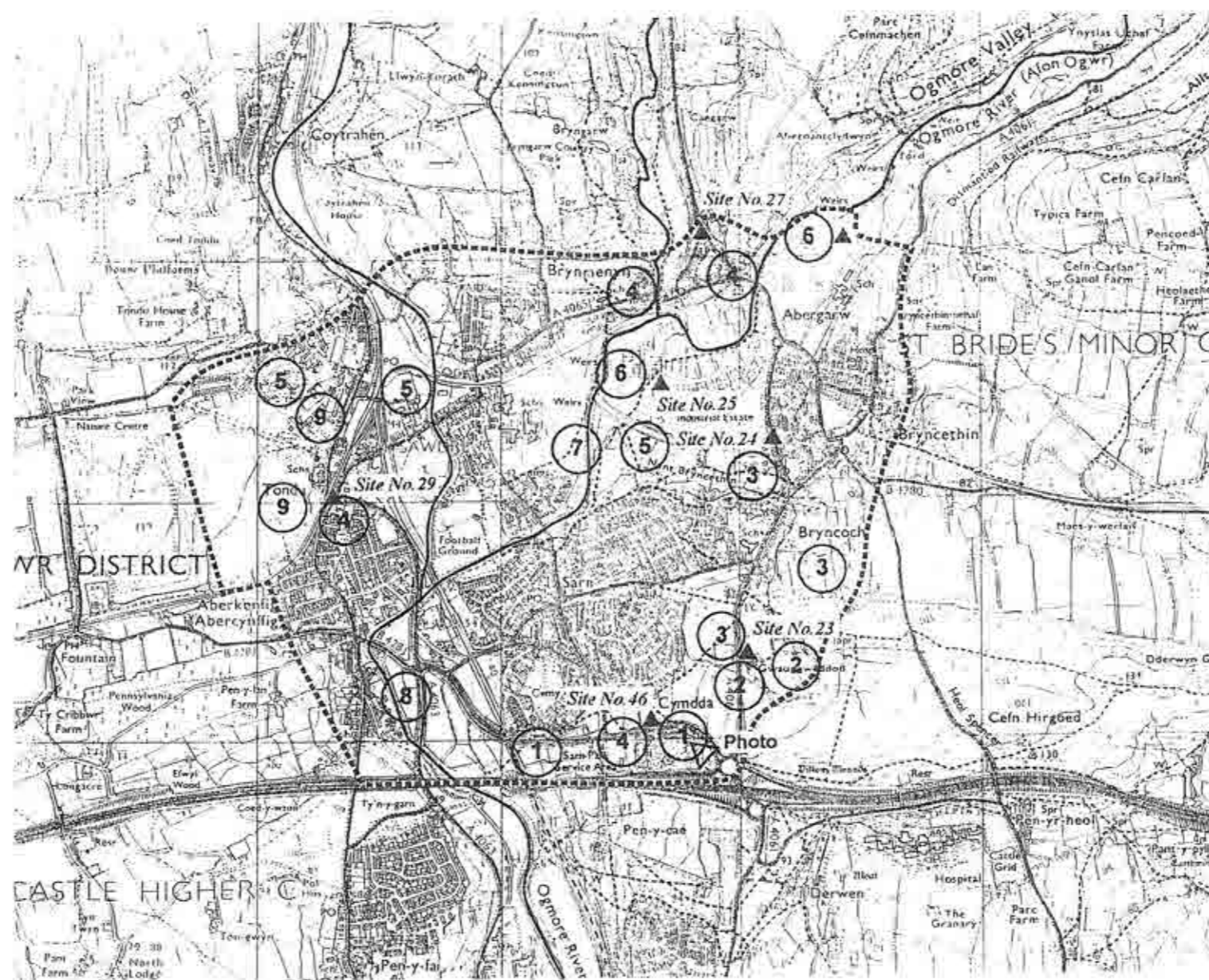
Urban fringe improved pasture has limited nature conservation value and is poorly managed with deteriorating boundary hedges and grazing by horses and sheep.

The area is the focus of access/recreational routes linking the Valleys with the rest of the borough as well as the east/west Ogwr Ridgeway. The implementation of the network has been started.

The rivers are used for the access network. They are still hidden within the semi-urban fabric.

Development is poorly integrated into the landscape. Abergarw industrial estate is encroaching on the Ogmore Valley landscape and proposed development at Cefn Hirgoed and the Bryncthin bypass will have significant impact on the exposed landscape.

There is a significant opportunity at Tondy for positive development incorporating the industrial heritage site.



VISION

The strategy seeks to promote a positive and legible image of the valley gateway area integrating development with the landscape on the approach roads. The access network will be promoted in conjunction with open space provision to optimise connections with the rest of the borough. Land management will optimise nature conservation value of field boundaries, woodlands and improved grassland. Development of Tondy will be supported to improve the Llynfi gateway and to retain industrial heritage interest.

STRATEGY

1. Create positive road frontage on A4063 through highway planting and hardworks at junctions and facilitating potential development fronting the road at Cymdda.
2. Implement roadside improvements to A4061. Incorporate design guideline approach to new road design to fit road into common landscape.
3. Improve management of urban fringe farmland for nature conservation including hedgerows and woodlands.
4. Improve signage and information provision at roadsides.
5. Implement all community routes [see Volume 3 site no 48] and facilitate subsidiary access routes with strong landscape infrastructure.
6. Implement strong landscape infrastructure associated with the river corridors on employment sites at Brynmwyn and Abergarw [see DG 19].
7. Investigate access to rivers for recreation such as canoeing in agreement with other interests such as angling.
8. Optimise nature conservation potential for river habitat provision.
9. Develop Tondy site as a pilot project for development following best practice in maximising resource efficiency and incorporating Iron Works site.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 19.

