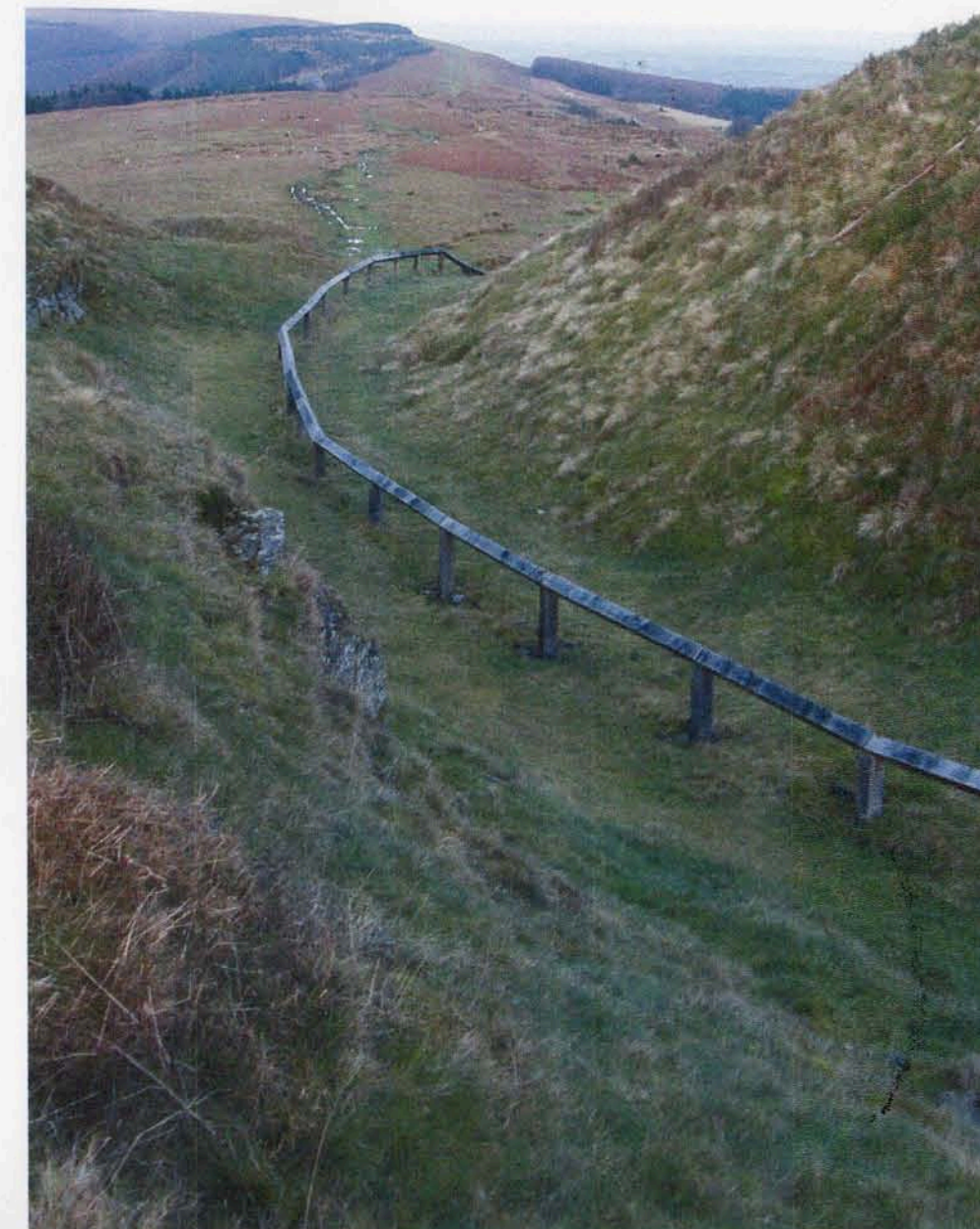


Twmbarlwm & Mynydd Maen

Scoping Study



Contents	Page Number
Executive Summary	
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 The Study Area	3
2.1 Existing Community Activity	4
2.2 Landscape Character, LANDMAP	5
2.3 Photographs and Description	
2.4 Planning Designations	<i>Appended</i>
2.5 Ecology and Biodiversity	
2.6 Historical, Heritage and Archeological	
2.7 Forestry Issues	
2.8 Countryside Access	20
2.9 Formalised Recreational Access	21
3.0 Background Information	22
4.0 Main Issues	23
5.0 Vision	24
6.0 Strategy	25
6.2 Strategy: Objective 1	26
6.3 Strategy: Objective 2	27
6.4 Strategy: Objective 3	28
6.5 Strategy: Objective 4	29
6.6 Strategy: Objective 5	30
6.7 Strategy: Objective 6	31
7.0 Costed Illustrative Proposals	32
7.3 Projects	33
7.3 Projects (<i>continued</i>)	34
8.0 Conclusion	35
Appendices	36



Executive Summary

Introduction

The Scoping Study was commissioned in early 2013 to explore the 'sustainable future management and enhancement of the upland landscape between south west Torfaen and eastern Caerphilly'

The study was undertaken by Haire Landscape Consultants Ltd

The principal authors are:

- Michael Haire: Landscape Consultant
- Steve Evison: Sustainable Development Consultant (Resources for Change)

The client representatives are:

- Phil Griffiths (CCBC): (Acting) Manager Countryside and Landscape Services
- Gareth Phillips (TCBC): Group Leader Economy and Environment

The Study Area

The Study Area comprises a significant landscape resource. The very wide range of habitats, historical features and landscape types and qualities is typical of the South Wales valleys, as is its position, being virtually surrounded by urban areas.

The landscape of the study area is predominantly upland heather moorland and grassland, bounded by steep sided valleys, some of which are forested, some more open. Views from the upland extend west across the Valleys, to the Brecon Beacons in the north and the Skirrid and Monmouthshire hills in the east. Views southwards take in the Severn Estuary in an ever changing view. Closer in, there are very clear visual links to the surrounding extensive areas of settlement, especially Cwmbran, Pontypool and Newport, particularly from the iron age hill fort, Twmbarlwm at the southern end of the study area.

Community Groups

The study area is clearly valued by the local communities and this is evidenced by the existing range of active community groups in the area. Prominent amongst these are groups dedicated to the recording, interpretation and protection of the significant archaeological resource that the area holds.

Community groups have become actively involved in managing the landscape, in particular issues surrounding landscape crime and anti-social behaviour.

Landscape character of the study area

The study assesses the landscape, based on LANDMAP, with each of the aspect areas described in detail. This process serves to illustrate the visual diversity of the area, which includes exposed upland and sheltered valleys, former mining villages and new recreational facilities.

Countryside Access

An annotated map shows the study area in its local context and illustrates the extent and quality of access from the surrounding built up areas. It identifies the existing car parks that surround the upland and describes the often constrained access from the public road network.

Recreational Access

This records the formalised recreational access opportunities within the study area, including circular walks, mountain bike trails and national cycle routes as well as cycleways and bridleways proposed under the UDPs

Review of background information

The various reports and studies identified in the brief were consulted. Many of the reference documents are design or planning guidance and the relevant information was incorporated into the consultation and strategy development process.

Consultation

Consultations were held with individuals and groups or representatives of groups before a consultation workshop was held in March 2013. The results of the consultation were considered in formulating the 'main issues' that affect the study area.

Main Issues (summary of issues arising from the desk study and consultations)

Perception: The upland does not have a single identity in the minds of most visitors. Of the different parts of the study area, Twmbarlwm is the most readily identified although it is likely that many visitors to the Cwm Carn centre would not be aware of even this nearby feature.

Landscape crime: The abuse of the open upland and some woodland areas by motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles is an ongoing problem. This is made difficult to control by the presence of the ORPA (Other Route with Public Access) in

the south and the access track to the masts and compounds on Mynydd Maen in the north. Fly tipping and arson are also perennial problems in this area.

Cwmcarn visitor centre provides information about the forest resource, it has a restaurant, shop and exhibition space and there are camping facilities, and fishing in the lake. There are established MTB (Mountain Bike) 'runs'. The centre also allows access to the forest drive. The centre is owned by Caerphilly CBC and the forest drive is operated by NRW. This relationship is not an ideal commercial 'fit'. Many locals do not use the visitor centre because there is a charge for parking and it is not obviously 'relevant' to them. Similar sentiments were expressed about the Forest Drive.

There are a number of **voluntary organisations**, three in particular are active within the study area and others have expressed an interest in being involved, particularly in the development of MTB facilities. There is a lot of interest in archaeology, which spans a long historical period.

The **historical resource** is extensive but is being diminished through damage (landscape crime) and some important features are on private land and therefore not easily accessible.

Interpretation and waymarking of the upland areas and features is weak and there is very limited positive signage. The area is currently divided into a number of locations with different themes and purposes, but with limited join up or commonality. The local authorities and user groups wish to improve recreational links through the area, there are recent examples of themed walks (Raven Walk & Cwm Lickey) and future improvements to the network are enshrined in planning policy.

There are several **Landowners** with an interest in the study area. The landowners share concerns about landscape crime and how this could spread into new areas (if access is allowed to Glyn Pits for example).

The Commoners' Association and landowners are similarly open to ideas that will resolve some of the issues and help achieve the objectives of the study, including allowing access to Glyn Pits. The Commoners are building a case for enhanced payments under Glastir, which the development of a partnership and supporting agendas for better wildlife management will support.

NRW policy and the threat of tree diseases will see significant changes to the landscape of the study area over the next few years as a result of **changes to forestry practice**. This will lead to the removal of Larch (because of *Phytophthora ramorum*) and an increase in broadleaf woodland as ancient woodland sites are restored.

A 'Vision' for the area was developed as follows:

'The historic Twmbarlwm landscape is protected, valued and well used for the benefit of local communities, visitors and biodiversity.'

Realising the Vision

The Strategy put forward is based on the philosophy that by improving positive use and access, existing negative behaviours will be 'squeezed out' of the area. This will bring a complete visitor experience and encourage local involvement in developing the vision and providing enhanced services ensuring that the area is viable in the long term. This will be achieved by a partnership working to deliver the strategy which will benefit the local economy, community, education, environment, policing and agriculture.

The study finds that the Cwm Carn Visitor Centre is an established resource but its full potential is not realised. It is ideally placed to fulfil Welsh Government objectives of 'Health, Economy and Training' within this area. This could be achieved by developing the facility as a 'hub' that supports programmes based around these themes and increases the use of the area. Developing an existing cross country link between Cwm Carn Visitor Centre and Blaen Bran serves to improve recreational access between populated areas in the eastern and western parts of the study area via the upland, including a link between the two arms of the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal.

The study identifies the following objectives to support the implementation of the Vision

- Objective 1: Improve links between settlements and across the area and provide strategic recreational signage
- Objective 2: Maximise the economic and regeneration potential of Cwm Carn visitor centre
- Objective 3: Interpretation and consolidation of the historical resource
- Objective 4: Control landscape crime, motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles
- Objective 5: Improve management and biodiversity of the upland common
- Objective 6: Involve the local community more pro-actively and improve working links between organisations

Delivery of the strategy

The physical proposals are illustrated on a 'Strategy' drawing (6.0), with detail on achieving each of the objectives. These can be summarised as follows:

Objective 1: Improve links between settlements and across the area and provide strategic recreational signage

- Review access across the common, make dedicated, usable routes following a rationalised network.
- Increase awareness of existing rights of way from adjacent settlements in the east up to the dedicated routes through waymarking and publicity.

- Improve access to the Cwmcarn visitor centre from nearby settlement areas in the east and south of the study area including along the canal.
- Improve access from Newport. This will be achieved by raising awareness of the area as a destination for existing users of the canal towpaths.
- Review 'tourism' signage from the M4 and road network.

Objective 2: Maximise the economic and regeneration potential of Cwm Carn visitor centre

- Improve the access road and arrival experience, including a review of signage and orientation for visitors. Consider the provision of a minibus to take pedestrians to the base of Twmbarlwm
- Review MTB visitor experience and consider changes to the character of the restaurant to reflect the 'great outdoors' experience.
- Review the content, layout and interpretation of the Forest drive and create a stronger link to the upland area, in the main, utilising the existing infrastructure. This review could include a change of name to reflect an emphasis on the place 'Twmbarlwm' rather than the theme 'Forest' and be associated with the wholesale removal of the Larch crop and NRW re-stocking plans.
- Review the role of the visitor Centre with a view to creating a 'Hub' that fulfils the following objectives:

1. *Health: Increase the extent and range physical activities.*
2. *Economy: Consider additional activities to compliment the existing visitor centre; ensure local produce and labour is promoted where possible. Increased visitor numbers at the centre should increase economic activity.*
3. *Training and education: Develop links with schools. Host training for colleges including NEETS, (linked with Blaen Bran Community Group). Develop links with universities, particularly for 'Life Long Learning' especially with reference to the archaeology.*
4. *Community: Provide a venue for community activities including acting as 'headquarters' for voluntary groups and community arts and theatre projects (venues within the forest).*

Objective 3: Interpretation and consolidation of the historical resource

- Establish the most relevant interpretation strategy for the area. Collate the archaeological data (primarily via community groups) and display selective information at Cwmcarn, other locations in Cwmbran and at Fourteen Locks.
- Consider development of community art as a vehicle for interpretation across the area through linked 'pieces'.
- Consider the future role of the Forest Drive and more effective ways of telling a developing story. This could involve local people, artists and crafts people.
- Engage the community through identification of local interest in the archaeology of the Penyrheol area.
- Minor works around the recently constructed Twmbarlwm car park and other satellite car parks to improve orientation signage, waymarking and interpretation

Objective 4: Control landscape crime, motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles.

Part of the reasoning of the strategy is that increasing the use of the area for conventional recreation will reduce this problem significantly by 'squeezing out' illegal activity.

- Construct a barrier at the southern end of the common, below Twmbarlwm
- Construct permanent 'linking feature' comprising stone walls with suitable barriers at the narrow part of the common to control access north-south.
- Define a rationalised network of dedicated routes across the common and through publicity and waymarking, encourage use by cyclists and pedestrians.
- Close the 'impassable' ORPA (Other Route with Public Access) through legal process.
- Introduce appropriate barriers and signage at so that motorbikes cannot access the narrow part of the common from the 'sides'.
- Introduce a permanent controlled barrier above Blaen Bran (south side) so that access is only possible east- west across the northern part of the common.
- Construct a new car park at the end of the service track (north west corner of common) with walls, gate and signage making it clear that cyclists and pedestrians are welcome but that motorised vehicles are not permitted.
- Tidy the margins of the service track, reducing its width and 'industrial' appearance
- Erect temporary fences with gates for a defined period, combined with a concerted policing effort, at the north west corner of the common and between Blaen Bran and Cwm Lickey.
- Remove temporary fences at the end of the defined period

Objective 5: Improve the land management and biodiversity of the upland common

- The common is an extension of many of the farms that surround it and all proposals must be supported by the local farming community. This will be achieved by involving the Commoners' Association in the management of the overall project. Of particular importance is the need for the proposals to support the objectives of Glastir.
- Review the existing management plan with particular reference to LBAP species and undertake cutting of heather etc to improve habitat and grazing in accordance with the recommendations. Control regenerating conifers (mainly at the southern end).
- Repair motorbike damage through regrading, seeding with locally sourced seed material and erection of temporary fences as appropriate.
- Consider the potential for an increase in the extent of wet areas (open water) within 'boggy' land along the route of the 'ORPA' or by retaining some large 'puddles' (flooded track sections)

Objective 6: Involve the local community more pro-actively

- Build on the work initiated through this study and develop a Local Management Steering Group, with a secretariat that could be hosted by a local access forum comprising the three voluntary groups, landowners, commoners' association, local authorities, CADW, Cwm Carn visitor centre and NRW.
- Blaen Bran Community Group has a proven track record of managing part of the study area. There is potential for this to be a vehicle to undertake some of the proposed works such as path construction, fencing, monitoring and training. This group could be instrumental in developing the 'hub' for the establishment of a community training programme based at Cwm Carn.
- Consider franchise mobile food outlet in the car parks on the eastern side of the study area to provide a visitor information service.
- Cwmcarn visitor centre and possibly an expanded Blaen Bran facility to act as host locations for an annual community event.
- In association with 'Cognition' and local MTB riders, develop links between the various MTB centres in the region, with a long distance, cross country link between them.
- Investigate interest in the development of a pump track in the disused Risca quarry with local youth initiatives and youth clubs.
- Consider the long term role for the Landscape Crime Officer to cover a wider remit and work with volunteers.
- The inclusion of the Commoners' Association in the management structure should ensure that all local farmers and land owners are engaged in the delivery of the proposed changes.

Means of implementation

The study concludes by identifying the principal means of implementation, recommending that the area could be funded via a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership bid. This would provide funding for the overarching strategy and some projects, with other works being funded from a variety of sources.

It also identifies ways in which community involvement can be maximised. This will involve the existing organisations such as the CTS and Blaen Bran Community Group, but will be given greater coordination and direction through the Partnership Board which would comprise members of active local organisations.