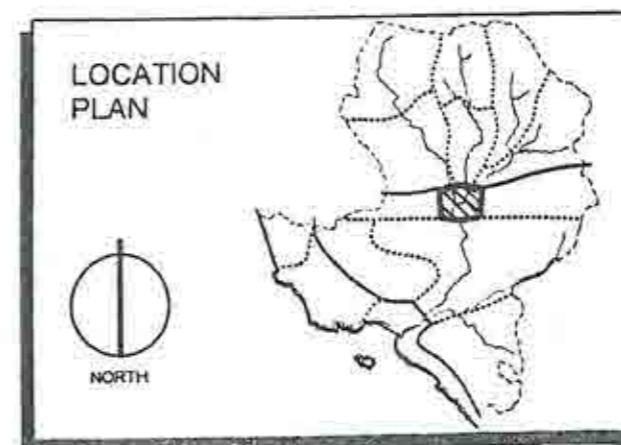


Figure LS18
**BRYNMWYN CONFLUENCE
AREA STRATEGY**



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Distinctive exposed broad plain of poorly drained common [Grade 5] and agricultural land [Grade 4] at the southern edge of the Coalfield plateau falling gently both east and west from a high point at Dderwyn Goppa at around 100m AOD towards Pencoed and Bryncoch respectively. Mynydd y Gaer to the north rises steeply to 295m AOD while, to the south, the narrow Millstone Grit ridge, Cefn Hirgoed, reaches 142m AOD. Mynydd y Gaer is dissected with several incised valleys the most prominent of which is Nant Crymlyn which drains east to the Ewenny.

Settlement consists of scattered farmsteads and the small post industrial settlement at Heol-y-Cyw. The isolated and anomalous Rockwool factory with it's tall chimney at Wern Tarw dominates the area.

The upland of Mynydd y Gaer consists of open acid grassland with significant bracken invasion while the slopes support improved grassland. In the valley bottoms, semi natural broadleaved woodland blocks are found where grassland improvement has not been successful.

Low lying land around Bryngwenith and Ty-chwith consists of unimproved and species rich grassland in a mosaic of wet woodland with sunken trackways.

Hirwaun Common support areas of improved grassland and extensive areas of rush pasture defined by weak field boundaries of scattered scrub and low trees.

The steep scarp face of Cefn Hirgoed has a land cover of impoverished acid grassland with extensive bracken and gorse invasion.

KEY ISSUES

The open, exposed character of the Common is sensitive to development which is highly visible.

The Rockwool factory with it's tall chimney is unsightly and visible from a wide area, including the M4 suggesting 'dirty' industry is still prevalent in the valleys. It is an anomaly within what is a predominantly rural area.

Farming practices such as grazing of woodland and poor hedgerow management have degraded the quality of the landscape in parts, particularly the common.

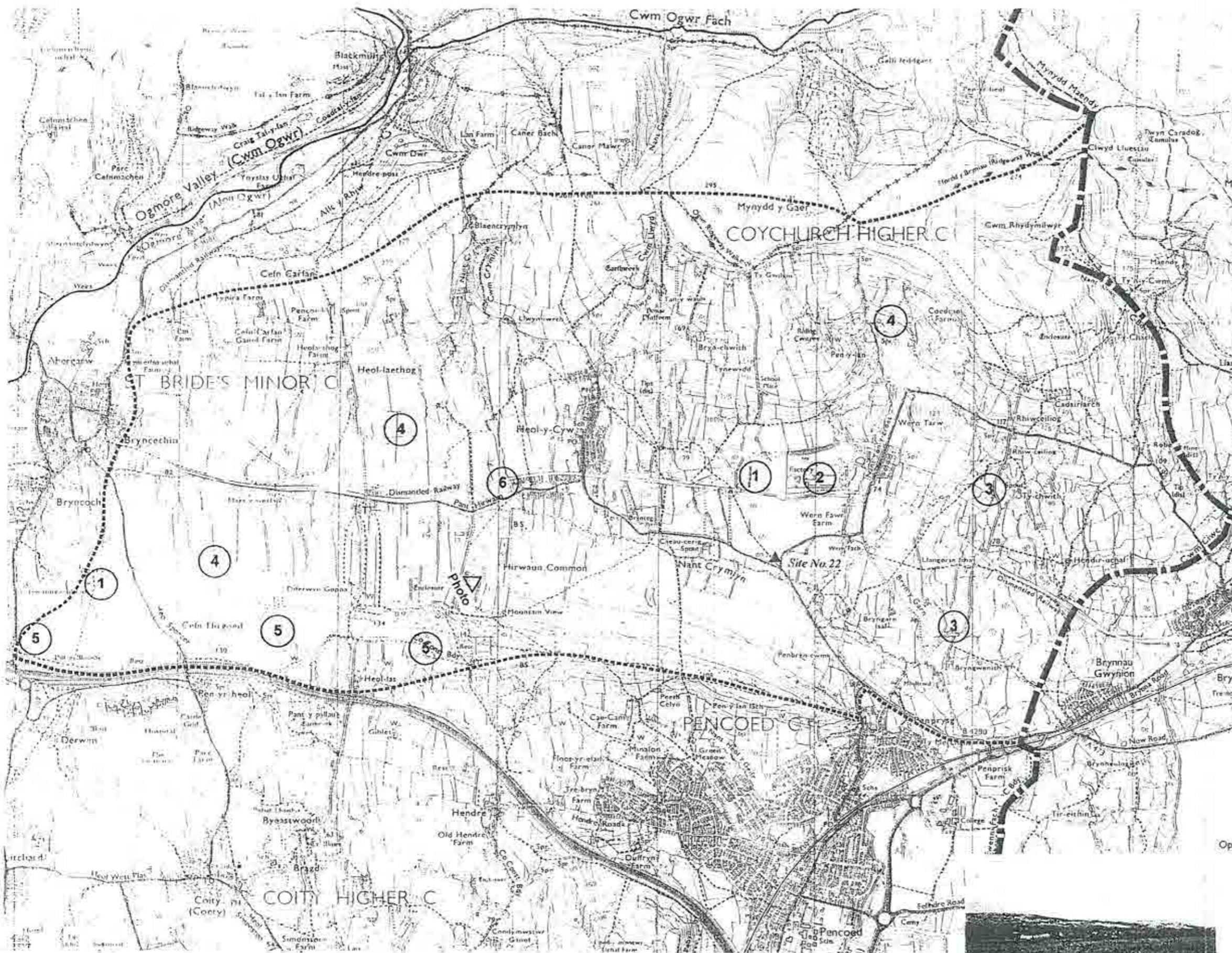
The lowland unimproved wet grassland and woodland mosaic around Bryngwenith and Ty-chwith is of significant ecological value.

Agricultural grassland improvement and farming practices such as grazing of woodland and hedgerow management have reduced areas of significant nature conservation interest to localised fragments except in the above area.

Inappropriate development such as agricultural seeding on a new water pipeline on Cefn Hirgoed has caused an unnecessary scar on the semi-natural vegetation cover. This is symptomatic of the lack of care accorded to this area.

Superb views are possible from Mynydd y Gaer where the Ogwr Ridgeway path runs.

The proposed development off the A4061 will have a major impact on the Cefn Hirgoed landscape.



VISION

The strategy seeks to promote positive rural land management to optimise landscape quality but which is sensitive to the areas distinctive character. Development should respect this character and be integrated carefully. Areas of nature conservation value particularly around Bryngwenith will be protected and conserved. The value of field boundaries, woodlands and improved grassland will be enhanced.

STRATEGY

- 1 Large scale development will have a major impact on the landscape. Should development occur, integrate carefully into landscape as per relevant design briefs. Should development not occur improve nature conservation value of sites.
- 2 Create robust landscape structure to integrate Rockwool factory into the surrounding landscape.
- 3 Consider nature conservation designation of Bryngwenith and Ty-chwith area.
- 4 Encourage farm and common management for nature conservation. Measures to include hedgerow planting and management, positive woodland management and enclosure, grassland diversification and selective bracken control. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors.
- 5 Reinststate water pipeline route to appropriate standard allowing regeneration.
- 6 Implement community route on dismantled railway [see Volume 3 Site no.48].

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG2, 5, 9, 10, 20

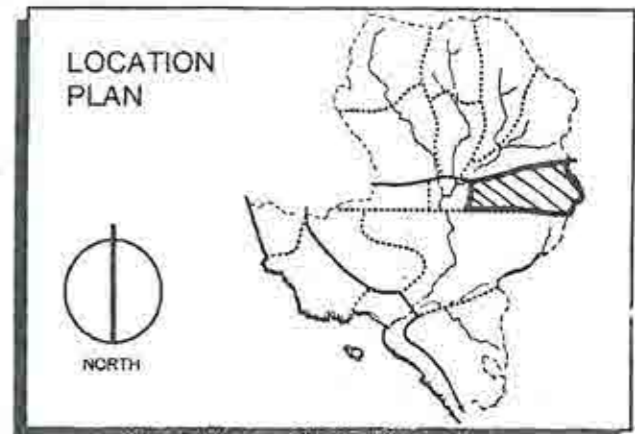


Figure LS19
**HIRWAUN COMMON
 AREA STRATEGY**



VISION

The strategy seeks to enhance and conserve the diverse landscape resource of the economic centre of the the borough. Key approaches and employment sites will be upgraded to accommodate development and to improve the image of the borough and raise the standard of landscape treatment. The strategy seeks to conserve and enhance the nature conservation value of the river valleys and promote positive rural land management in woodlands, field boundaries and on improved grassland. Recreational access along the rivers will be sought to create a network of open space corridors.

STRATEGY

- 1 Improve road and rail approaches in key locations such as A473 and improve signage to aid sense of identity.
- 2 Implement improvement strategy of employment sites particularly on A473 and at Brackla
- 3 Access for walkers and cyclists (on community and subsidiary routes) to be improved particularly along the river corridors by agreement and management. Opportunities for access to the river and for canoeing to be investigated.
- 4 Clean up rivers removing knotweed and litter once similar initiatives upstream are nearing completion.
- 5 Conserve the enclosed landscape character of the area particularly, the Coity and Coychurch areas, through woodland and hedgerow management and planting in conjunction with farmers and landowners.
- 6 Conservation of, enhancement and consolidation of existing areas of woodland and grassland habitat of nature conservation interest, minimising loss of semi-natural vegetation.
- 7 Maximise nature conservation value of field boundary woodland strips and improved grassland and introduce additional wildlife habitats.
- 8 Protect rural character and integrity of river corridor of the Ewenny south of the A473 and on Ewenny Moor

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DGI.2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 21
 Bibliography: Barton et al [1993]
 [Dd] and [Dd] [1995]

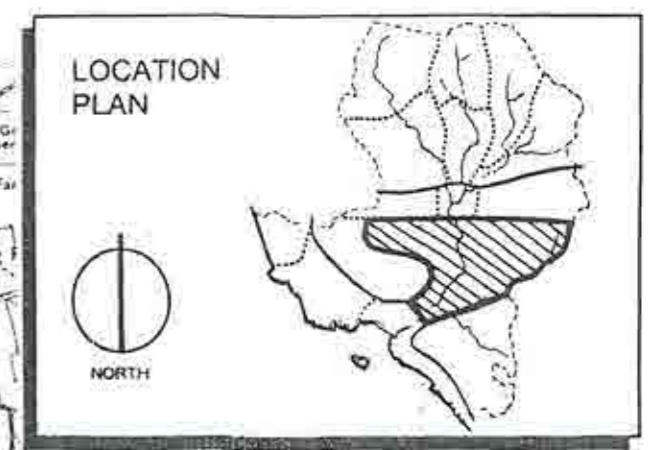


Figure LS20 - (Sheet 2)
LOWLAND VALLEYS AREA STRATEGY
 Opus

CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Gently undulating plateau around 100m AOD bounded by Pyle on lowland to the west at 40m AOD, Cefn Cribwr ridge [130m AOD] and Nant Ffornwg valley [50m AOD] to the north, falling to Laleston in the east at 50m AOD. The southern boundary is the steep scarp slope overlooking the low lying Portheawl hinterland. This softens eastwards towards Merthyr Mawr becoming incised with shallow valleys. The high ground consists of Lower Carboniferous Limestone with Mercia Mudstones to the north west and Lower Lias to the east.

Limestone quarries dominate the high ground cutting into the plateau. Though they are generally well hidden, Cornelly Quarry spills through the southern scarp slope to be visible to the west.

The eastern half of the area is under intensively managed Grade 2 arable or Grade 3 improved grassland with frequently trimmed hedgerows or walls. Blocks of woodland with conifers punctuate the landscape. Much of this is part of estate lands [Tythegston or Merthyr Mawr].

To the west, Stormy Down, dissected by the M4, has large stands of bracken and patchy scattered scrub. Cornelly Quarry has regeneration of woodland, scrub and grass.