A programme of physical works and management activities is identified to allow the vision to be implemented. These are set out in a deliberate order, working from south to north, thereby protecting Twmbarlwm, where this problem has been most acute. The programme also sets out how the community organisations can contribute to the ongoing management of the area by acting as volunteer wardens or becoming involved in management operations such as path maintenance or vegetation management on the uplands

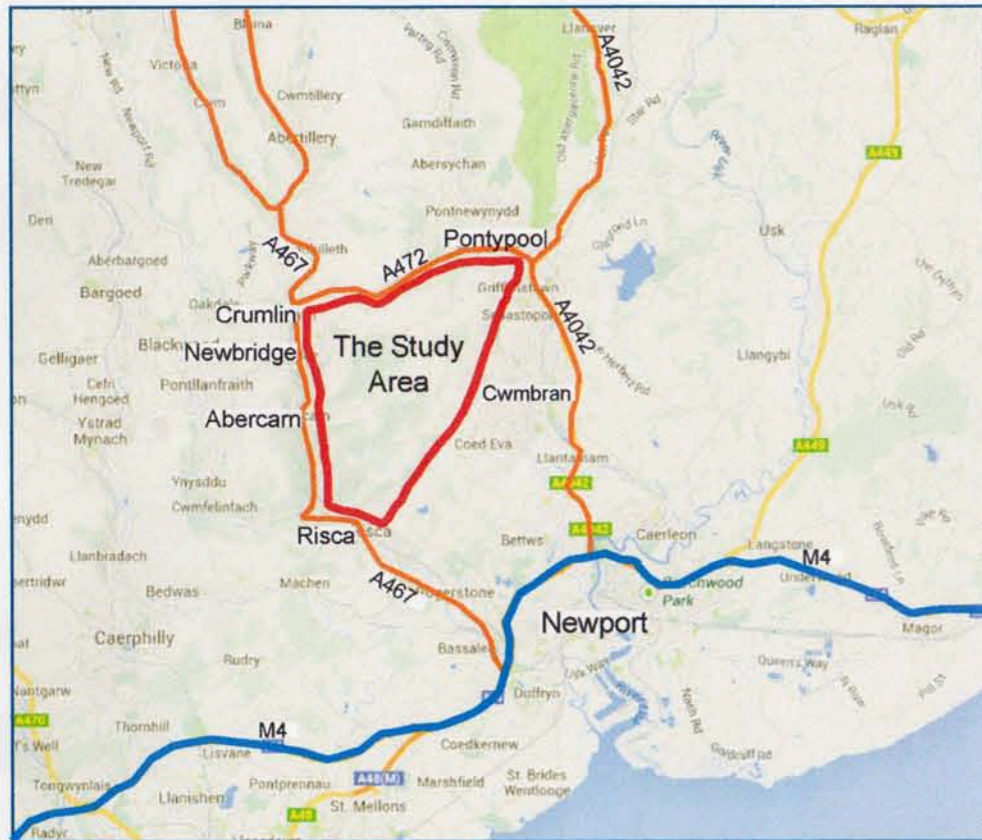
1.0 Introduction

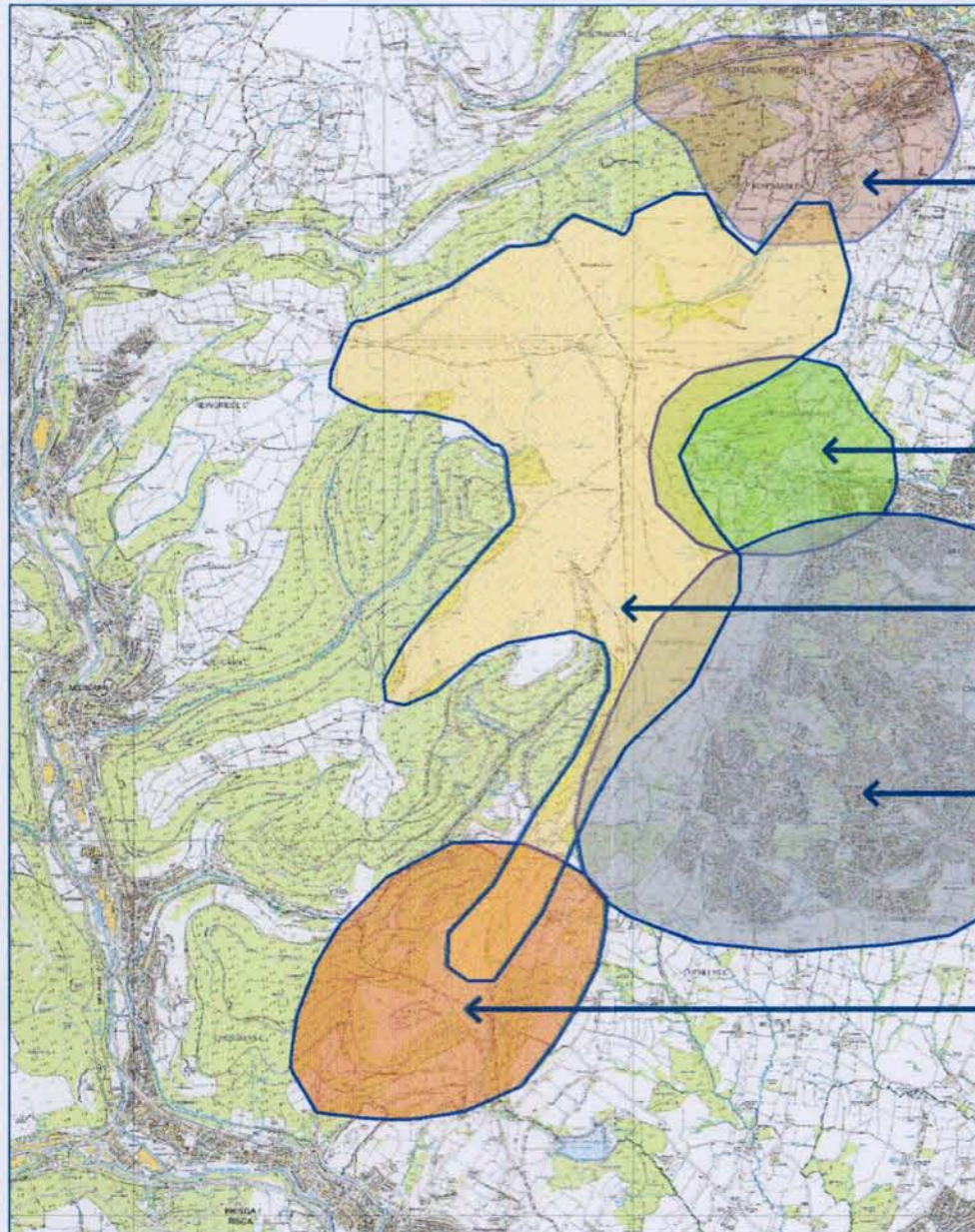
- 1.1 The study area includes upland in parts of both Torfaen and Caerphilly County Boroughs. The study focuses on opportunities for improved management of the upland landscape including access and informal recreation. The study is required because there is significant evidence of landscape abuse across significant parts of the study area.
- 1.2 Haire Landscape Consultants were appointed in December 2012. The team comprised Landscape Architects and a Sustainable Development Consultant: Resources for Change (R4C).
- 1.3 The appointment was made jointly by Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils. The Brief for the Scoping Study is appended.
- 1.4 Method. Based on the Brief, the following stages were identified:
 - Field work survey, consultations, desk study and background report.
 - Analysis, consideration, initial ideas and concepts
 - Consultation with client group, initial ideas, stakeholder workshop
 - Develop proposals (strategy) based on feedback from consultations
 - Consultation with client group. Presentation of draft strategy
 - Finalise strategy and costed action plan

- 2.0.5 There is a long and visible history of industrial uses around the study area. This is mainly mining and quarrying and includes the large and relatively recently reclaimed coal tips above Newbridge, surviving minor works and industrial artefacts across much of the area and a large disused quarry above Risca. Current industrial uses continue to influence the study area. These include the large active Quarry at Newbridge and the very prominent power transmission pylons and telecommunications masts that dominate parts of the upland. There are also a number of small reservoirs, including some derelict, former industrial ponds.
- 2.0.6 The pre-industrial landscape survives in some form over much of the study area with relics from this era providing depth and quality to the landscape resource. The field pattern is the most obvious surviving element, with stone walls of varying quality and outgrown Beech hedges providing distinctive structure to large pockets of the 'middle' landscape between valley and moor. This landscape type is typical locally and extends for some distance to the north and west. The western fringes of Mynydd Maen include one of the areas of 'Ffridd' within CCBC which comprises a mosaic of different habitats.
- 2.0.7 The character and quality of the upland varies around the study area, with transitions from heather to grassland affected by historic management practices. There is evidence of recent management of the heather in the north. Elsewhere it is relatively denuded and where this coincides with the modern 'industrial' elements such as the telecommunications masts, the character is altered and these areas have the feel of urban incursions within an otherwise relatively 'wild' place.
- 2.0.8 The landscape is important to the surrounding urban population both as a visual backdrop and as a recreational resource. It features at its southern end the iconic Twmbarlwm hill fort which is visible from both Counties and from the coastal plain including the M4 motorway. The study area also includes the well established recreational destination, Cwmcarn Visitor Centre, with its Forest Drive and popular mountain bike trails, which skirt around the northern slopes of Twmbarlwm.

2.0 The Study Area

- 2.0.1 The study area comprises a significant landscape resource. The very wide range of habitats, historical features and landscape types and qualities is typical of the South Wales valleys, as is its position, being virtually surrounded by urban areas. Its location and the character and layout of the surrounding urban areas means that the upland is at the same time remote and accessible and influences the patterns of use and abuse to which it is subjected.
- 2.0.2 The landscape of the study area is predominantly upland heather moorland and grassland, bounded by steep sided valleys, some of which are forested, some more open. These valleys contain a wide variety of landscapes and industrial or agricultural uses, with farming often providing the only enduring physical link between the valley and the mountain.
- 2.0.3 Views from the upland extend west across the valleys, to the Brecon Beacons in the north and the Skirrid and Monmouthshire hills in the east. Views southwards take in the Severn Estuary in an ever changing view, much loved by the locals. Closer in, there are very clear visual links to the surrounding extensive areas of settlement, especially Cwmbarn, Pontypool and Newport.
- 2.0.4 Existing uses of the Study Area are most obviously agriculture and forestry. The farming is mainly pasture, with the open moorland being grazed common. The extent of the forestry is significant as this has a major influence on the character and future use of large parts of the study area.





Former group now inactive

Blaen Bran Community Group

Mynydd Maen Commoners' Association

Ancient Cwmbran Society

Cwmdeithas Twmbarlwm Society (CTS)

2.1 Existing Community Activity

2.1.1 The study area is clearly valued by the local communities and this is evidenced by the existing range of active community groups in the area. Prominent amongst these are groups dedicated to the recording, interpretation and protection of the significant archaeological resource that the area holds.

2.1.2 Community groups in both the south and north of the study area have become actively involved in managing the landscape. In particular these groups have begun to address issues surrounding landscape crime and anti-social behaviour.



AREA 5: TRFNVS002

This includes two separate areas of open countryside immediately to the east of the study area. These lie to the north and to the south of Cwmbran and are a transition between the steep slopes of the study area and the more rolling countryside to the east.

AREA 6: TRFNVS016

Pontymoile Valley - this area is contained in the south by a high, worked cliff face and includes the jumbled landscape of revegetated tips on the land that slopes down to the Pontymoile reservoir.

AREA 7: TRFNVS017

Cwm y Glyn - Very tight, deep valley with woodland composed of broadleaf, larch & conifers. The valley floor is dominated by the busy A472. Evidence of past mining activity is scattered along the valley sides. This area includes land within Torfaen CBC, being an extension of Area 4 (Cynon VS372) which lies within Caerphilly CBC.

AREA 8: TRFNVS024

This is the eastern part of the upland within the study area, principally the ridges between Cwm y Glyn, Cwm Lickey and Blaen Bran and between Cwmbran and Cwm Carn (Mynydd Henllys). Views extend down these valleys across Pontypool and Cwmbran and ultimately to Wentwood and across the Bristol Channel.

AREA 9: TRFNVS036

Cwm Lickey is a steep sided valley that extends into the upland in the north eastern corner of the study area.

AREA 10: TRFNVS042

Valley landscape between Cwmbran and Pontypool with mix of both broadleaf woods and field pattern. Much of this northern area has been disturbed by mining or quarrying activity.

AREA 11: TRFNVS044

This area comprises the east facing slopes of Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Henllys and the west facing slopes of Mynydd Henllys (within Cwm Carn).

AREA 12: NWPRTVS014

This is the extreme southern edge of the study area. Views extend across it northward from the narrow lane that allows access to the Twmbarlwm car park.

Detailed information relating to the study area is appended

2.3 Photographs and Description

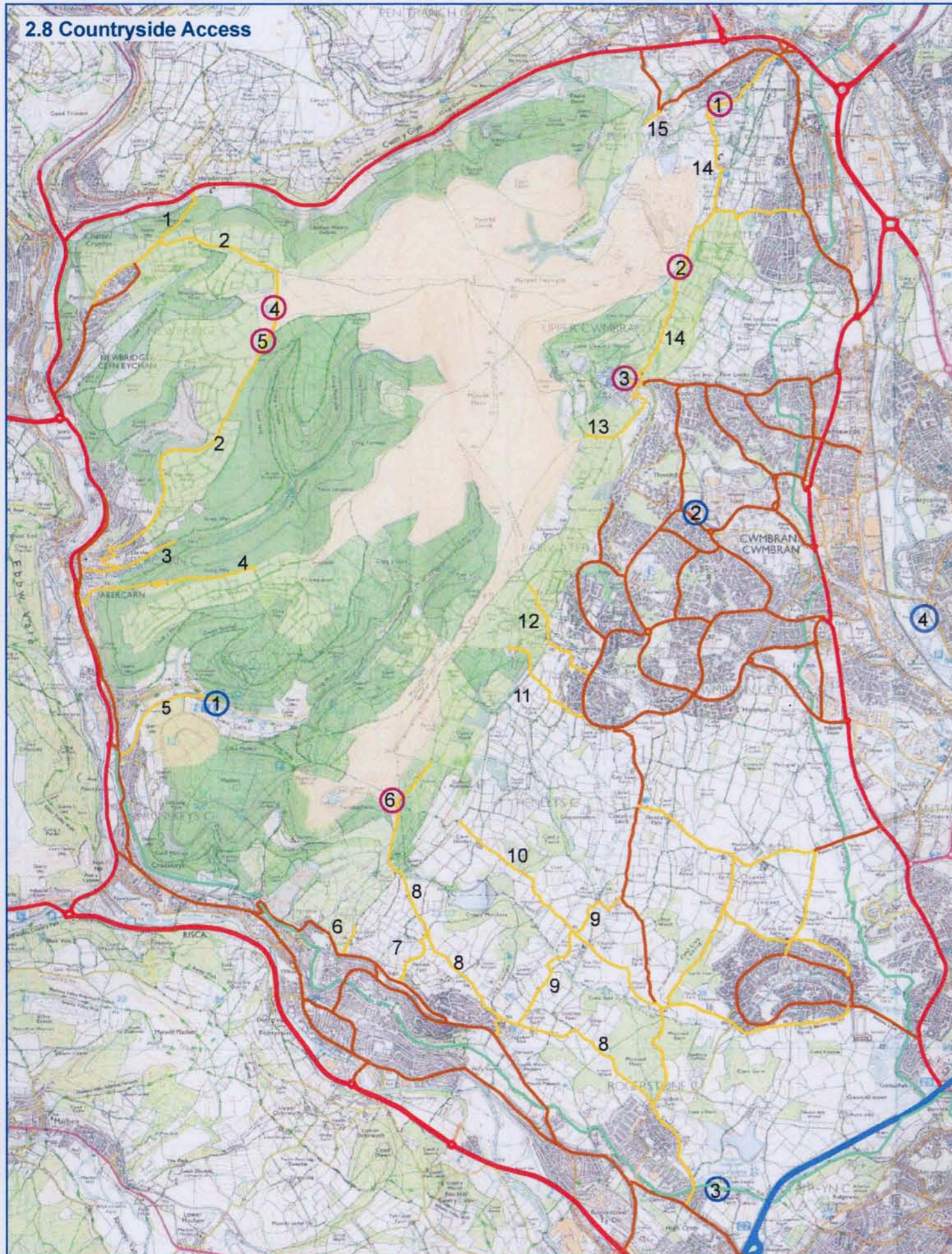
2.4 Planning Designations

2.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

2.6 Historical, Heritage and Archeological

2.7 Forestry Issues

2.8 Countryside Access



ACCESS TO THE STUDY AREA

○ Car Parks

1. Cwmyrnysycoy – Serves Local Nature Reserve in disused quarry. Also used by residents
2. Mountain Air – Allows access to Edlogan Common and provides views across Cwmbran
3. Blaen Bran – Allows access to reservoirs and woodland and to common land beyond
4. Roadside car park – Allows access to common
5. Roadside car park – Allows access to common and forestry plantation
6. Twmbarlwm – Access to Ancient Monument, forestry and common land