Settlement is focussed on Pyle with large housing and industrial estates, Laleston and the hamlet of Tythegston which is a conservation area. Farmsteads are evenly scattered. The exposed airfield with ancillary buildings at Newton Down is disused.

KEY ISSUES

Extensive productive farming land has few features of nature conservation interest.

Areas of habitat interest for semi-natural grassland include Stormy Down and below Newton Down. Cornelly Quarry also has extensive areas of wildlife habitat.

Development site Local Plan ref.E8[2] on Pyle approach from M4 is pending.

Pyle Industrial Estate is a detractor visible from the main line railway.

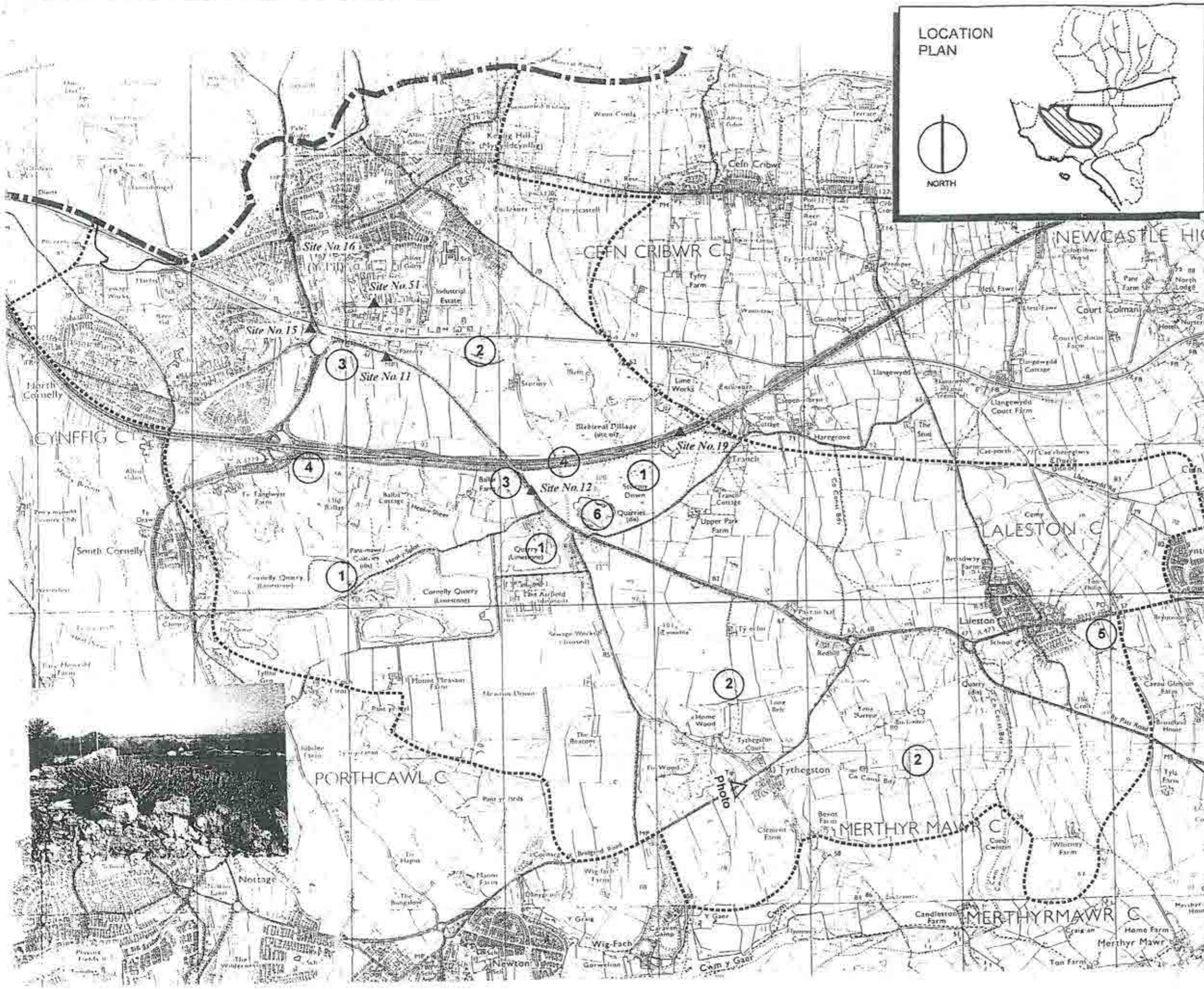
The A48 forms an access to Portheawl and Bridgend. It has localised points of unsightly frontage around Pyle and Stormy Down.

The DLPR is not expressed or used as an access route within the area mainly due to road development.

Public rights of way are scarce throughout the estate farmland which limits the recreational value of the area.

Limestone quarrying continues with working projected in an easterly direction into the plateau. Landfill at Stormy Down quarry continues to a high level.

Figure LS21
WEST LIMESTONE
PLATEAU AREA
STRATEGY



VISION

The strategy seeks to conserve the landscape character of the estate farmland with management of woodland blocks and hedges and upkeep of stone walls field boundaries. It also seeks to integrate the disturbed landscapes of the quarries by careful screening, planting and management of natural regeneration. It promotes positive rural land management to optimise nature conservation value of field boundaries, woodlands and improved grassland through diversification. Areas of nature conservation value will be conserved and enhanced. Countryside access within the area will be improved.

STRATEGY

General

Encourage positive management of countryside particularly the upkeep of stone walls and woodland blocks and hedgerows in partnership with CCW, WOAD, Coed Cymru and other relevant bodies.

Encourage farm management for diversification of wildlife habitat interest in conjunction with the above mentioned bodies. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors.

Specific sites/areas

- 1 Optimisation of semi-natural vegetation at Stormy Down and Newton Down balancing the needs of the High Brown Fritillary butterfly in the control of bracken.
- 2 Improve countryside access in agreement with landowners, including bringing DLPR into use as far as possible.
- 3 Improve A48 road approaches in key locations such as at Pyle
- 4 Retain and enhance the essentially rural character of the area when viewed from the M4.
- 5 Protect the integrity of the settlement of Laleston from Bridgend encroachment.
- 6 Minimise impact of limestone quarrying or waste fill through planting and landform and ensuring after use has optimum nature conservation and agricultural value. Maximise nature conservation value of habitats at Cornelly Quarry. Ensure quarries do not further impinge on scarp slope.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG1, 2, 9, 10, 22

Figure LS21
**WEST LIMESTONE PLATEAU
 AREA STRATEGY**



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

Gently undulating plateau around 80m AOD dissected by valley of the River Alun which narrows to a ravine at its western end, and the dry valley of Pant St. Brides. Geologically, the area is split between the carboniferous limestone of Ognore, Old Castle and Ewenny Downs to the west and lower Lias to the east. Alluvial deposits are found in the Alun valley bottom.

Limestone quarries cut into the downs. The western quarries spill through the valley sides to be visible to the west.

The eastern half of the area is under intensively managed arable [Grade 2] or improved grassland [Grade 3] with frequently trimmed hedgerows or walls towards the coast. Blocks of woodland punctuate the landscape. Much of this is part of estate lands.

To the west, Old Castle Down and Ognore down consist of acid heath, limestone heath and calcareous grassland [Grade 5] of considerable nature conservation interest. Gorse and bracken, though natural components of the vegetation cover, have increased their dominance in the last 20 years or so.

The Alun Valley north of Castle upon Alun consists of a narrow steep-sided valley with the river creating braided channels, bordered by reed swamp and woodland which are of considerable nature conservation interest.

Settlement is focussed on the small villages of St. Brides Major and Wick. Farmsteads are evenly scattered.

KEY ISSUES

The landscape character is gradually being modified by hedge and woodland management to create a less enclosed countryside with larger field sizes.

Extensive productive farming land has few features of nature conservation interest.

There are areas of habitat interest for calcareous grassland and heath including Old Castle Down and Ognore Down which are under pressure from bracken and gorse invasion.

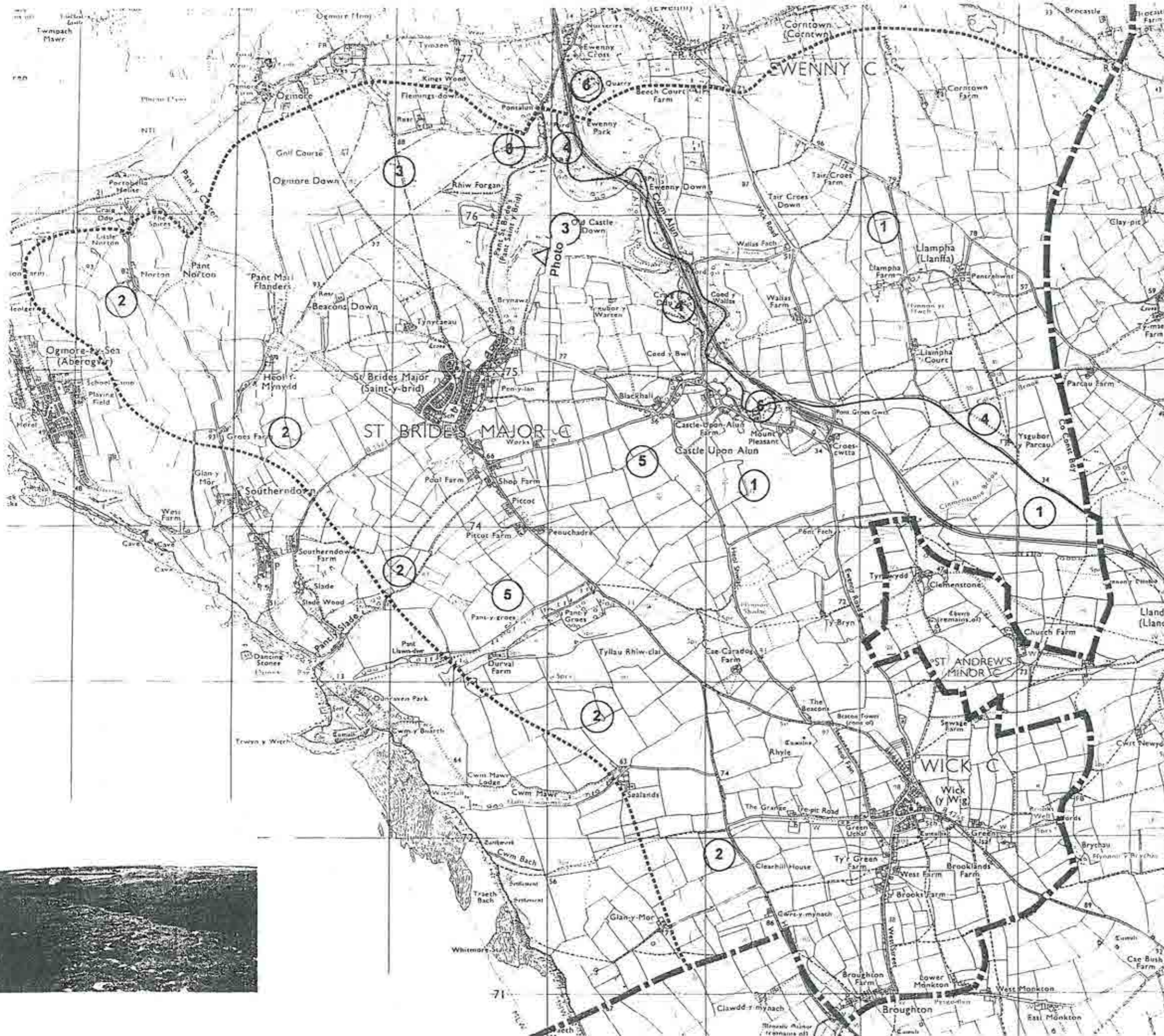
The wooded western section of the Alun valley is of considerable local conservation interest.

Inactive limestone quarries have nature conservation and geological value which would be damaged should reworking or dumping of material from other quarries occur. Existing quarries continue working into the plateau.

The area is predominantly rural with some limited dormitory housing for Bridgend attached to the villages.

There are few rights of way through farmland.

Figure LS22
VALE LIMESTONE
PLATEAU AREA
STRATEGY



VISION

The strategy seeks to create a modified rural landscape conserving elements of conservation value and creating new areas of planting and wildlife interest in accordance with farming practice. Areas of nature conservation value such as the Downs and the Alun Valley will be conserved and enhanced. Country side access within the area will be improved. Limestone extraction will be controlled to minimise impact on the landscape.