○ Visitor Centres

1. Cwmcarn Visitor Centre (CCBC)
2. Greenmeadow Farm (TCBC)
3. Fourteen Locks (Newport CC)
4. Llanyrafon Manor (TCBC)

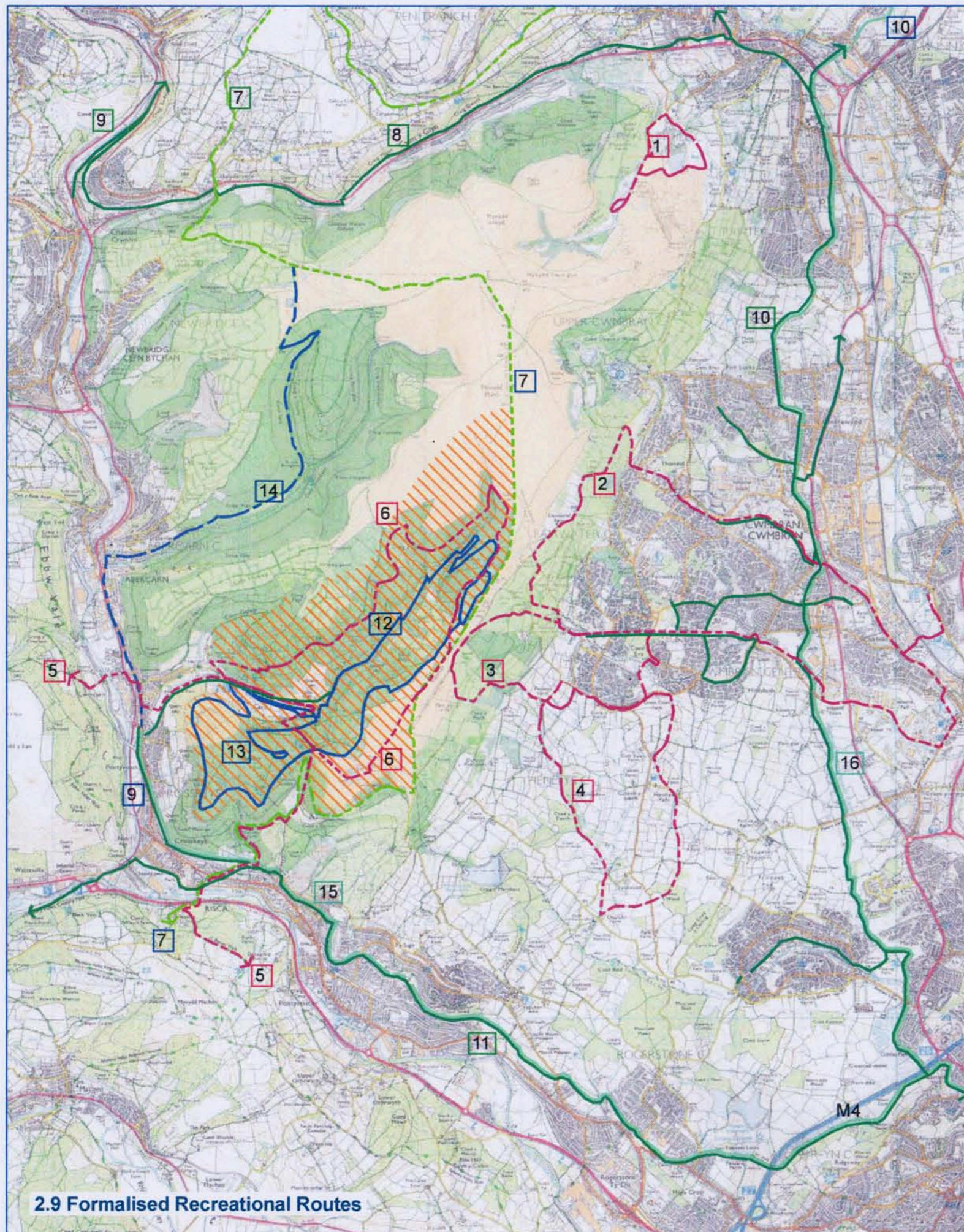
Minor Roads (narrow roads with passing places)

1. Hafodyrynys to Panside. Quite heavily used lane across steep valley side and over ridge; allows access to A472 from housing area. Road west from Panside to A467 is a larger, urban road.
2. Panside to Abercarn. This road allows access to the common and to several farms and isolated houses. The stretch between the common and Abercarn is particularly narrow in places, especially above the quarry, where passing is difficult. The link through the housing in Abercarn is also very awkward.
3. Gwyddon Road. This allows access to housing and the large area of forestry in Cwm Gwyddon. Accessed from the A467 via Abercarn High Street, Gwyddon Road begins as a well used, fairly straight residential street with many parked cars. This leads to a single carriageway, metalled road through woodland that gives access to an isolated group of houses further up the valley. At this point, there are two access gates in to the forestry plantations. There is hardstanding on either side of the road and this is used as informal parking for dog walkers and local residents.
4. Very minor road accessed via 'hairpin' bends from the B4591. This allows access to housing areas on the lower slopes before climbing the very steep valley side to allow access to two farms. This is a very narrow and steep road, unsuitable for most traffic.
5. Access road to Cwmcarn Forest Drive. This road belongs to NRW and has barriers at either end. It follows the formation of a disused railway and provides satisfactory access to the visitor centre and for forestry activities. The link to a roundabout

6. on the A467 is via a short section of the B4591.
6. An extremely steep and narrow lane that allows access to isolated houses and farms only.
7. Very steep and narrow lane with several blind bends that allows access to isolated houses and farms. Links with larger lane, ultimately leading to Twmbarlwm.
8. Rogerstone to Twmbarlwm. Hedged lane that extends for several kilometres through rolling pastoral landscape. Allows access to the new car park at Twmbarlwm from southern end of Risca and Rogerstone. Busiest at its southern end.
9. Linking lane 'across country'. Narrow and twisting, with passing places, this allows access to Cwmbran and is quite heavily used at times.
10. Narrow lane leading towards the study area. Used mainly for farm access. It is possible for a limited number of vehicles to park at its 'dead end'. Gives way to a 'public access' route that leads onto the common and footpaths that run along the slope in each direction
11. Narrow and steep lane that leads up to the common from the extreme southern edge of Cwmbran. In very poor condition with a lot of surface water, it leads to a single house in the forestry plantation that extends up the hillside. Uphill of this dwelling, where there is a gate, the route becomes a 'route with public access' and follows the edge of the wood up to the common.
12. Narrow and steep lane that allows access to farms. There are numerous public footpaths leading from this lane, including direct access onto the common.
13. Lane giving access to houses and farms south of Blaen Bran. Narrow lane, accessed from Upper Cwmbran this is a dead end for traffic but allows access westward to the common land and south westward, along the hillside, between the steep fields.
14. Mountain Road. This road links Upper Cwmbran with Pontypool, at times skirting the edge of the common. The road is narrow and twisting, not least at either end but appears to be heavily used at times. This is evidenced by the extensive areas of 'overrun' on either side of the metalled surface. This road allows access to the car parks at Mountain Air, from where, paths lead onto the common land.
15. A short length of road that extends into the northern end of Cwm Lickey. This lane leads on to the formation of a disused railway. This is metalled as it extends southward and open to pedestrians, but vehicular access appears to be limited. This railway formation extends north and westward into Cwm y Glyn, passing Glyn pits.

Canals

The Brecon and Monmouthshire canal and towpath



2.9 Formalised Recreational Routes

KEY:

Formal 'Walks' (excludes public footpaths)

- 1. Cwm Lickey Circular Walk
- 2. In the Footsteps of Pilgrims Walk
- 3. Henllys Circular Walk
- 4. Southern Henllys Circular Walk
- 5. Raven Walk
- 6. Twmbarlwm Walk

Bridleway

- 7. Long distance bridleway (proposed)

Sustrans routes

- 8. National route 466
- 9. National route 465
- 10. National route 49
- 11. National route 47

Trails

- 12. Cwmcarn Mountain Bike Trail - Twrch
- 13. Cwmcarn Mountain Bike Trail - Mynydd
- 14. Caerphilly cycle route (Proposed)

Canals (with towpath)

- 15. Brecon and Monmouthshire canal Crumlin arm
- 16. Brecon and Monmouthshire canal



Tourism Area (Caerphilly CBC UDP)

This study area contains many public footpaths, bridleways and byways. This drawing shows the routes that have been identified and publicised by the local authorities

2.9 Formalised Recreational Access

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 The various reports and studies identified in the brief were consulted. Many of the reference documents are design or planning guidance and the relevant information was incorporated into the consultation and strategy development process. These include the Landscape Strategies and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Much of this information has been included in the preceding sections of this report.
 - 3.1.1 Other documents such as the Cwm Lickey, Cwmyrnysycoy – Reclamation Feasibility Report, June 2007 and the Caerphilly Rural Boundaries Study have a relevance for parts of the study area. There is a brief summary of these reports in the appendix. Where relevant, the content of these reports was considered during the formulation of the strategy.
- 3.2 Consultations were held with individuals and groups or representatives of groups before a consultation workshop was held in March 2013. A full list of consultees and notes from the workshop is appended.
 - 3.2.1 Results of the consultation were considered in formulating the ‘**main issues**’ (4.1 to 4.9) that effect the study area.



View west from Common



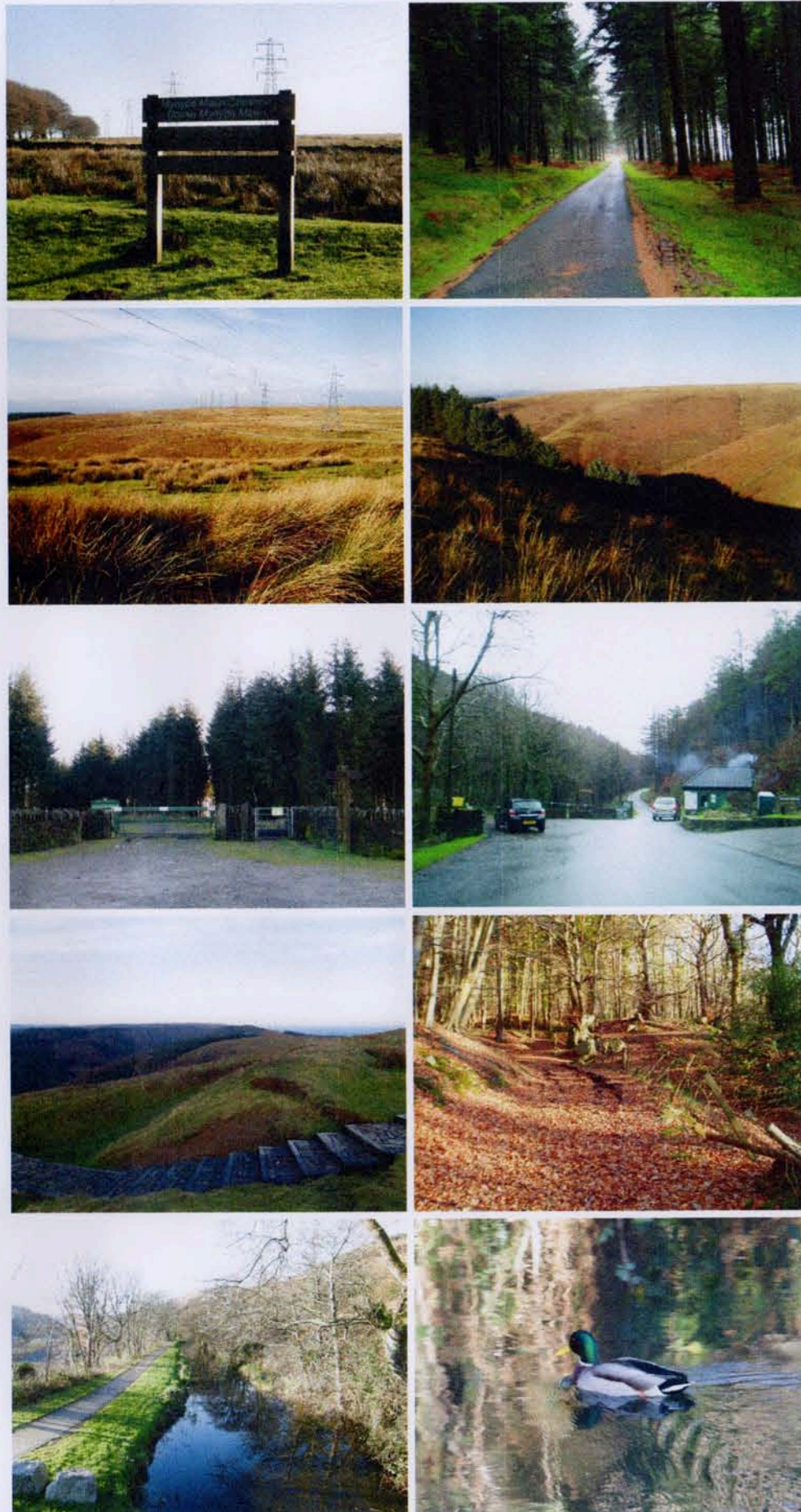
4.2 Landscape crime

4.0 Main Issues

(summary of issues arising from the desk study and consultations)

- 4.1 Perception: The study area is extensive and diverse but the upland (common) is accessible from all parts of it. Despite this, the upland does not have a single identity in the minds of most visitors, it is generally associated with the place they gain access to the 'mountain'. Of the different parts of the study area, Twmbarlwm is the most readily identified although it is likely that many visitors to the Cwm Carn centre would not be aware of even this nearby feature.
- 4.2 Landscape crime. The abuse of the open upland, and some woodland areas by motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles is an ongoing problem, although efforts to control it both from the police and voluntary groups have been partially successful. This is made difficult to control by the presence of the ORPA (Other Route with Public Access) in the south and the access track to the masts and compounds on Mynydd Maen in the north. Both of these provide a perceived 'excuse' for access onto the common. Fly tipping and arson are also perennial problems in this area.
- 4.3 Cwmcarn visitor centre provides information about the forest resource, it has a restaurant, shop and exhibition space and there are camping facilities, and fishing in the lake. There are well developed plans to expand parking and the number of MTB (Mountain Bike) 'runs'. The centre also allows access to the forest drive. The centre is owned by Caerphilly CBC and the forest drive is operated by NRW. This relationship is not an ideal commercial 'fit'. Many locals do not use the visitor centre because there is a charge for parking and it is not obviously 'relevant' to them. Similar sentiments were expressed about the forest drive.
- 4.4 There are a number of voluntary organisations, three in particular are active within the study area and others have expressed an interest in being involved, particularly in the development of MTB facilities. There is a lot of interest in archaeology, which spans a long historical period.
- 4.5 The historical resource is extensive but is being diminished through damage (landscape crime) and some important features are on private land and therefore not easily accessible.
- 4.6 Interpretation and waymarking of the upland areas and features is weak and there is very limited positive signage. The area is currently divided into a number of locations with different themes and purposes, but with limited join up or commonality. The local authorities and user groups wish to improve recreational links through the area, there are recent examples of themed walks (Raven Walk, Cwm Lickey) and future improvements to the network are enshrined in planning policy.

- 4.7 There are several Landowners with an interest in the study area. The landowners share concerns about landscape crime and how this could spread into new areas (if access is allowed to Glyn Pits for example). There is the outside possibility of coal extraction taking place around Penyrheol Reservoir, this would cause significant disturbance if pursued and there is also the possibility that a proposal to erect wind turbines could be put forward by the landowner on the northern part of the common.
- 4.8 The Commoners' Association and land owners are similarly open to ideas that will resolve some of the issues and help achieve the objectives of the study, including allowing access to Glyn Pits. There is an extant proposal, in association with CTS to fence the common at the southern end. There is a limited amount of active management of the common, including localised cutting of soft rush and heather in the north and removal of self seeded conifers in the south. The Commoners are building a case for enhanced payments under Glastir, which the development of a partnership and supporting agendas for better wildlife management will support.
- 4.9 NRW policy and the threat of tree diseases will see significant changes to the landscape of the study area over the next few years as a result of changes to forestry practice. This will lead to the removal of Larch (because of Phytophthora ramorum) and an increase in broadleaf woodland as ancient woodland sites are restored.



5.0 The Vision

5.0.1 The Vision for the area is as follows:

'The historic Twmbarlwm landscape is protected, valued and well used for the benefit of local communities, visitors and biodiversity'.

5.1 Realising the vision

5.1.1 By improving positive use and access, existing negative behaviours will be 'squeezed out' of the area. This will bring a complete visitor experience and encourage local involvement in developing the vision and providing enhanced services ensuring that the area is viable in the long term. This will be achieved by a partnership working to deliver the strategy which will benefit the local economy, community, education, environment, policing and agriculture.

5.1.2 Review the role of Cwmcarn Visitor Centre. This is an established resource but its full potential is not realised. It is ideally placed to fulfil WG objectives of 'Health, Economy and Training' within this area. This could be achieved by developing the facility as a 'hub' that supports programmes based around these themes and increases the use of the area.

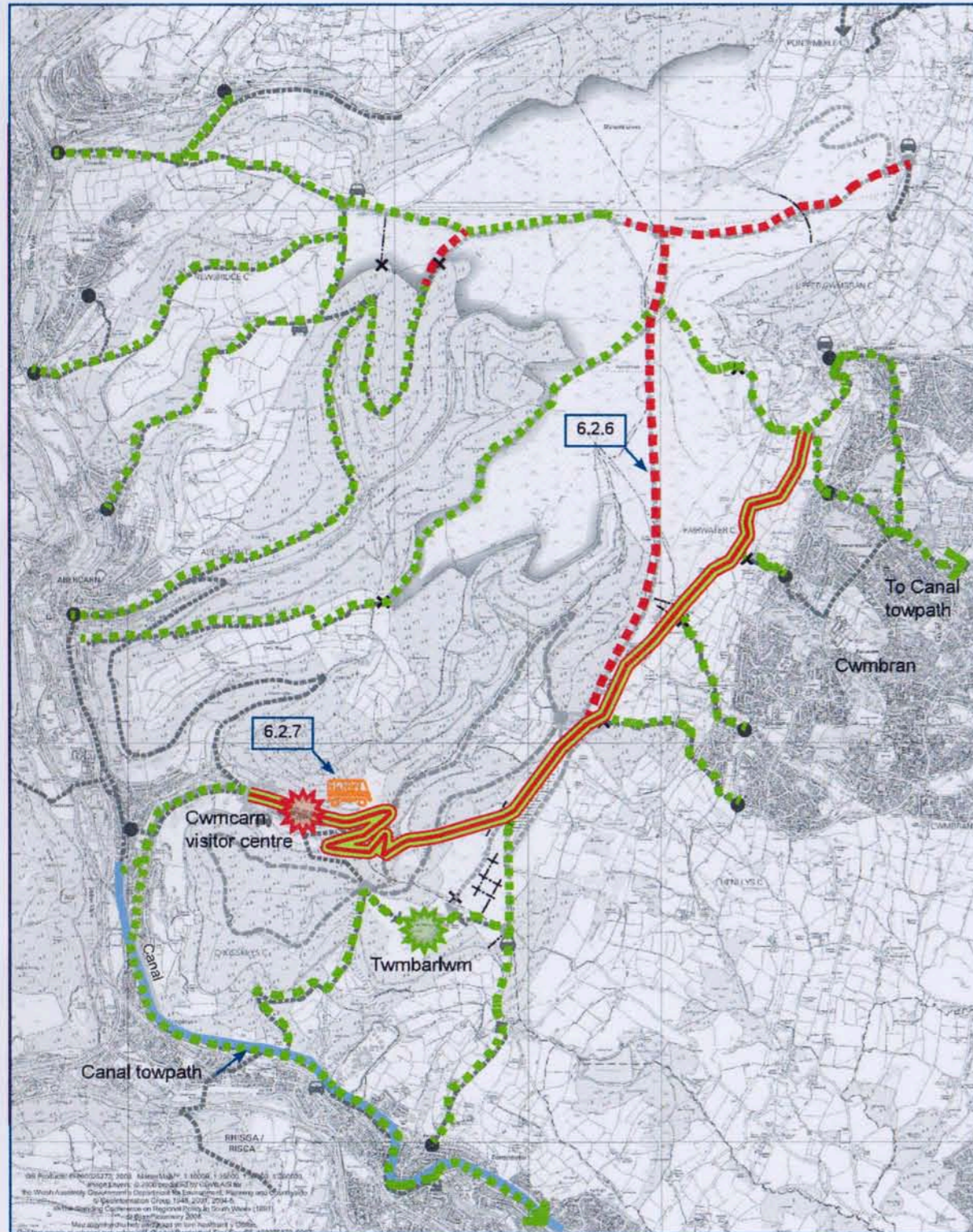
5.1.3 Undertake selective physical works and management to allow the vision to be implemented.