STRATEGY

- 1 Encourage farm management to create a new landscape structure based on woodland blocks in field corners, for shelter and along watercourses and roads. Diversify wildlife habitat interest. Maximise linkage and consolidate wildlife corridors.
- 2 Encourage use of stone walls as field boundaries near the coast.
- 3 Manage vegetation to maintain the high nature conservation interest including High Brown Fritillary butterfly at Ogmore Down and Old Castle Down. Management plan required.
- 4 Protect and enhance riparian vegetation of Alun Valley to maximise nature conservation value.
- 5 Improve countryside access
- 6 Minimise landscape impact of limestone quarrying. After use to be of optimum nature conservation and agricultural value, whilst maintaining access to their considerable geological interest in some cases.

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Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG9,10,23

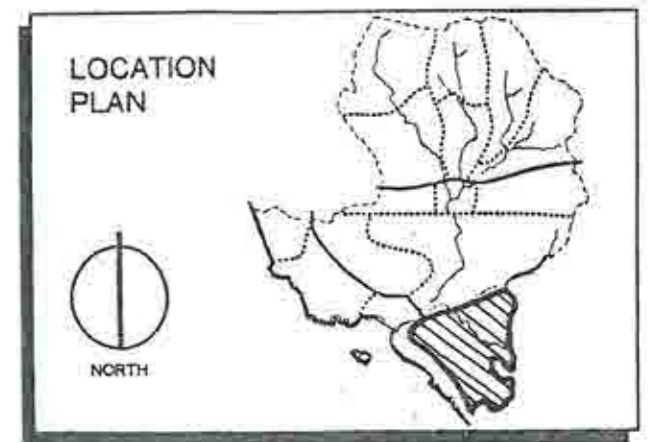


Figure LS22
VALE LIMESTONE PLATEAU
AREA STRATEGY



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

The simple topography of low coastal plateau around 20m AOD bordered by a steep scarp slope rising to 90m AOD to the north east and dunes to the east and west belies a complex geology. Lower carboniferous limestone outcrops onto the sea at Porthcawl and also forms the scarp slope. Mercian Mudstones occur between these outcrops and Aoelian sand lies to the east and west.

The tourist resort of Porthcawl dominates the area and the coastline with the most intensive use focussed on Trecco Bay to the east tailing off towards Rest Bay to the west. The settlement has developed out of the original villages of Newton and Nottage which still have small intact centres which are conservation areas.

An important feature of Porthcawl's industrial heritage as a small port, the Duffryn Llynfi and Porthcawl Railway [DLPR], has been obliterated by the A4061 approaching the centre but is still in evidence to the north running towards Pyle.

The south west facing hinterland of the settlement is the most productive agricultural land in the borough at Grade 2. Small scale fields with stone wall boundaries, fences and trimmed hedgerows form a tidy, open landscape.

The coast line west of Porthcawl consists of low limestone cliffs with maritime grassland [Locks Common] and rocky shore [Sker Rocks, Black Rocks] enclosing beaches. The Royal Porthcawl golf course hugs the coastline.

Offshore is the Nash Bank which provides some protection to the shoreline from heavy seas. The coast is experiencing net sand loss at present.

KEY ISSUES

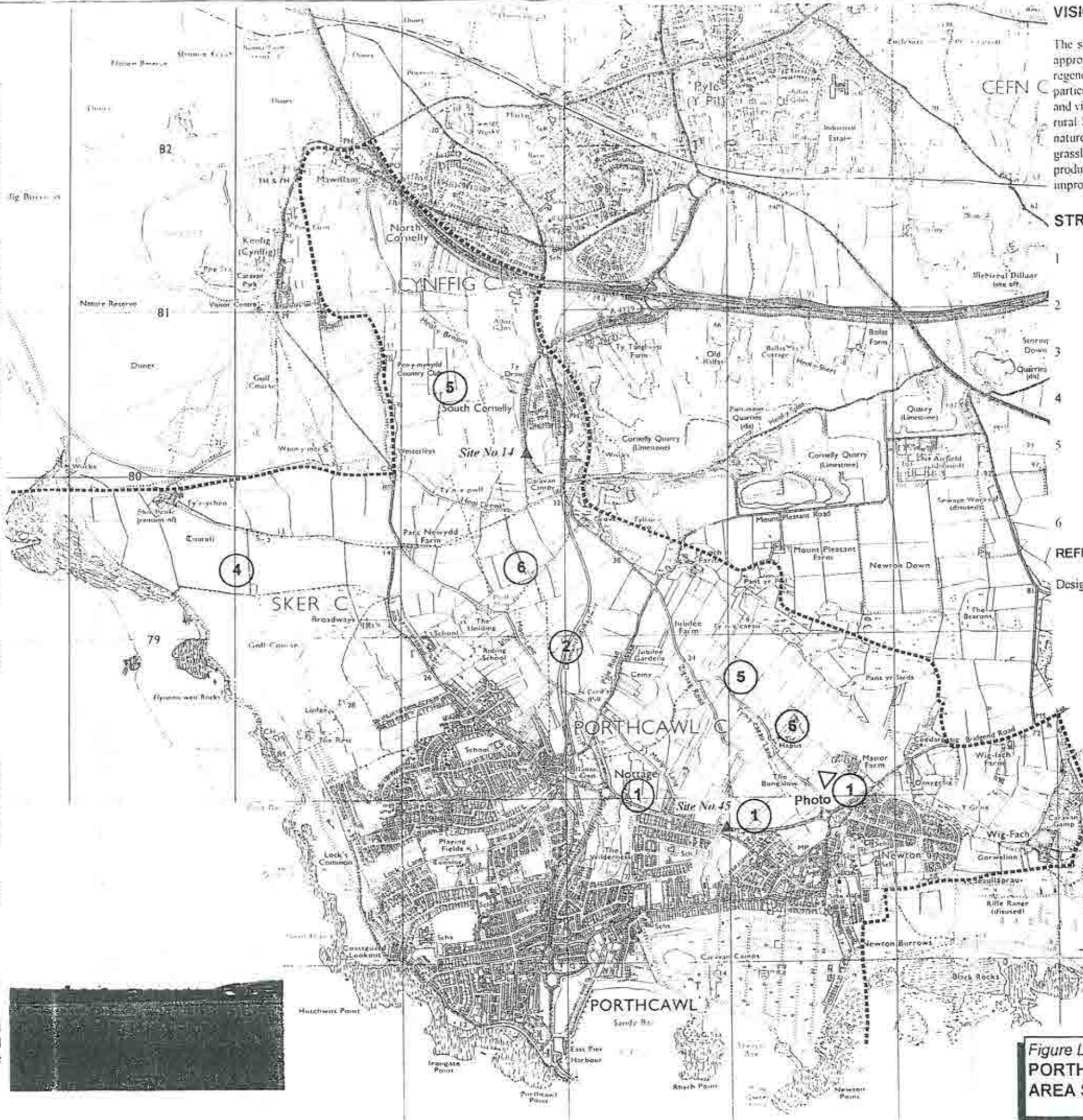
Porthcawl is important as the main tourism product of Ogwr and is key to the borough's image. The A4016 approach road is open and featureless in places and would benefit from a strong landscape treatment in addition to that already implemented. A strategy for Porthcawl is being implemented currently.

The DLPR is not expressed or used as an access route within the area mainly due to road development.

The gas holder is a local detractor.

Extensive productive farming land has few features of nature conservation interest.

Areas of habitat interest for semi-natural grassland include the semi natural grassland below Newton Down, the coastal rocky shore and maritime grassland.



VISION

The strategy seeks to promote a positive image of the approaches to the resort to aid its economic regeneration. Areas of nature conservation value particularly on the coast will be conserved and enhanced and visitor pressure concentrated on other areas. Positive rural land management will be encouraged to optimise nature conservation value of field boundaries and grassland within the constraints of the need to maximise productivity. Countryside access within the area will be improved.

STRATEGY

- 1 Improve A4061 road corridor with landscape treatment
- 2 Improve countryside access including bringing DLPR into use as far as possible
- 3 Integrate strategy with existing Porthcawl strategy for improvement.
- 4 Implement proactive grassland management in coastal area in partnership with the farmer.
- 5 Encourage farm management for diversification of wildlife habitat interest. Maximise linkage and consolidation of wildlife corridors.
- 6 Improve countryside access.

REFERENCES

Design Guidelines Volume 2: DG1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 25



Figure LS24
PORTHCAWL HINTERLAND
AREA STRATEGY



CHARACTER

The key characteristics of the area are:

The area can be divided into two distinct zones: the area around Merthyr Mawr Warren and the coastal cliff and agricultural plateau south east of Ogmores-by-Sea.

Merthyr Mawr Warren and Newton Burrows consist of wind blown sand dunes at the mouth of the River Ogmores running up to 75m AOD over Lower Carboniferous limestone and Lias which underlie the agricultural land to the north. The confluence of the Ogmores and Ewenny rivers lies to the East on mainly alluvial deposits. The steep eastern valley side rising to 85m consists of Lias overlying Limestone.

The low cliffs around Ogmores-by-Sea exhibit Oolitic and Dolomitised limestone outcrops while to the south Lower Lias occurs and superb cliffs rise to 65m AOD above extensive wave cut platforms. The plateau landform slopes gently down to these cliffs incised by narrow valleys such as Pant y Slade and Cwm Mawr.

Much of Merthyr Mawr Warren consists of both stabilised and mobile dunes. It has a varied mosaic of vegetation types including dune and calcareous grassland, dune slack and scrub woodland. Beneath the sand is extensive evidence of human settlement including Candleston Castle, dating from the Middle Ages.

The dunes are kept from further encroachment to the east by woodland of sycamore, other broadleaves and conifers protecting the village of Merthyr Mawr (a conservation area). The pastoral slopes to the north are incised with the valleys of Cwm Cwintin which is heavily wooded and Cwm y Befos.

The valley bottom is largely open grassland running down to the tidal river channel. Ogmores Castle and the western edge of Merthyr Mawr estate village are indications of the strong heritage value of this landscape. The valley side has woodland of mixed composition and calcareous grassland colonised by gorse and bracken.

The attractive and distinctive stone wall enclosed pastoral farmland (Grade 2 and 3) on the cliff tops is interspersed with a variety of woodland, scrub and grassland habitats some of a specialised coastal nature. The semi-natural wooded valleys are part of this valuable mosaic of vegetation types.

The main settlement is the village of Ogmores-by-Sea. It sprawls on the seaward slopes of the plateau (Grade 5 grazing) and is highly visible to the west. Other settlement is rural and scattered consisting mainly of limestone built structures, well integrated into the landscape. Facilities for day trippers including car parks, WCs and shops are located at Ogmores-by-Sea and Dunraven Bay.

KEY ISSUES

Merthyr Mawr is an area of international nature conservation importance as an SSSI, a proposed Special Area for Conservation and also a proposed NNR (to be confirmed). It is also designated as a Landscape of Exceptional Historic Interest and is part of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Conservation issues, sea buckthorn control in particular, therefore are paramount in the management of this valuable landscape.

The cliffs and hinterland are also part of the Heritage Coast and include geological and biological SSSIs and SNCIs.

Area designations omit locally valuable areas of contiguous habitat, connected by physical coastal processes.

The intrinsic value of the landscape and wildlife habitat are under threat from the effects of recreation pressure, coastal erosion, river-borne and tidal litter accumulation and Japanese knotweed.

Many of the area's most valuable features are maintained by complex and dynamic coastal processes.

Ogmores-by-Sea car park is a detractor at the mouth of the River Ogmores.

Facilities for visitors around the River Ogmores and Merthyr Mawr are poor considering the area's natural and historic value. These include access, parking and interpretation and signage. The potential for improving these must be balanced with conservation considerations.

VISION

The strategy seeks to optimise the nature conservation, historic, landscape and recreation value of the area by striking an appropriate balance between these sometimes conflicting aims. In particular it seeks to conserve and enhance the nature conservation value of the dunes and coastal habitats.

STRATEGY

General

Ensure that contiguous and interdependent features of nature conservation interest are represented in frameworks of site designation and protection.

Minimise threats to nature conservation interest from recreation and litter accumulation.