5.2 The following objectives support the implementation of the Vision

- **Objective 1:** Improve links between settlements and across the area and provide strategic recreational signage
- **Objective 2:** Maximise the economic and regeneration potential of Cwmcarn visitor centre
- **Objective 3:** Interpretation and consolidation of the historical resource
- **Objective 4:** Control landscape crime, motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles
- **Objective 5:** Improve management and biodiversity of the upland common
- **Objective 6:** Involve the local community more pro-actively and improve working links between organisations

6.1 Strategy – ways of achieving the OBJECTIVES (refer ‘Strategy’ drawing)

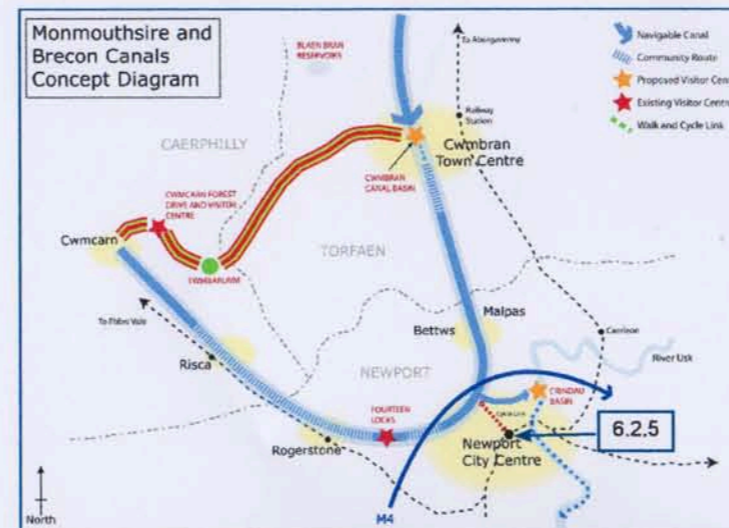
6.1.1 The Strategy comprises actions, sometimes to be undertaken in a particular order, intended to achieve the stated objectives. The actions include a combination of physical and temporary works and reviews of policy. This process will involve many parties and will inevitably be influenced by events and by the success or otherwise of funding bids. The following represents a framework, based on the objectives listed above.



Multiple routes on common (existing)

KEY to main plan:

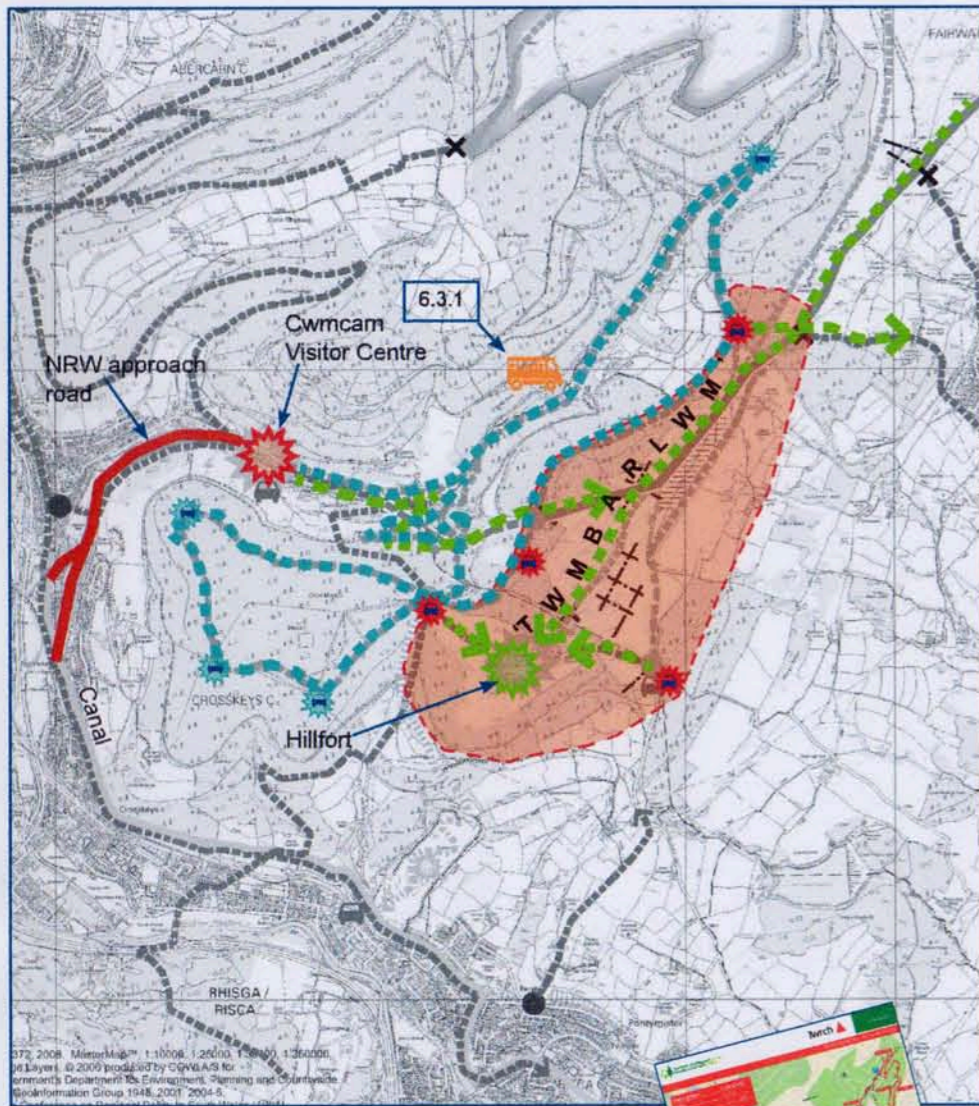
- ■ ■ ■ Upgraded existing infrastructure (6.2.2.and 6.2.3)
- — — — Link between Cwmcarn and Cwmbarn (6.2.4)
- ■ ■ ■ New / rationalised routes (6.2.6)



*Link between Cwmcarn and Cwmbarn identified in TBC concept diagram shown in red/green on plan to left and above

6.2 Objective 1: Improve links between settlements, facilities and across the area and also provide strategic recreational signage

- 6.2.1 Review access across the common, make dedicated, usable routes following a rationalised network. Close off many informal, eroded routes, provide waymarking and interpretation along dedicated routes (possibly comprising QR codes). These routes will serve specific communities but also allow longer journeys to be made across the study area as part of the wider network, including the canal, as it passes the study area to the east and west. Provide signage and approximate walking time.
- 6.2.2 Increase awareness of existing rights of way from adjacent settlements in the east up to the dedicated routes through waymarking and publicity. These settlements include Cwmyrnyscoy, Griffithstown, Sebastapol, Upper Cwmbarn, Cwmbarn and Fairwater
- 6.2.3 Improve access to the Cwmcarn visitor centre from nearby settlement areas in the east and south of the study area including along the canal. These settlements include Abercarn, Crosskeys and Risca (although there are more direct routes from Risca).
- 6.2.4 Improve links from the Cwmcarn visitor centre to the upland, especially the link across to Cwmbarn helping to realise the Monmouthshire and Brecon canals concept*. Parts of this route close to Cwmbarn are common with parts of the existing formal 'In the Footsteps of Pilgrims' and 'Henllys Circular Walks', refer 2.9.
- 6.2.5 Improve access from Newport helping to realise the Monmouthshire and Brecon canals concept*. This will be achieved by raising awareness of the area as a destination for existing users of the canal towpaths.
- 6.2.6 Investigate the feasibility of a cross boundary bridleway. (refer plan)
- 6.2.7 Investigate the feasibility of providing a minibus to collect or drop walkers at locations around the study area. This would be based at Cwmcarn and could operate at peak times or to a set timetable to encourage visitors to explore the study area.
- 6.2.8 Review 'tourism' signage from the M4 and road network.



KEY to main plan:

- Forest drive (6.3.3)
- Forest drive car parks
- ★ Car parks providing access to Twmbarlwm
- 'Twmbarlwm upland'



Cwmcarn Visitor Centre Car Park



Cwmcarn Visitor Centre



Example of community arts and theatre as seen at Parc Cwm Darran, June 2013

6.3 Objective 2: Maximise the economic and regeneration potential of Cwmcarn visitor centre

- 6.3.1 Improve the access road (NRW strategy in place) and arrival experience, including a review of signage and orientation for visitors (MTB users, Visitor Centre users, Forest Drive users). Consider the provision of a minibus to take pedestrians to the base of Twmbarlwm (as 6.2.6 above).
- 6.3.2 Review MTB visitor experience at the Cwmcarn Visitor Centre and consider changes to the character of the restaurant to reflect the 'great outdoors' experience.
- 6.3.3 Review the content, layout and interpretation of the Forest Drive and create a stronger link to the upland area, in the main, utilising the existing infrastructure. This review could be associated with the expected wholesale removal of the Larch crop and NRW re-stocking plans. The review could include a change of name to reflect an emphasis on the place 'Twmbarlwm' rather than the theme 'Forest'. This would be an NRW initiative, with the 2005 study 'Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan' acting as a starting point.
- 6.3.4 Review the role of the visitor centre with a view to creating a 'Hub' that fulfils the following objectives:

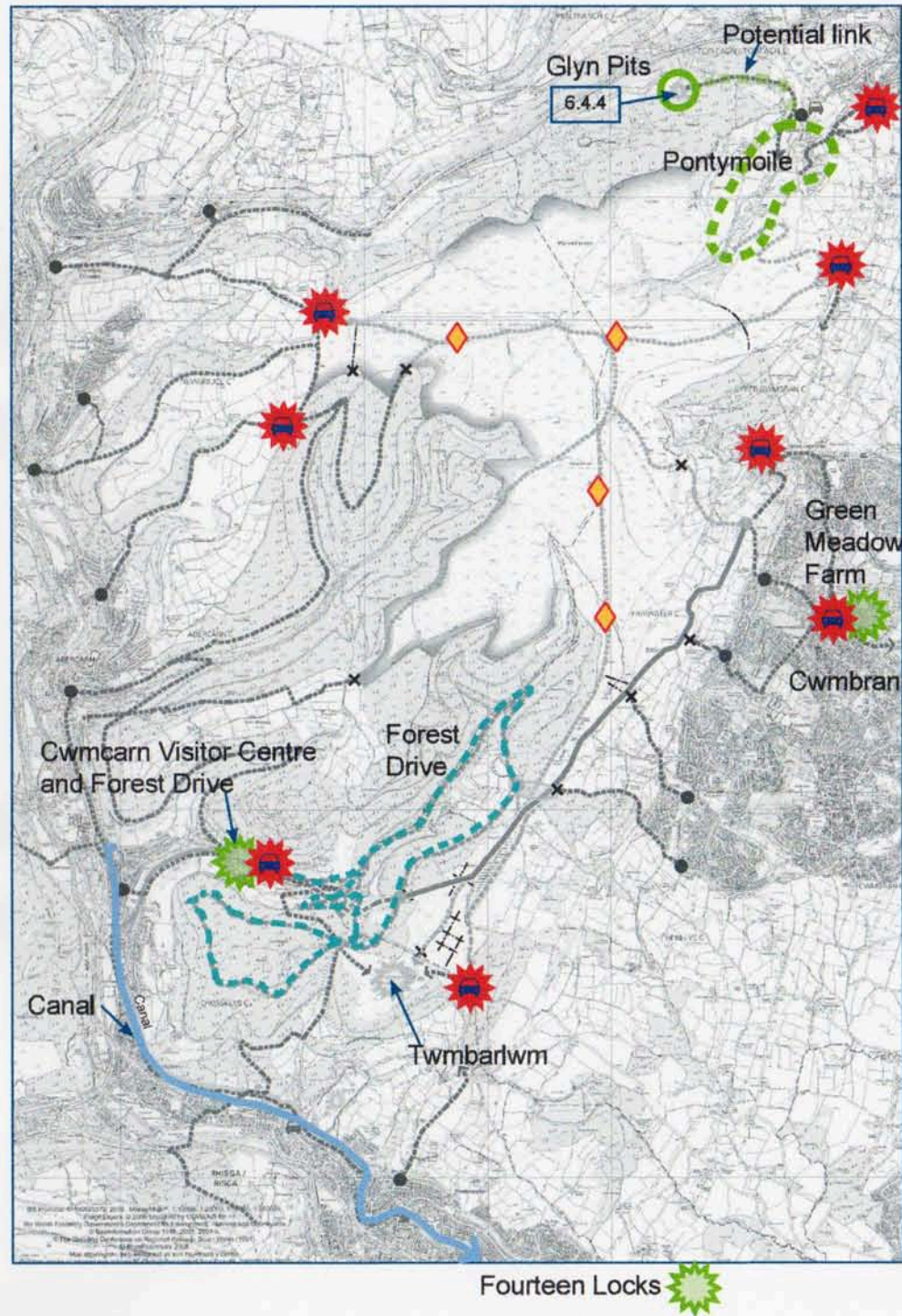
Economy: Consider local trade spaces and workshops to compliment the exhibition space at the visitor centre; ensure local produce and labour is promoted where possible in the restaurant and other facilities. Increased visitor numbers at the centre as a result of the review should increase economic activity. Review MTB market and consider whether more visitors can be persuaded to eat and stay overnight at the centre and whether 'supplies' such as gas could be sold.

Health: Increase the extent and range of MTB runs, including longer distance circular routes (encouraging positive access into upland areas), 'easy' routes and a pump track targeted at local young people. Build on the existing range of 'traffic light' themed walks and encourage other physical activities.




Training and education: Develop links with schools and create an 'open' outdoor classroom within the forest site. Consider development of a Forest School; a 'Twmbarlwm curriculum' (similar to that developed for Exmoor). Host training for colleges including NEETS, link to the established Blaen Bran Community Group, which does landscape management works and training. Develop links with universities, particularly for 'Life Long Learning' especially with reference to the archaeology. Consider a 'guardian/ambassador' programme for locals and staff to increase the resource for visitor engagement.

Community: Provide a venue for community activities including community arts and theatre projects (venues within the forest). Run more community activities (not necessarily related to woodlands and nature). Hold dialogue with local people and community groups to establish optimum uses for the centre. Explore the possibility of the centre acting as 'headquarters' for voluntary groups, hosting meetings and providing an administration and archive resource for an appropriate charge.

All of these points would be aided by an increase in the staff resource at Cwmcarn, particularly at weekends and in the evenings. This could possibly be aided by a link up with NRW, or via the local access forum which could explore all potentially available staffing resources (refer 6.7.1).



KEY to main plan:

-  Potential exhibition sites for collated information
-  Places where more interpretation would be appropriate
-  Identification and interpretation of points of interest via QR codes mounted on robust post as appropriate along path network. This would tie in with waymarking / navigation refer 6.2.1

Existing interpretation



Examples of formalised walk leaflets

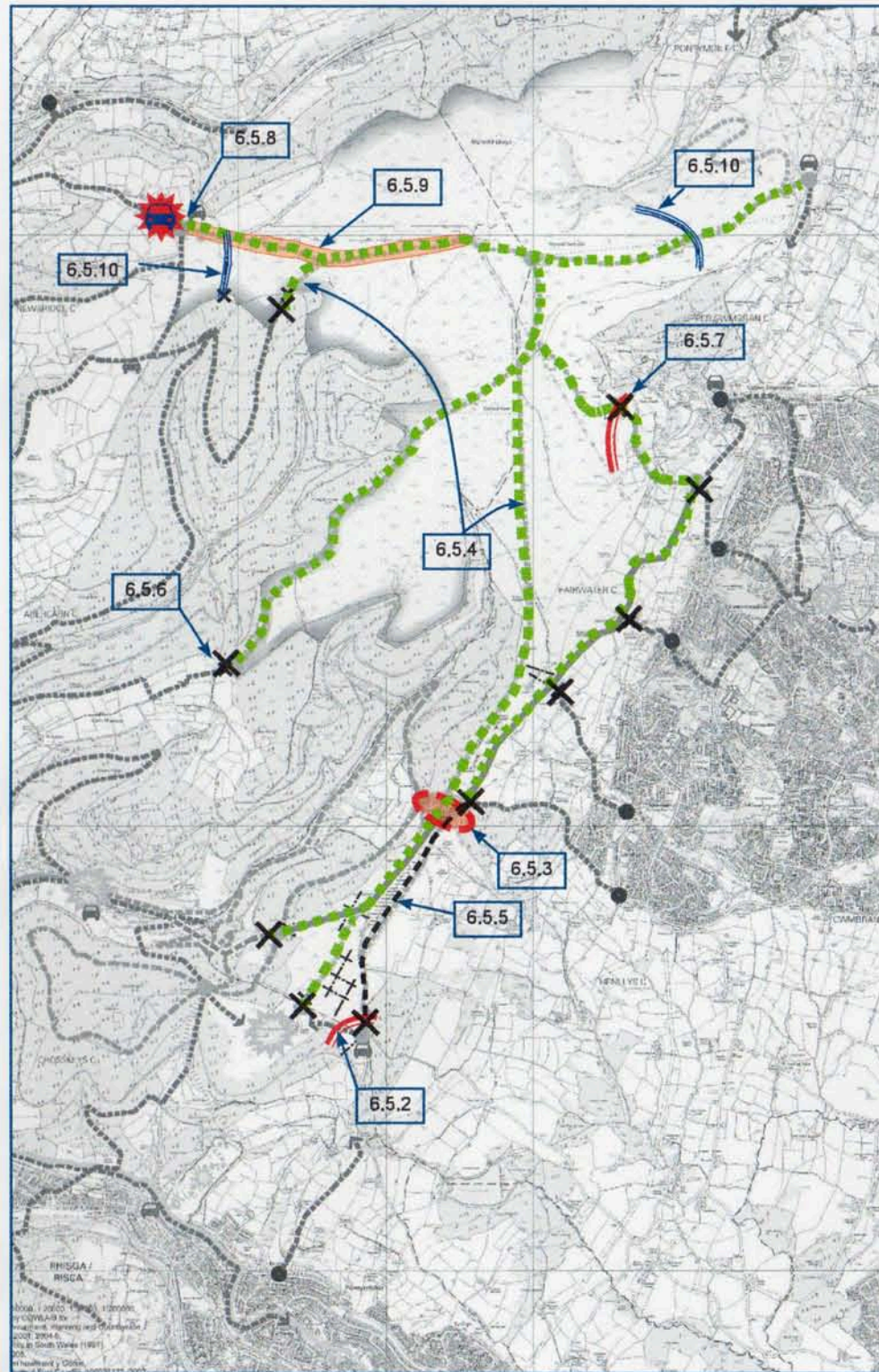


6.4 Objective 3: Interpretation and consolidation of the historical resource





- 6.4.1 Establish the most relevant interpretation strategy for the area. Some historical research has been undertaken by community groups as well as by CADW but much archaeology is yet to be recorded. This has been illustrated recently by the discovery of the features in the fields above Cwrt Henllys. Collate the archaeological data (primarily via community groups) and display selective information at Cwmcarn, other locations in Cwmbran and at Fourteen Locks.
- 6.4.2 Consider development of community art as a vehicle for interpretation across the area through linked 'pieces'.
- 6.4.3 Consider the future role of the Forest Drive and more effective ways of telling a developing story. It could consist of a series of points and views, each telling something of the landscape history from the ancient origins of Twmbarlwm, agriculture, mining and forestry, to the Severn estuary. Remove other elements which are not relevant. This could involve local people, artists and crafts people.
- 6.4.4 Engage the community through identification of local interest in the archaeology of the Penyrheol area. Consider improved access to Glyn Pits and surrounding landscape, consolidate the buildings and provide parking and interpretation (land owner agreement is likely). Improve existing footpath links between Cwmyrnyscoy (Local Nature Reserve car park) and Cwm Lickey.
- 6.4.5 Minor works around the recently constructed Twmbarlwm car park and other satellite car parks to improve orientation signage, waymarking and interpretation BUT keep as low profile facilities with a focus on local use.



Existing interpretation associated with the forest drive



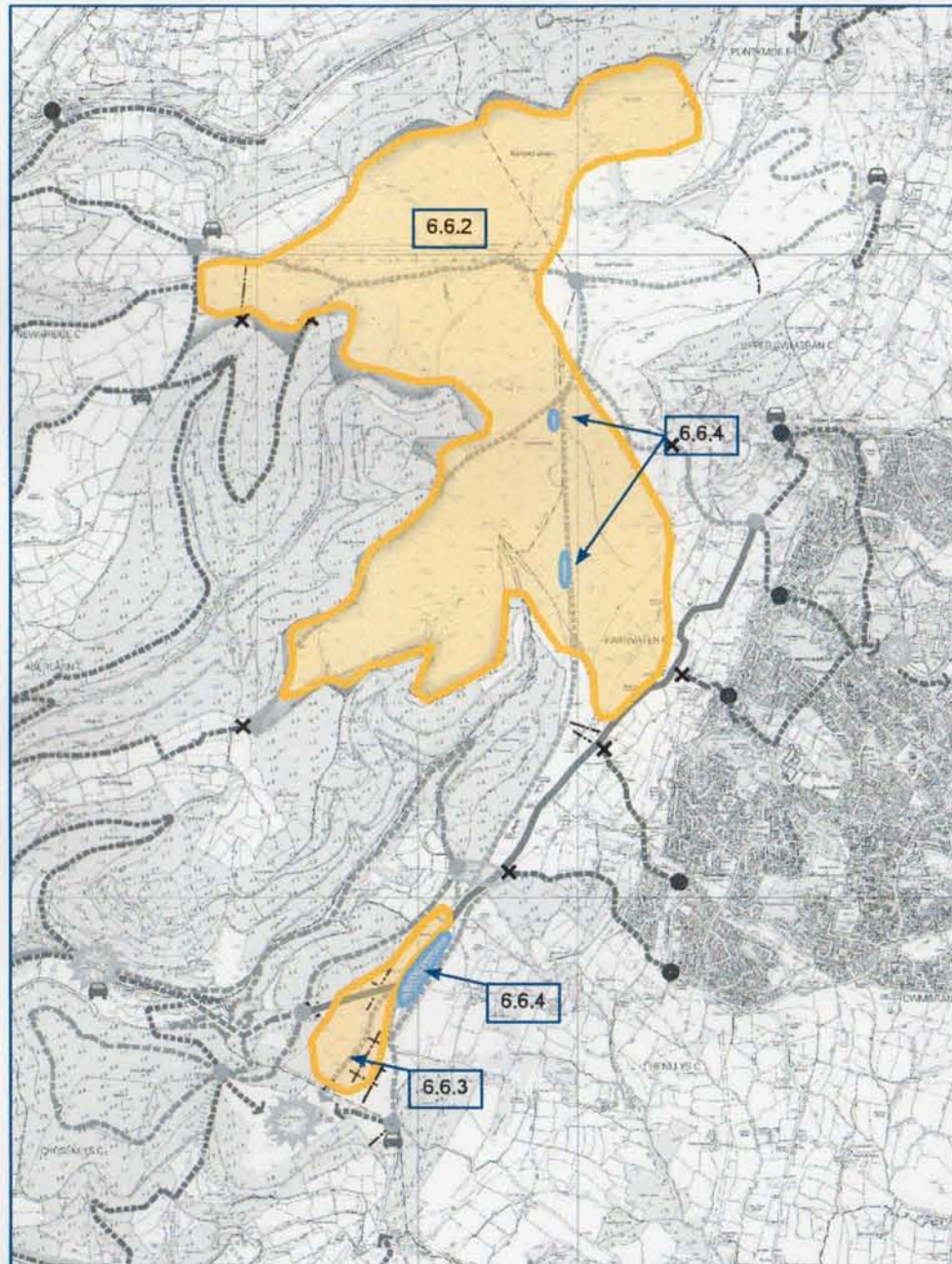
KEY to main plan:

-  Rationalised network of dedicated routes (6.5.4)
-  Permanent double fence barrier with controlled access
-  Temporary fences
-  Control barriers



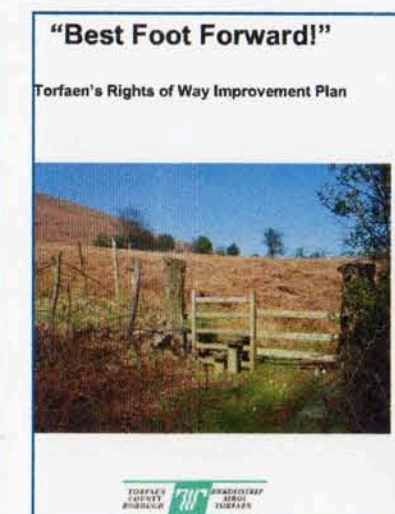
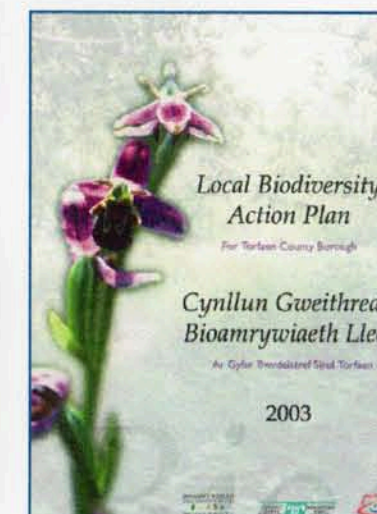
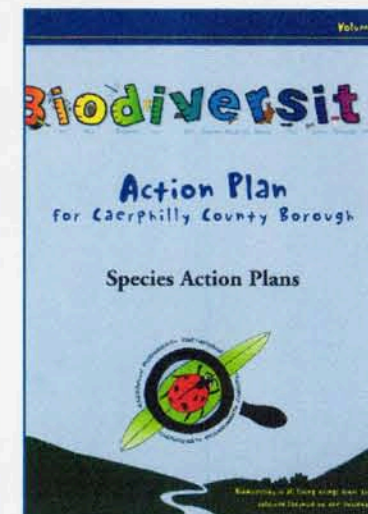
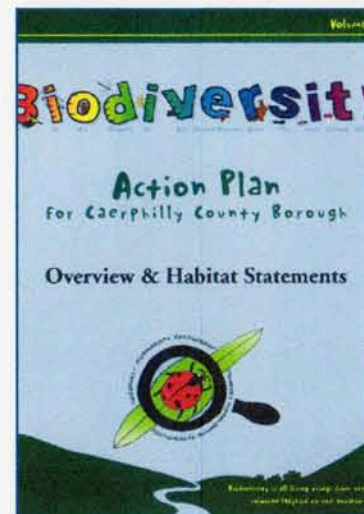
6.5 Objective 4: Control landscape crime, motorbikes and 4 x 4 vehicles

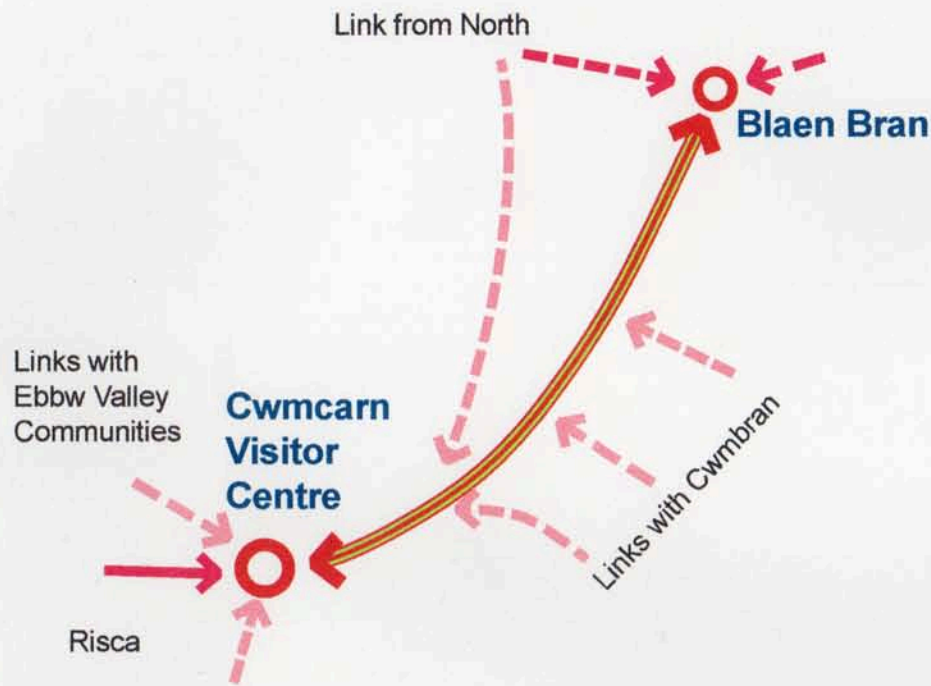
- 6.5.1 Part of the reasoning of the strategy is that increasing the use of the area for conventional recreation will reduce this problem significantly by 'squeezing out' illegal activity. The following are practical steps that, by building on existing proposals, will address the problem. These are in a deliberate order, working from 'south to north', thereby protecting Twmbarlwm where this problem has been most acute.
- 6.5.2 Construct a barrier at the southern end of the common, below Twmbarlwm (this element is being progressed by CTS).
- 6.5.3 Construct permanent 'linking feature' comprising stone walls with suitable barriers at the narrow part of the common to control access north-south. This feature will not interfere with the grazing of the common (this will require WG consent)
- 6.5.4 Define a rationalised network of dedicated routes across the common and through publicity and waymarking, encourage use by cyclists and pedestrians.
- 6.5.5 Close the 'impassable' ORPA (Other Route with Public Access) through legal process.
- 6.5.6 Introduce appropriate barriers and signage at Rhyswg Ganol (west side) and at access points from Cwmbran so that motorbikes cannot access the narrow part of the common from the 'sides'.
- 6.5.7 Introduce a permanent controlled barrier above Blaen Bran (south side) so that access is only possible east- west across the northern part of the common.
- 6.5.8 Construct a new car park at the end of the service track (north west corner of common) with walls, gate and signage making it clear that cyclists and pedestrians are welcome but that motorised vehicles are not permitted.
- 6.5.9 Tidy the margins of the service track, reducing its width and 'industrial' appearance
- 6.5.10 Erect temporary fences with gates for a defined period, combined with a concerted policing effort, at the north west corner of the common and between Blaen Bran and Cwm Lickey.
- 6.5.11 Remove temporary fences at the end of the defined period



6.6 Objective 5: Improve the land management and biodiversity of the upland common

- 6.6.1 The common is an extension of many of the farms that surround it and all proposals must be supported by the local farming community. This will be achieved by involving the Commoners' Association in the management of the overall project. Of particular importance is the need for the proposals to support the objectives of Glastir.
- 6.6.2 Review the existing management plan with particular reference to LBAP species and undertake cutting of heather etc to improve habitat and grazing in accordance with the recommendations. Control regenerating conifers (mainly at the southern end).
- 6.6.3 Repair motorbike damage through regrading, seeding with locally sourced seed material and erection of temporary fences as appropriate.
- 6.6.4 Consider the potential for an increase in the extent of wet areas (open water) within 'boggy' land along the route of the 'ORPA' or by retaining some large 'puddles' (flooded track sections)





Two Linked Hubs
(refer 6.7.2)



Example of a Pump Track at Blaenavon



Potential visitor information facility

6.7 Objective 6: Involve the local community more pro-actively and improve working links between organisations

6.7.1 Build on the work initiated through this study and develop a Local Management Steering Group, with a secretariat that could be hosted by a local access forum comprising the three voluntary groups, landowners, commoners' association, local authorities, CADW, Cwmcarn visitor centre and NRW. The next step would be to bring this group together to establish the most appropriate host and working structure which will be sustainable in the future and not just for a single intervention or project.



Community involvement at Blaen Bran



Stone sculpture beside the canal

The group could be based at the Cwmcarn Visitor Centre, further strengthening its role and purpose in the local context. This group should consider a Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership proposal as a priority since this could significantly help develop the proposals to a stage where they can be continued locally with little input/cost.

6.7.2 Blaen Bran Community Group has a proven track record of managing part of the study area. There is potential for this to be a vehicle to undertake some of the proposed works such as path construction, fencing, monitoring and training. This group could be instrumental in developing the 'hub' for the establishment of a community training programme based at Cwmcarn visitor centre (refer 6.3.4). This would be an additional 'centre', possibly allowing the Blaen Bran venture to develop further, the two 'hubs' being connected by one of the strategic links. The training and education agenda could be linked to schools, health programmes, historic and nature conservation groups and unemployed/NEETS programmes.

6.7.3 Consider franchised mobile food outlet in the car parks on the eastern side of the study area. These would be 'rent free' for the first year, with a low rent thereafter. Within their contract would be the requirement to provide a visitor information service, with the location moving as the strategy develops. This approach would provide a more resilient model of delivery than a project funded or local authority funded service which is likely to be subject to cuts or project fund fluctuations on a regular basis.

6.7.4 Cwmcarn visitor centre and possibly an expanded Blaen Bran facility to act as host locations for an annual community event (or events); for example the established Easter walk to Twmbarlwm. These events should also be publicised through 'canal' based activities.

6.7.5 In association with 'Cognition' and local MTB riders, develop links between the various MTB centres in the region, with a long distance, cross country link between them. Publicise these links in all centres and more widely.

6.7.6 Investigate interest in the development of a pump track in the disused Risca quarry with local youth initiatives and youth clubs. This site would be accessed from the forest above and linked to Cwmcarn via the canal towpath and other options.

6.7.7 Consider the long term role for the Landscape Crime Officer to cover a wider remit and work with volunteers so that the police presence is retained but once major issues are under control, daily policing is supplemented by local volunteers, allowing the police to cover a wider area and only get involved if needed.

6.7.8 The inclusion of the Commoners' Association in the management structure should ensure that all local farmers and land owners are engaged in the delivery of the proposed changes.



7.0 Costed illustrative proposals

7.1 Means of implementation, capital works, management and maintenance

7.1.1 This is an appropriate project for a Heritage Lottery Fund 'Landscape Partnership' and a bid should be made to HLF with a view to this being the main vehicle by which the objectives of the Strategy are achieved. This would be put together at the direction of the Local Management Steering Group (refer 6.7.1). The fact that the commoners' association is building a case for enhanced payments under Glastir will help strengthen the case for HLF.

7.1.2 The HLF Landscape Partnership would provide the overarching funding that would allow the study area to be managed to achieve the objectives of the study. An outline proposal to this effect is appended.