Specific sites/areas

- 1 Ensure conservation, enhancement and consolidation of features of nature conservation and historic interest at Merthyr Mawr, maintaining wildlife habitats of international importance as a priority.
- 2 Appraise and identify principal coastal processes and ensure they are maintained and enhanced where appropriate.
- 3 Improve access along the River Ogmore to create a link between Ogmore-by-Sea with Bridgend.
- 4 Improve tourist facilities in honeypot areas for visitors such as signage, car parking and interpretation in order to inform and protect areas sensitive to visitor pressure. Improve Ogmore-by-Sea car park facilities.

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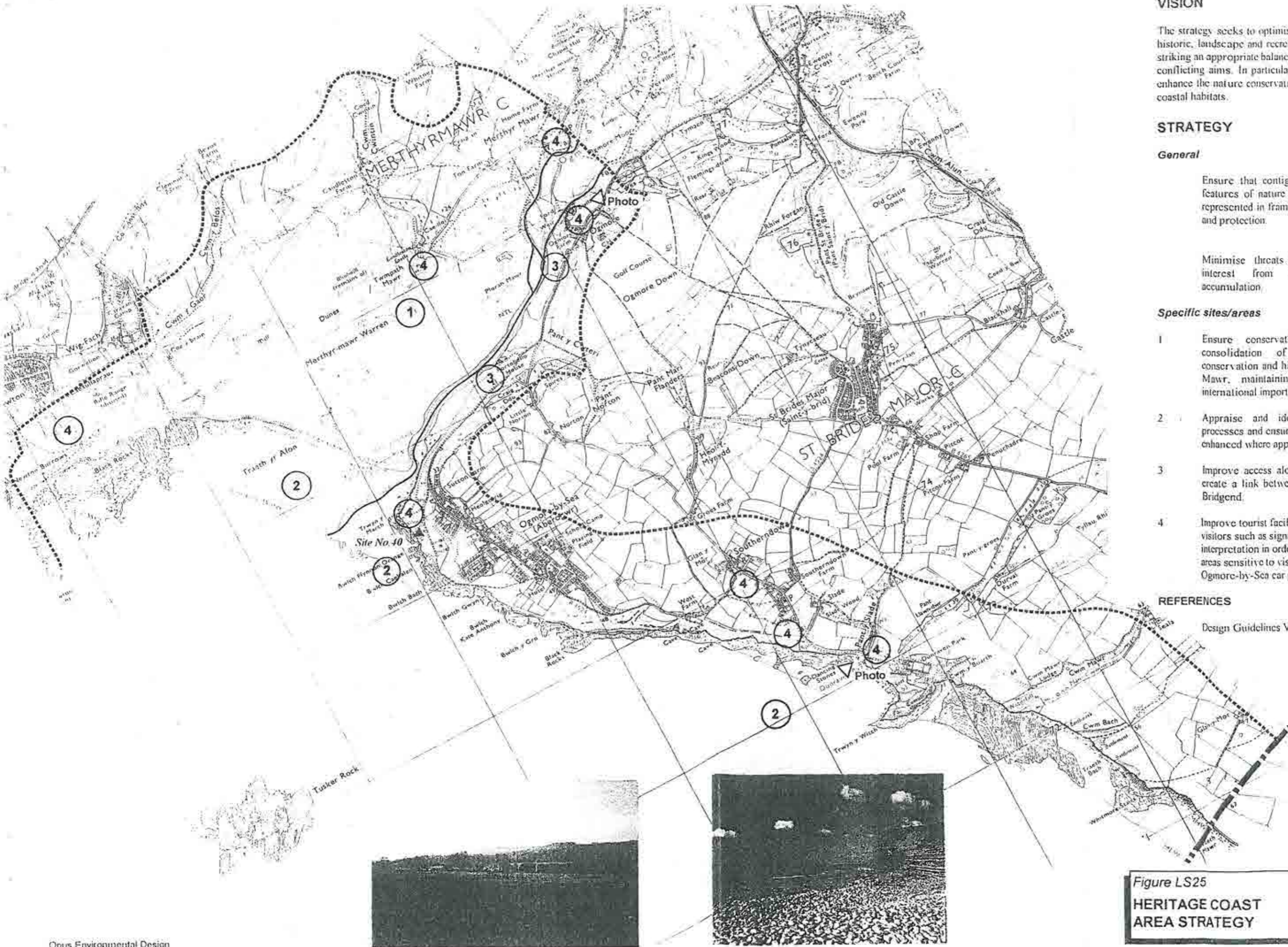


Figure LS25
HERITAGE COAST
AREA STRATEGY



*C*onclusion
SECTION 7.0

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Study Area has a diverse landscape resource from the exposed tops of the coalfield plateau through upland and lowland valley landscapes and coastal plateau to the coast with its dunes and cliffs. The study identifies fifteen landscape character areas each with their own specific identity. This resource is a positive asset which makes an important contribution to the economy of the area. It does this in terms of contributing to the quality of life which encourages people to live, work, play and invest in the borough.

The landscape strategy puts forward a vision for the County Borough which combines landscape and economic aims within the context of sustainable development. It will only be successfully achieved if an integrated and inclusive approach is taken with all the relevant agencies working together and the community being fully involved with the process.

Local Agenda 21 and Local Government Reorganisation offers a mechanism for this to happen. The new unitary authority has the principle role in conserving and enhancing the landscape. The process can be started by resourcing a Local Agenda 21 team and forum, resourcing a countryside section, addressing the special issues related to the coast and establishing a comprehensive database including information on biodiversity which will inform the environmental planning process.

Equally important, the strategy proposals can aid the planning process and enhance the quality of new development in the Study Area. This can be achieved by taking the document through the appropriate consultation processes, building key recommendations into the Unitary Development Plan and developing the rest as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Design Guidelines and Design Briefs could be of particular value in assisting development control. Through this mechanism, the Guidelines will link the protection and enhancement of the environment to the economic development process.

This strategy is relevant at this moment in time. It will take many years to be put into practice. It therefore needs to be reviewed on a regular basis as circumstances change and more information is made available.

Glossary 8.1
Bibliography 8.2

*G*lossary and Bibliography

SECTION 8.0

8.1 GLOSSARY

BCBC	Bridgend County Borough Council
BCBP	Bridgend County Borough Council Planning Section
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
EA	Environment Agency
FROG	Friends of River Ogmore
GO	Groundwork Ogwr
NRA	National Rivers Authority
Study Area	Area concurrent with Ogwr Borough Council
WDA	Welsh Development Agency
WTB	Wales Tourist Board

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