7.1.3 Smaller, individual projects could be facilitated by a number of alternative funding sources including:

- Biffa Award (£150K minimum)
- Income to the Commoners' Association (say from Glastir)
- Smaller grants to fund specific works such as HLF Your Heritage grants as well as more local tourism and social project grants (via Community Groups)
- Arts grants
- EU proposal for an Ecosystem Services approach (refer to WeCan project as an example)
- NRW Nature Fund
- Rural Development Plan (WAG)
- Interreg/Life

7.1.4 Longer term income streams mentioned in the report would help underpin the long term sustainability. These include:

- Additional food franchises (also acting as information points)
- Local craft venues and sales points (could include one at Cwm Carn and one at Blaen Bran woods)
- Events
- Accommodation provision (camping, pods, etc) on NRW and other land (% to the project)

7.1.5 Potential Partner Organisations include:

- Valleys Regional Park
- Commoners
- Both Local Authorities
- CADW
- NRW
- Blaen Bran Community Woodland Project
- Twmbarlwm Community Group

7.2 Community involvement

7.2.1 The involvement of the community in implementing the strategy will be maximised through the development of the Landscape Partnership Board which will comprise representatives of active local groups and organisations.

7.2.2 The community can contribute significantly to the implementation of the strategy through the following initiatives:

- Blaen Bran Community Group training projects
- Training of volunteers (as part time wardens)
- Cognation involvement in dedicated MTB routes
- Information dissemination via mobile food outlet (no cost)
- Development of links with schools and education facilities
- Link to community initiatives (e.g. Communities First, Come Outside project)
- Link to the Eastern Valleys Woodland Plan

7.3 Projects

7.3.1 Around Twmbarlwm

- Boundary at southern end of common (funding in place)
- Minor works around the car park
- Reinstatement of motorbike damage (including temporary fencing)
- Manage conifers (volunteers/commoners)
- Close ORPA (legal fees)
- Improve pedestrian link to visitor centre
- Improve interpretation

7.3.1 Around Twmbarlwm		Refer 6.0 Strategy Drawing for locations	
Project	Description	Suggested means of implementation	Cost/budget
Boundary at southern end of common (also refer 6.5.1)	Proposed barrier combining fencing and hedge	Volunteers (CTS)	In place
Minor works around car park	Earthworks to form obvious route from car park to Twmbarlwm via information board. Tie in with proposed boundary/barrier layout	CCBC	£6K (exc. professional fees)
Reinstate motorbike damage (also refer 6.6.2)	Localised earthworks to prevent runoff scour, cultivate damaged areas in late spring to allow regeneration. Some places will require measures to break up large eroded areas e.g. importation of suitable rocky material. Erect temporary protective fences as appropriate.	CCBC, TCBC & Commoners, volunteers (training)	£18K (exc. professional fees)
Manage conifers	Cut out and remove regenerating conifers close to forest boundary	Commoners & volunteers	Voluntary
Close ORPA (also refer 6.5.4)	Legal process to close route (and remove 'excuse' for motorised vehicle to access open land)	TCBC	TCBC
Improve pedestrian link to visitor centre	Waymarking on moorland, path construction down to car park 3, provide road crossing, grading and path construction through to existing path network via ruined house	CCBC & NRW	£11K (exc. professional fees)
Improve interpretation	Part of a major reassessment following the wholesale changes expected as a result of the Phytophthora outbreak. Tied to 7.3.2	NRW, CCBC & TCBC	More detailed study required

7.3.2 Around Cwmcarn visitor centre:

- Improvements to access road (NRW Project)
- Review signage and orientation for visitors (MTB/Visitor Centre/Forest Drive)
- New route down to quarry, pump track in quarry
- Local enterprise initiative
- Improved interpretation and link to surroundings including to the canal through interpretation and art project

7.3.2 Around Cwmcarn Visitor Centre		Refer 6.0 Strategy Drawing for locations	
Project	Description	Suggested means of implementation	Cost/budget
Improvements to NRW access road	Rationalise passing places, tidy margins, new entrance to 'forest'	NRW (FCW) Initiative	NRW budget
Review signage and orientation for visitors	Minimum of new signage strategy to direct visitors to the various parts of the site. Consider 'gateway' to forest drive to create distinct entrance (currently 'anonymous')	CCBC/NRW	£20K
New route down to quarry, pump track in quarry (also refer 6.7.6)	Physical works to land above quarry and rear slope of quarry to create downhill route. Pump track constructed in quarry (existing track in place)	CCBC, Private company, volunteers	Works could be limited to construction of tracks, dependant on management (More detailed study required)
Local Enterprise Initiative			
Improved link to surroundings through interpretation and art project	Tied to 7.3.1. Emphasis shift from Theme 'Forest' to Place 'Twmbarlwm'. Part of a wider review of access and interpretation	NRW (FCW) Initiative	£50K estimated but more detailed study required

7.3.3 North from 'linking feature' (Henllys) to Blaen Bran and Mynydd Maen trig point:

- Construct 'linking feature', dry stone walls, gates, barriers, artworks
- Interpretation boards
- Surfacing, repair of dedicated routes
- Waymarking along routes within upland and from Cwmbrian
- Construct barrier above Blaen Bran
- Focal point at trig point, large stones, signage

7.3.3 North from linking feature to Blaen Bran and Mynydd Maen trig point		Refer 6.0 Strategy Drawing for locations	
Project	Description	Suggested means of implementation	Cost/budget
Construct 'linking feature' (also refer 6.5.2)	Dry stone walls, gates, barriers, artworks, seating	CCBC, TCBC	£120K (exc. professional fees)
Interpretation	Minimum of QR codes on posts or stones at intervals across upland	CCBC, TCBC	£5K
Surfacing, repair of dedicated routes on ridge and between Blaen Bran and Linking feature (also refer 6.5.3)	Localised drainage works, very minor earthworks to establish clear route, minor surfacing improvements to ensure sound surface for pedestrians and cyclists	Volunteers (with agreement of CCBC, TCBC & Commoners)	£10K budget for materials & tools
Closing of informal, duplicated routes	Localised earthworks to prevent runoff scour, cultivate damaged areas in late spring to allow regeneration. Erect temporary protective fences as appropriate.	Volunteers (with agreement of CCBC, TCBC & Commoners)	£10K budget for materials & tools
Waymarking along routes within upland and from Cwmbrian	Establish suitable design and material, create signage regime, ensure path surfaces are in good condition	TCBC, CCBC & volunteers	£4K
Construct barrier above Blaen Bran	At edge of common to control access	Volunteers	£2K
Focal point at trig point	Large stones, signage	CCBC, TCBC	£5K

7.3.4 Mynydd Maen to north west corner of common

Close off part of stone track
 Work to margins of existing track
 Path link to forest gate
 New car park at end of track, walls, gates, surfacing, signage
 Waymarking along routes from Crumlin, Newbridge, Panside and Hafodyrynys
 Temporary fencing and gates (motorbike control)

7.3.4 Mynydd Maen to north west corner of common		Refer 6.0 Strategy Drawing for locations	
Project	Description	Suggested means of implementation	Cost/budget
Close off part of stone track. Minimise extent of paved surface to allow access to compounds, form turning area. Reduce to 'grassy track' beyond this	Localised earthworks to prevent runoff scour, cultivate damaged areas in late spring to allow regeneration. Erect temporary protective fences as appropriate.	Volunteers, CCBC	£8K budget for materials & tools
Works to margins of existing track (also refer 6.5.8)	Reduce width and 'industrial' appearance	Volunteers	£3K budget for materials & tools
Path link to forest gate (refer Fig.6)	Construct path link from track to gate in forest to provide direction to users	Volunteers	£2K budget for materials & tools
New car park at end of track	Walls, gates, surfacing, signage	CCBC	£45K (excluding professional fees)
Waymarking along routes from Crumlin, Newbridge, Panside and Hafodyrynys	Establish suitable design and material, create signage regime, ensure path surfaces are in good condition (control drainage etc)	CCBC	£4K
Temporary fencing and gates (motorbike control)	Post and wire fence to last for 18month period. Gates to allow vehicles to use track and pedestrians and cyclists to use the approved routes.	Volunteers	£1K

7.3.5 Pontymoile area

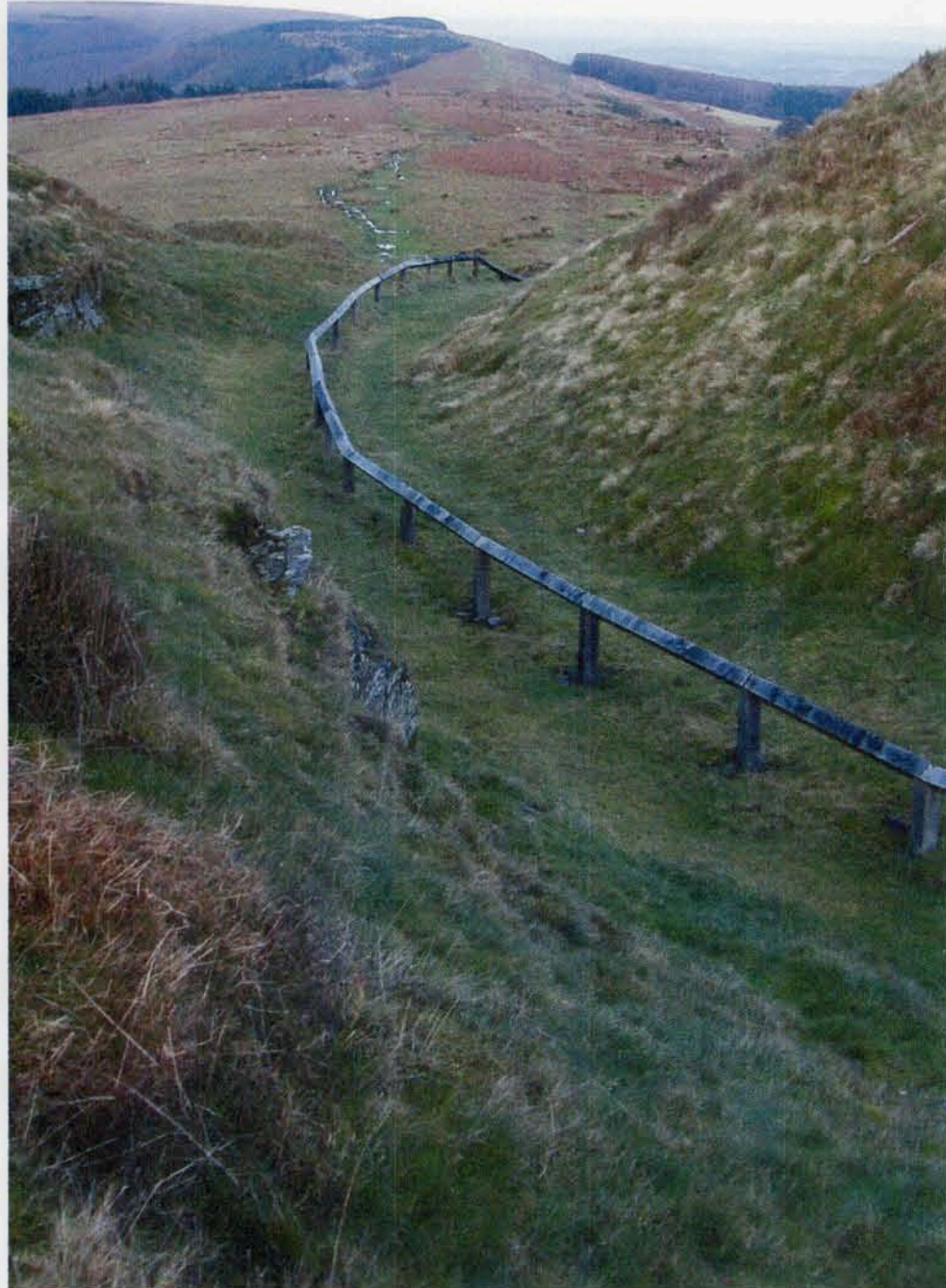
Surfacing of route to Mynydd Maen from Mountain Air car park and from Cwm Lickey
 Temporary fencing and gates (motorbike control)
 Upgrade existing footpath network from Cwmyrnyscoy quarry into study area
 New car park at bus turning area with interpretation maps etc
 Create footpath link to Glyn Pits
 Refurbish buildings at Glyn pits

7.3.5 Pontymoile area		Refer 6.0 Strategy Drawing for locations	
Project	Description	Suggested means of implementation	Cost/budget
Surfacing of route to Mynydd Maen from Mountain Air car park and from Cwm Lickey	Select best routes and construct low-key surfaced track from car park to Mynydd Maen via ridge and link to Cwm Lickey	Volunteers	£10K budget for materials & tools
Temporary fencing and gates (motorbike control)	Post and wire fence to last for 18 month period. Gates to allow pedestrians and cyclists to use the approved routes.	Volunteers	£1K
Upgrade existing footpath network from Cwmyrnyscoy quarry into study area	Review existing network, provide signage, stiles, gates etc to improve link between Cwmyrnyscoy and Cwm Lickey	Volunteers	£4K
New car park at bus turning area with interpretation maps etc	Construct small car park at large junction (if vehicular access to Glyn Pits not possible)	TCBC	£30K (exc. professional fees)
Create footpath link to Glyn Pits	Construct footpath link to Glyn Pits along railway formation	Volunteers	£10K budget for materials & tools
Refurbish buildings at Glyn Pits	Complete refurbishment of Glyn Pits buildings, provide interpretation. Upgrade to vehicular access and car park in due course	TCBC in collaboration with landowner and community group	More detailed study required

7.3.6 Management

Boundary inspections and repairs (community monitors)
 Policing motorbikes, fly tipping
 Path repairs
 Habitat management, mowing, wetlands

7.3.6 Management		Refer 6.0 Strategy Drawing for locations	
Project	Description	Suggested means of implementation	Cost/budget
Boundary inspections and repairs	Check perimeter fences and with forestry for breaches suitable for motorbike access	Volunteers (community monitors), NRW, Commoners	£5K annual budget for materials & tools
Policing motorbikes, fly tipping	Policing exercise, continue work of dedicated Landscape Crime Officer	Volunteers (community monitors), Gwent Police	CCBC and TCBC contribution (established)
Path repairs	Monitor condition, effect repairs as required	Volunteers	£5K annual budget for materials & tools
Habitat management, mowing, wetlands	Implement recommendations of management plan	Commoners, Volunteers	Commoners' contribution



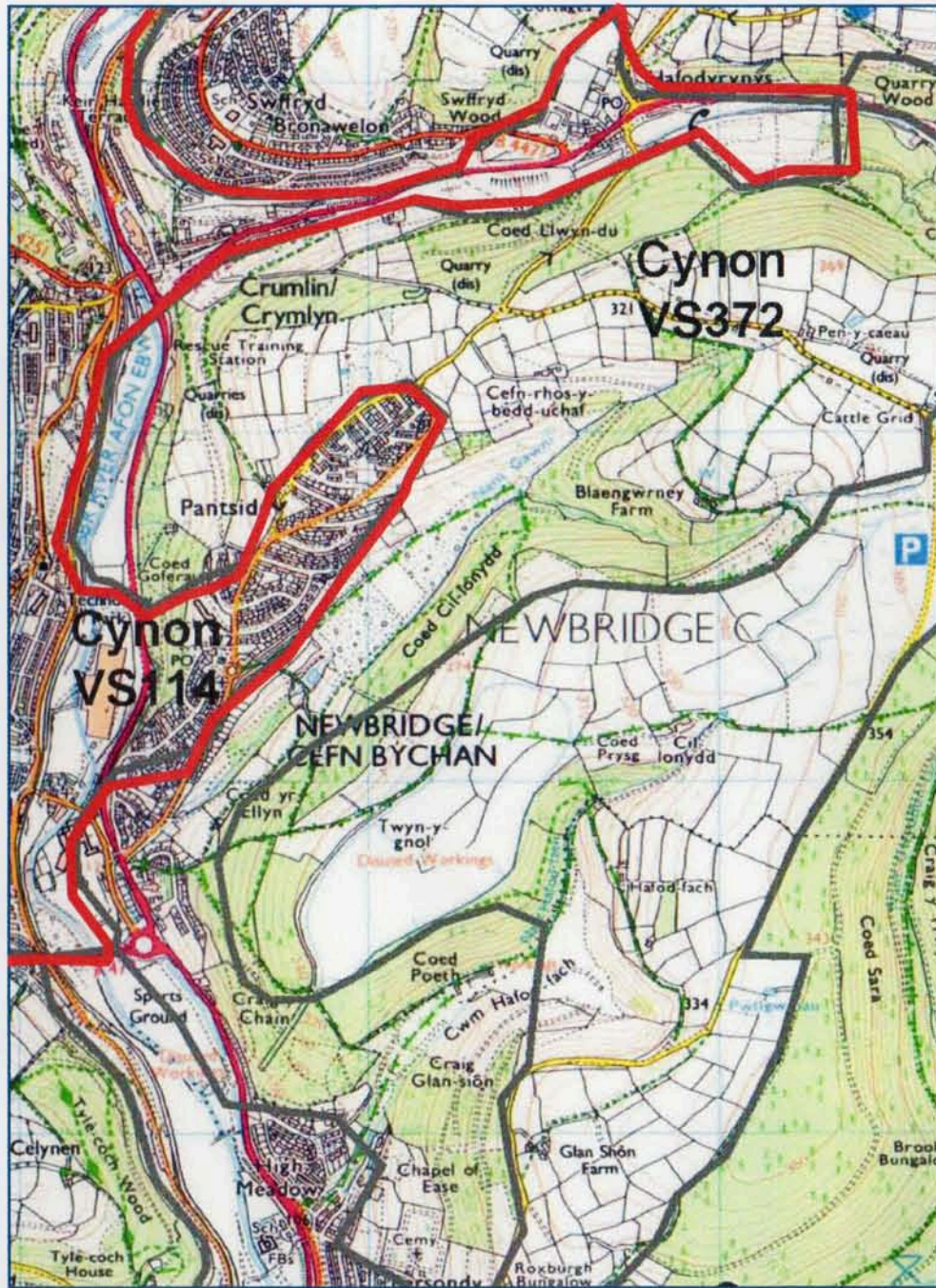
8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The Mynydd Maen and Twmbarlwm upland is a large and diverse area. It is a significant landscape resource that has great potential to benefit the large surrounding population. It is clearly important to the surrounding communities and this is evidenced by the existing range of community activities in the area. Not least of these is the obvious value attached to the significant archaeological resource that the area holds.
- 8.2 There is an extensive infrastructure of paths, tracks and bridleways that provide access into the area. Although this has in some ways allowed some of the abuse of the space to continue, if properly managed, this will facilitate comprehensive access to the area for recreation and provide crucial links between communities across the upland. This strategy provides a course of actions to bring control and efficiency to this network.
- 8.3 The landscape of the area will be subject to dynamic forces, with enormous physical changes to the landscape imminent as a result of the recent outbreak of tree disease. Although this will be seen by many to be negative, it provides the opportunity to review the way that the entire area is used and perceived.
- 8.4 Increased recreational access, centred on an axis between Cwmcarn visitor centre and Blaen Bran has the potential to meet many of the Welsh Government objectives on developing Health, Economy and Training and Education as well as being a potential hub for Community activity. Realisation of this strategy will lead to the better ongoing management of the area, building on the existing landscape and community resource.
- 8.5 The study identifies a number of funding sources that should be available for the implementation of elements of the overall scheme. The proposals will benefit all aspects of the landscape of the study area and involve many partners in achieving its objectives. Given this comprehensive approach, the project would be a suitable candidate for HLF Landscape Partnership Project funding and an outline of how this could be achieved is set out in the appendix.

Appendices

- 2.3 Photographs and Description
- 2.4 Planning Designations
- 2.5 Ecological / Biodiversity
- 2.6 Archeology
- 2.7 Forestry

- The Brief
- Summary of relevant background documents
- Feedback from Consultation
- Outline HLF bid structure



Area 1

*"CynonVS114
Conglomeration of many settlements which coalesce...an odd environment with the scale of a large town but with some areas of open fields and open/vegetated areas within the built form.....Rolling topography with north-south trending valleys loses some of its distinctiveness as a result of being swathed in built form - however the marked differences in elevation between valley floor (eg 100mAOD) and hilltop (eg229mAOD) are still apparent and contribute to its sense of place" (extract from LANDMAP)*

This is the extreme edge of large aspect area that contains the north western corner of the study area. It comprises the settlements of Crumlin and Newbridge including Panside, a housing estate that extends up the hillside. The settlements in the valley floor tend to be dominated by the heavily wooded steep valley sides, especially parts of Crumlin, which extends into the western end of the east-west orientated Cwm y Glyn. The more elevated parts of these settlements often have extensive views across the study area, including Panside, much of which extends up a south west facing ridge from the floor of the Ebbw valley.

A472 at Crumlin



Housing in Panside



A472 at Hafodyrynys showing steep sided valley, forestry and remnant fields



Crumlin, Cwm y Glyn beyond



Aspect area viewed from A472 overbridge - Panside in centre of view



Hafodyrynys side valley (looking north)

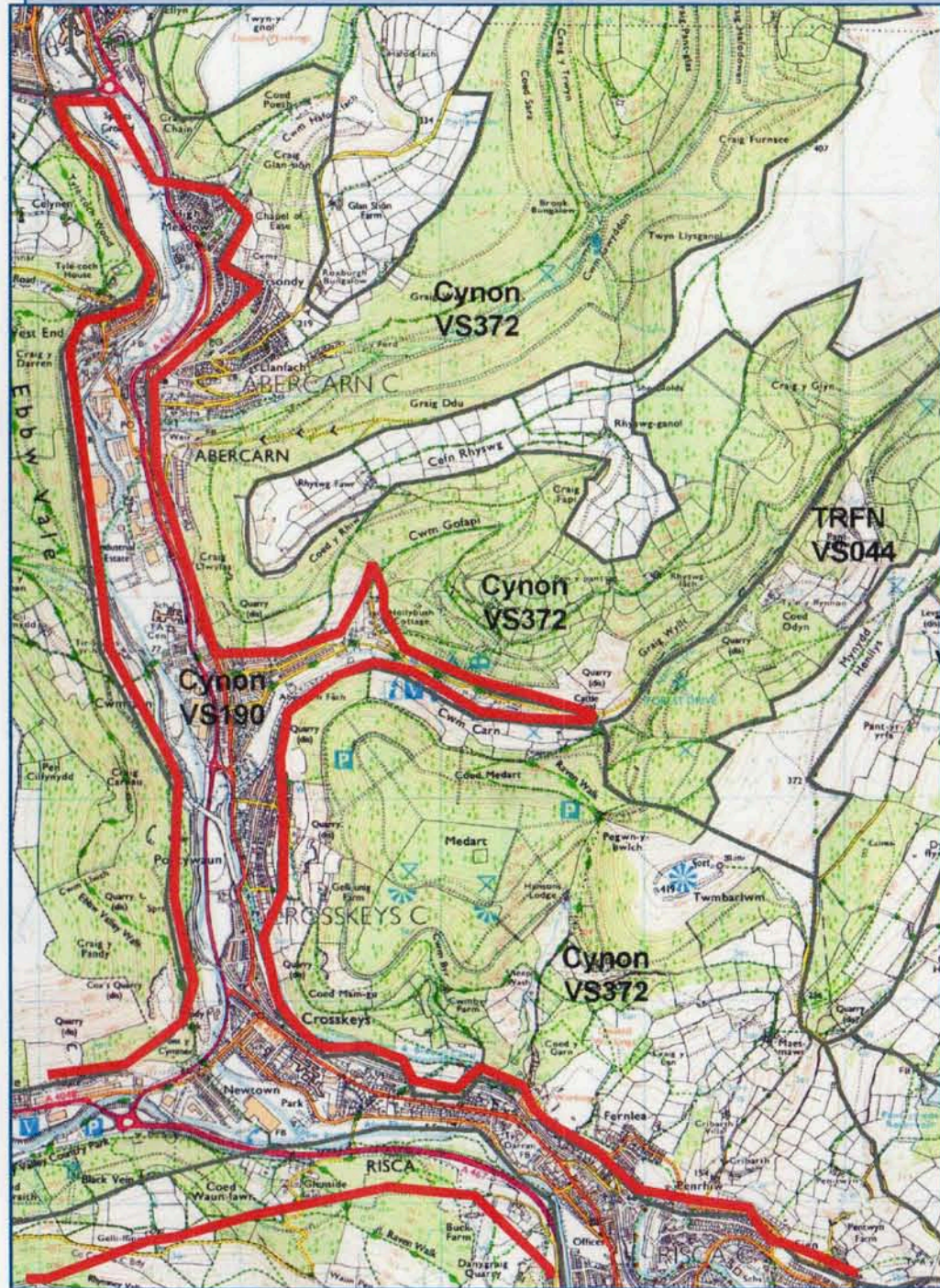


View to study area from upper part of Crumlin



Cwm y Glyn confluence with Ebbw Vale at Crumlin, Swyffryd in left of view

2.3.1 Photographs and Description



Area 2

"CynonVS190
 Urban area of housing with some areas of industry in valley setting. Some views out to wooded valley sides and open tops lessen the overall sense of enclosure and provide a small measure of relief from the dominant built form and noise from traffic on the A467 along the south western areas" (extract from LANDMAP).

Valley floor that contains the western edge of the study area, where it is often dominated by the A467 and adjacent B4591. Further south and east, downstream of the confluence of the Sirhowy and Ebbw rivers, the widening valley floor includes the settlements of Cross Keys and Risca. This area extends deep into the study area at Cwmcarn where it includes the floor of the tributary valley as far as the Cwmcarn visitor centre, car parks and lake.



Cwmcarn Visitor Centre



Cwmcarn visitor centre



Cycle route



Y Mynydd (Mountain Bike Route)



Visitor car park



Visitor car park



Brecon and Monmouth Canal



Towpath, Crosskeys



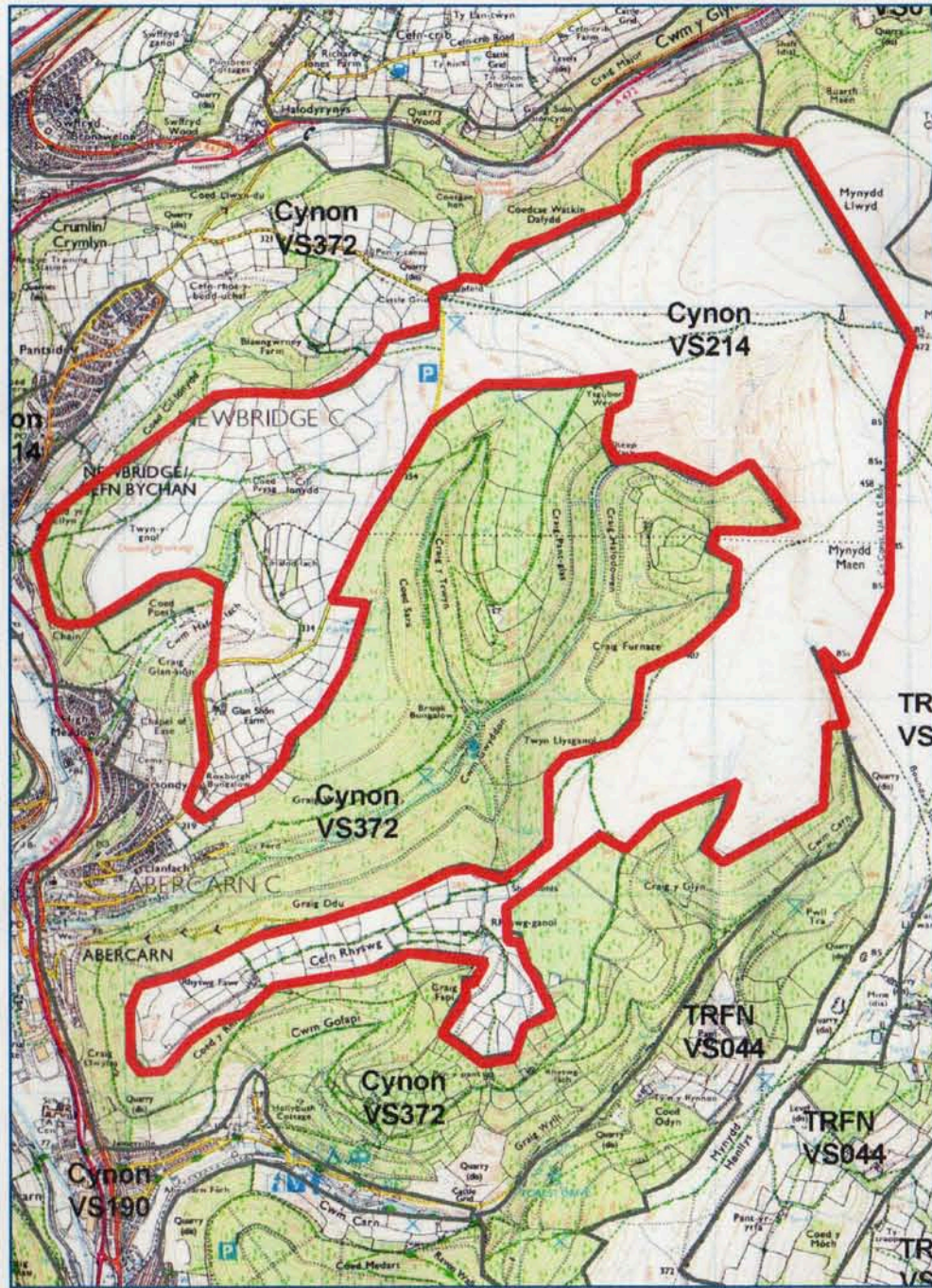
Approach road to Cwmcarn forest and visitor centre



Cwmcarn Road, beyond visitor centre



Urban fringe, Jamesville (Cwmcarn)



Area 3

*"CynonVS214
Mynydd Llwyd and Mynydd Maen
Areas of upland comprising both heath and grassland on the western slopes of both Mynydd Maen and Llwyd. These areas are largely flanked by coniferous plantation woodland with more areas to the east. More westerly areas in valleys have smaller field patterns. Some views to adjacent upland areas of Newbridge in the valley to the west"* (extract from LANDMAP).

This upland area includes much of the open, common land within the study area and the agricultural land contained by a strong field pattern on the ridges between the valleys. This upland pasture is typically enclosed by outgrown Beech hedges (now rows of trees), and dry stone walls, which also mark the boundary with the common. The condition of these walls varies, often being in poor condition along the boundary with the forestry plantations that edge much of this area. Here, it is usually supplemented by stockproof fencing, again of varying condition. There are various points of access onto the upland within these areas, not least via the minor road that runs from Pantiside and Hafodyrynys, across the common to Abercarn. The open common area is dominated in places by the power transmission pylons, telecommunications masts and associated compounds.

This area includes the active quarry at Abercarn and the reclaimed colliery tips at Twyn-y-gnol above Newbridge.



Minor road crossing the common



Flooded track and pylons



Off-road vehicle damage



Car park at edge of common



Car park on common



Minor road crossing the common



Track access across common to Pylons and telecom masts etc



Sheepfolds, Rhyswg-ganol



Fly tipping



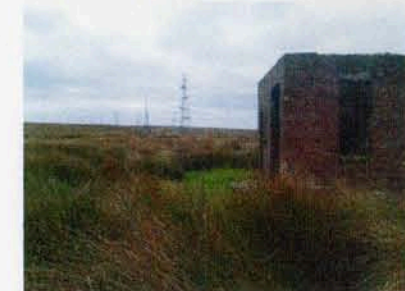
Pwllgwinau



Nant Gwyddon looking south west



Typical boundary between common and forestry



Mining building and pylons



Heath and coniferous plantations



Quarry above Cwmcarn



View west, Twyn-y-Gwl tip on right of view



Cattle grazing common



High quality wall at edge of common



Pylons, mast and compound



Heath and Cwm Carn

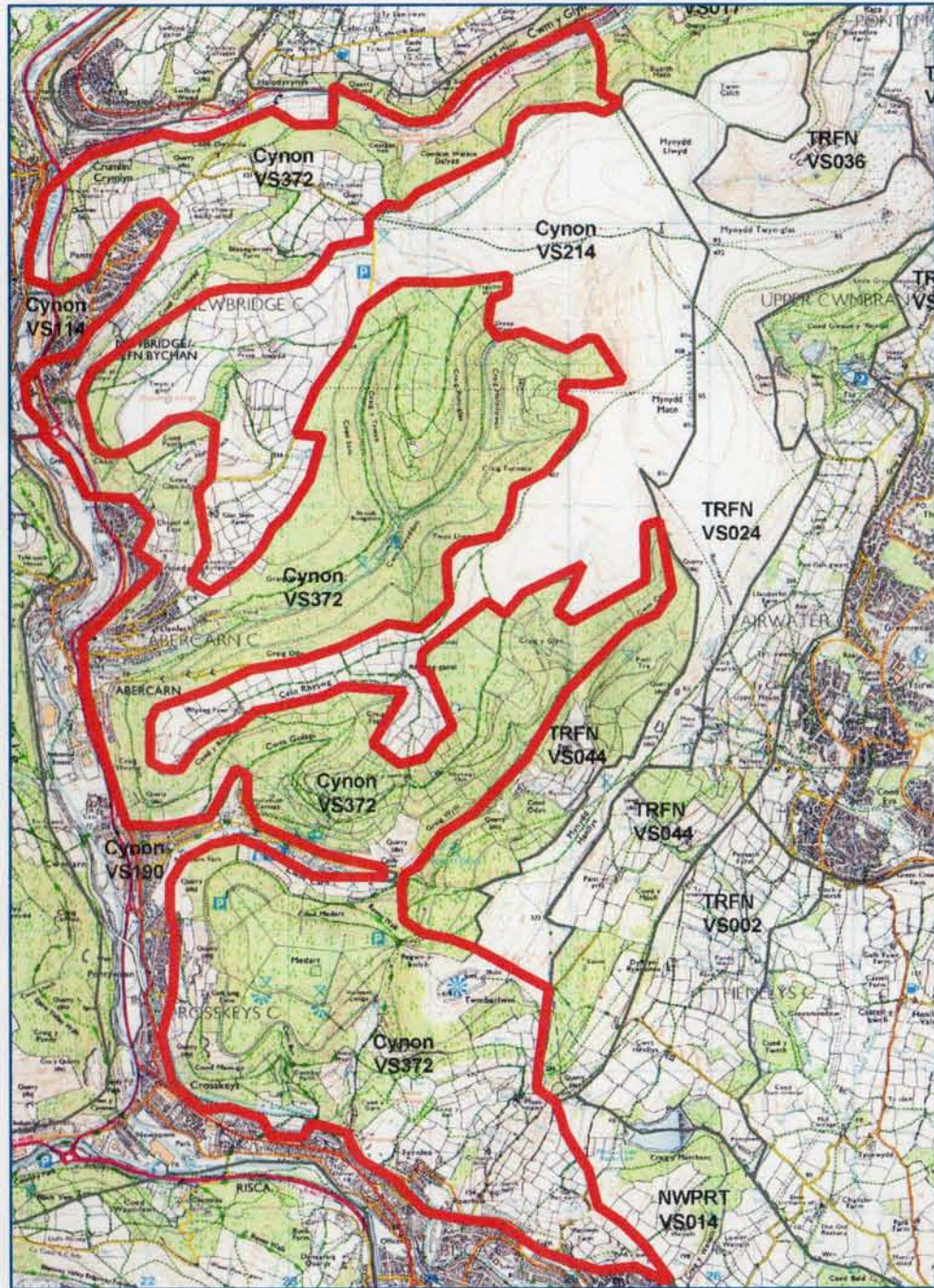


Farmland at Graig fapi



Cefn Rhyswg

2.3.3 Photographs and Description



Area 4

*"CynonVS372
Mynydd Maen*

Upland area of ridges (reaching 450mAOD) and valleys (at approx. 200m AOD) with conifer and mixed woodland mosaic. Open ridgelines and woodland spaces afford views across adjacent wooded valleys, and urban areas. Visual detractors on open ridgelines include overhead powerlines and telecom mast, strong intrusive elements that disrupt the mosaic pattern of the landscape" (extract from LANDMAP).

This area includes much of the steeply sloping land in the central and western part of the study area. Much of this is forestry plantations, although there are extensive areas of native broadleaved woodland. In the north around Panside and in the south above Risca, are remnants of the pre-industrial field pattern, where the land is relatively gently sloping. The field pattern is also visible in many locations within the forestry plantations.

In the south, this area includes the hill fort at Twmbarlwm and the land that slopes down to the fringes of Risca, where isolated houses and farmsteads survive within the field pattern. The forestry plantations in this area include part of the Cwm Carn forest drive. Also in this area is the large disused quarry to the north of Risca and sections of the Brecon and Monmouthshire canal.



Coed y Darren



Quarry



Quarry entrance and track above Crumlin



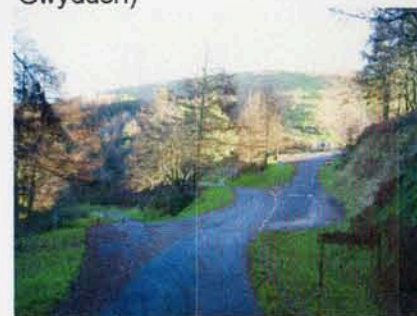
Risca Quarry



Forestry barrier, Llanfach (Cwm Gwyddon)



Cwm Gwyddon



Pegwyn y Bwlch (FOREST DRIVE)



Canal at Crosskeys



View north east into Cwm y Glyn



Derelict pre-forestry wall Cwm y Glyn



Cwm Gwyddon



Canal at Risca



Playing fields, Panside



Cwmcarn Forest Drive



Forest drive



Approach to Twmbarlwm from south



Erosion at Twmbarlwm

2.3.4 Photographs and Description

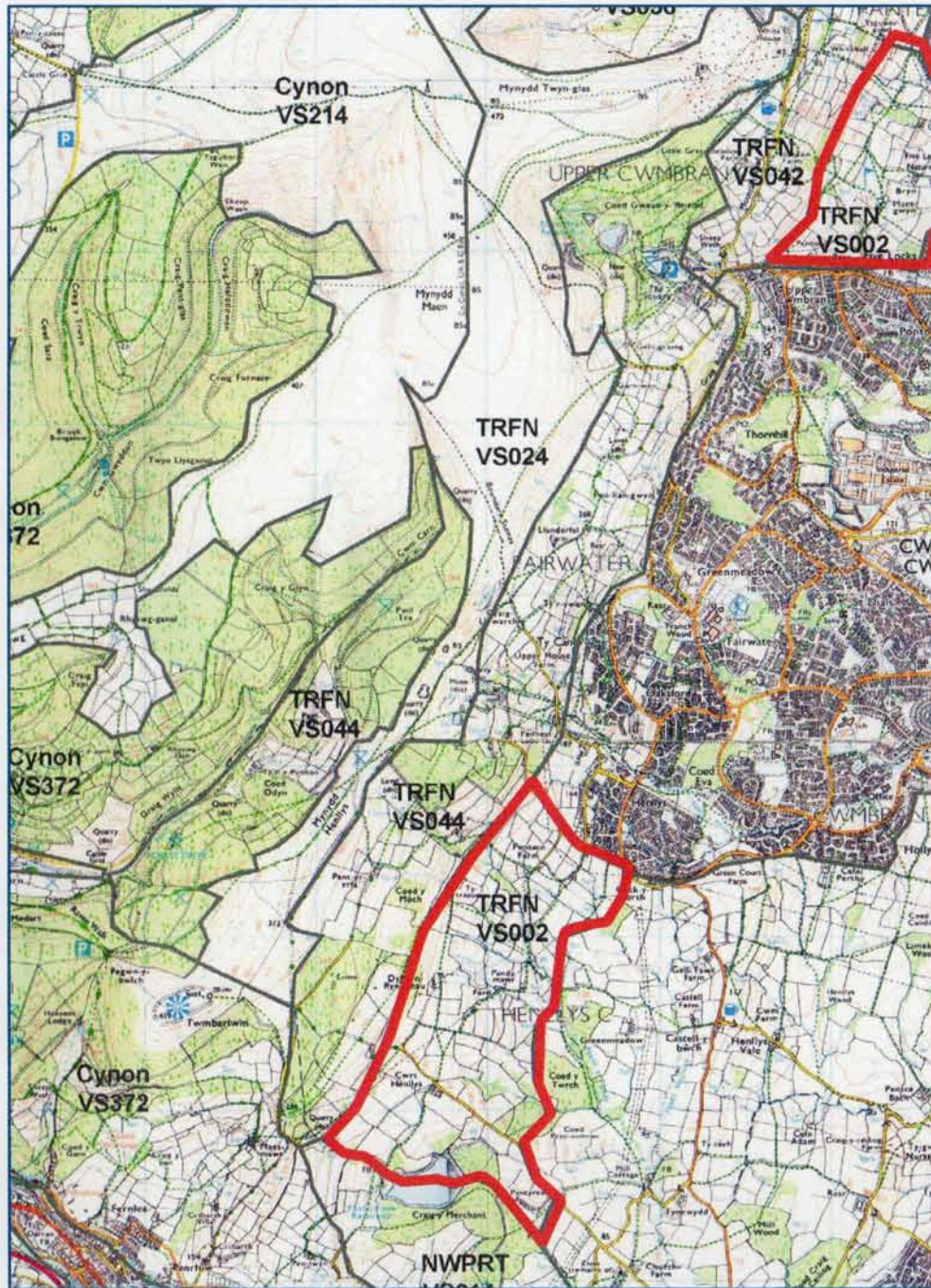
Area 5

“TRFNVS002

Upland area with easterly aspect ranging from approx. 120m to 200m AOD, dominated by slopes, wooded (broadleaf and conifer) blocks and open tops to produce a mosaic pattern. Very quiet, secluded, with slight lowland feel engendered by proximity to, and extent of views over, the adjacent rolling farmland, and the wider views to the urban area of Cwmbran and Sebastol. This proximity may explain the network of public footpaths that criss cross the area, several of which provide a direct access link with the urban area. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and a golf course lie in the area” (extract from LANDMAP).

This includes two separate areas of open countryside immediately to the east of the study area. These lie to the north and to the south of Cwmbran and are a transition between the steep slopes of the study area and the more rolling countryside to the east.

Access through these areas is limited to numerous public footpaths and narrow lanes. These are impractical for large volumes of traffic.



View across paddocks towards Mynydd Henllys



View across area south east to reservoir and the Bristol Channel



Cwmbran edge - south west road junction with minor road



View to Twmbarlwm



Minor road end north west of Cwrt Henllys, track access to Twmbarlwm and footpath north east along hillside



Typical minor road

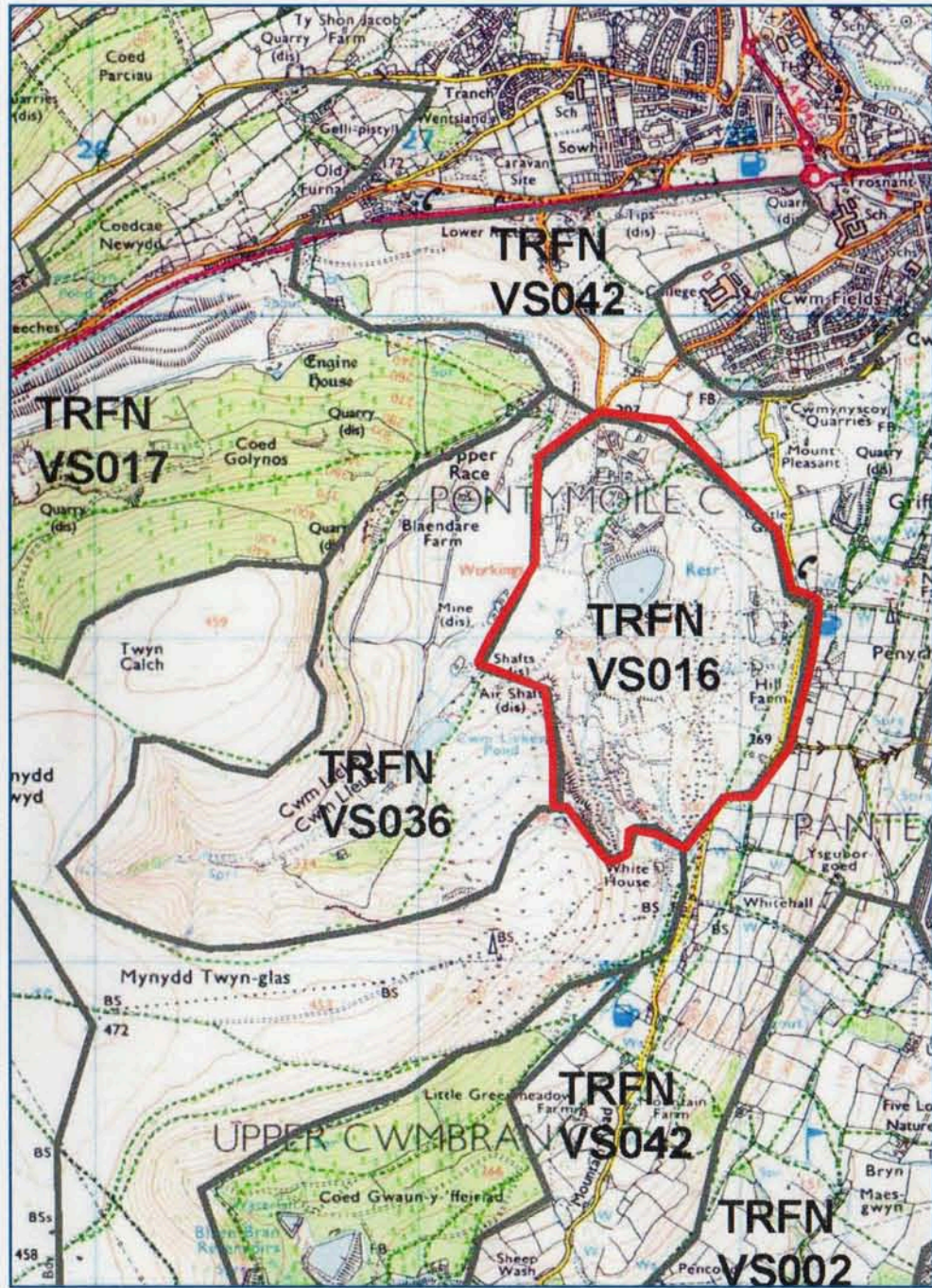
Area 6

“TRFNVS016

Pontymoile Valley - an enclosed valley with strong evidence of ground disturbance - now mixed grazing, woodland, bracken. Steep valley slopes lead to peak beyond” (extract from LANDMAP)

This area is contained in the south by a high, worked cliff face and includes the jumbled landscape of revegetated tips on the land that slopes down to the Pontymoile reservoir. The northern part of this area is an informal arrangement of narrow, unsurfaced roads and irregular residential and industrial plots set within the former mineral workings tips. As such, it has an air of inaccessibility, although a public footpath does pass through it. The central part of this area is a scheduled ancient monument.

The minor 'Mountain' road contains the eastern edge of this area. This passes through a small settlement which through its layout has the atmosphere of a village, set around a 'green' at the edge of the common. It is clearly too small to be called a village and the pub is closed.



Bog habitats near reservoir



Tips near reservoir



Area of paddocks and residential properties within tips north of reservoir



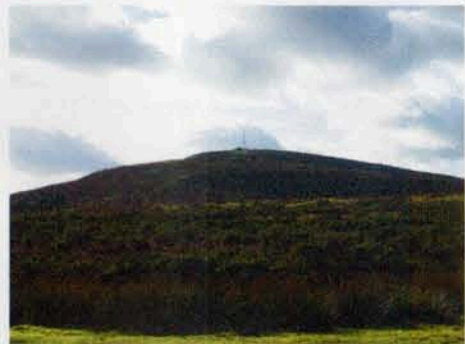
Pontymoile reservoir



Approach to residential area from north



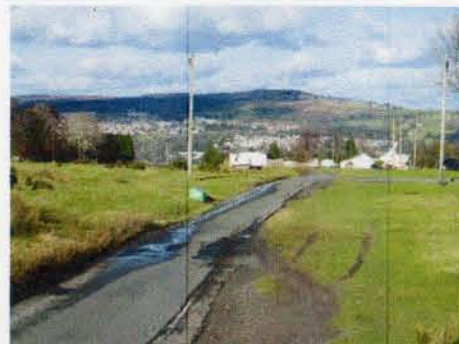
Settlement at eastern edge of area



Worked rock face - telecom mast above



Mountain road



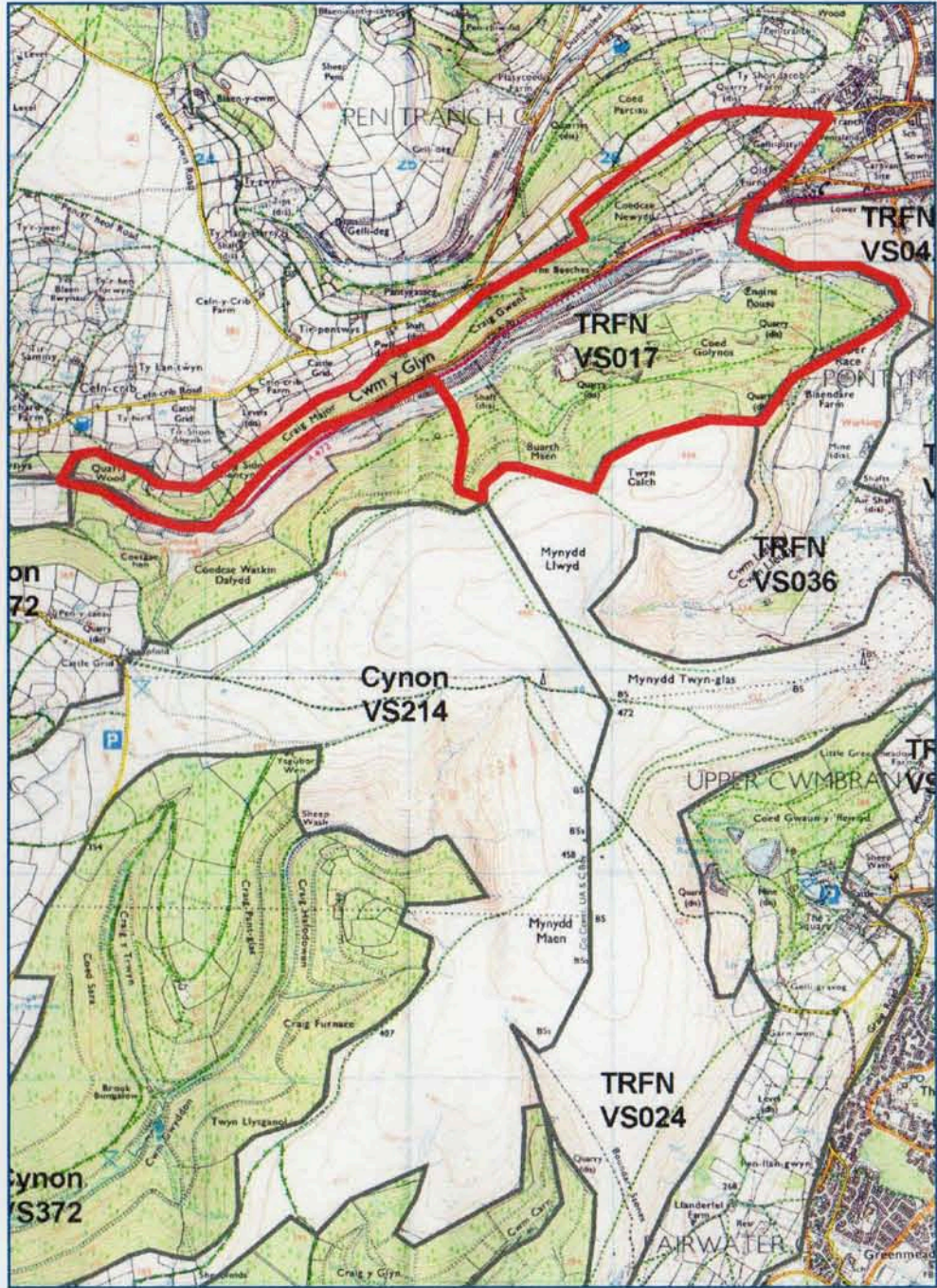
'Village' centre

Area 7

TRFNVS017

Cwm y Glyn - Very tight, deep valley with wooded slope ranging from approx. 190mAOD to 440nAOD; woodland composed of broadleaf sp(eg oak), larch, conifers, valley floor dominated by busy road. Shade important visual and sensory quality on valley slopes - differences in microclimate evident, especially on wooded north facing slopes. Forests though fairly dense are crossed by public footpaths, tending to follow contours along valley side. Evidence of past mining activity is scattered along the valley sides (eg old quarries, workings and switchgear)" (extract from LANDMAP).

This area includes the mainly native broadleaved woodland on the lower slopes on the north side of the valley, and the wooded north facing slopes of Mynydd Llwyd and Twyn Calch, most of which comprises Larch plantations. This area includes land within Torfaen CBC, being an extension of Area 4 (Cynon VS372) which lies within Caerphilly CBC. The valley has been dominated in the past by mining and this is evident to most visitors from the obviously reclaimed landform along the lower slopes on the southern side of the road and the unusual concrete building to the north of the A472. More detailed examination reveals several disused quarries, pits and adits and most notably the engine houses at Glyn Pits. These lie at the junction between the wooded slopes and the reclaimed area. There is a linking feature of a disused railway formation that extends around the landform to Cwm Lickey. The woodland at this eastern end of this area is native broadleaved woodland.



Old A472 looking west along Gwyn y Glyn



Colliery structure



A472 looking east along Gwn y Glyn



A472 looking east



Railway formation



Engine houses at Glyn Pits



Forestry track from A472. Broadleaved woodland on northern slopes



Forestry track and larch plantations



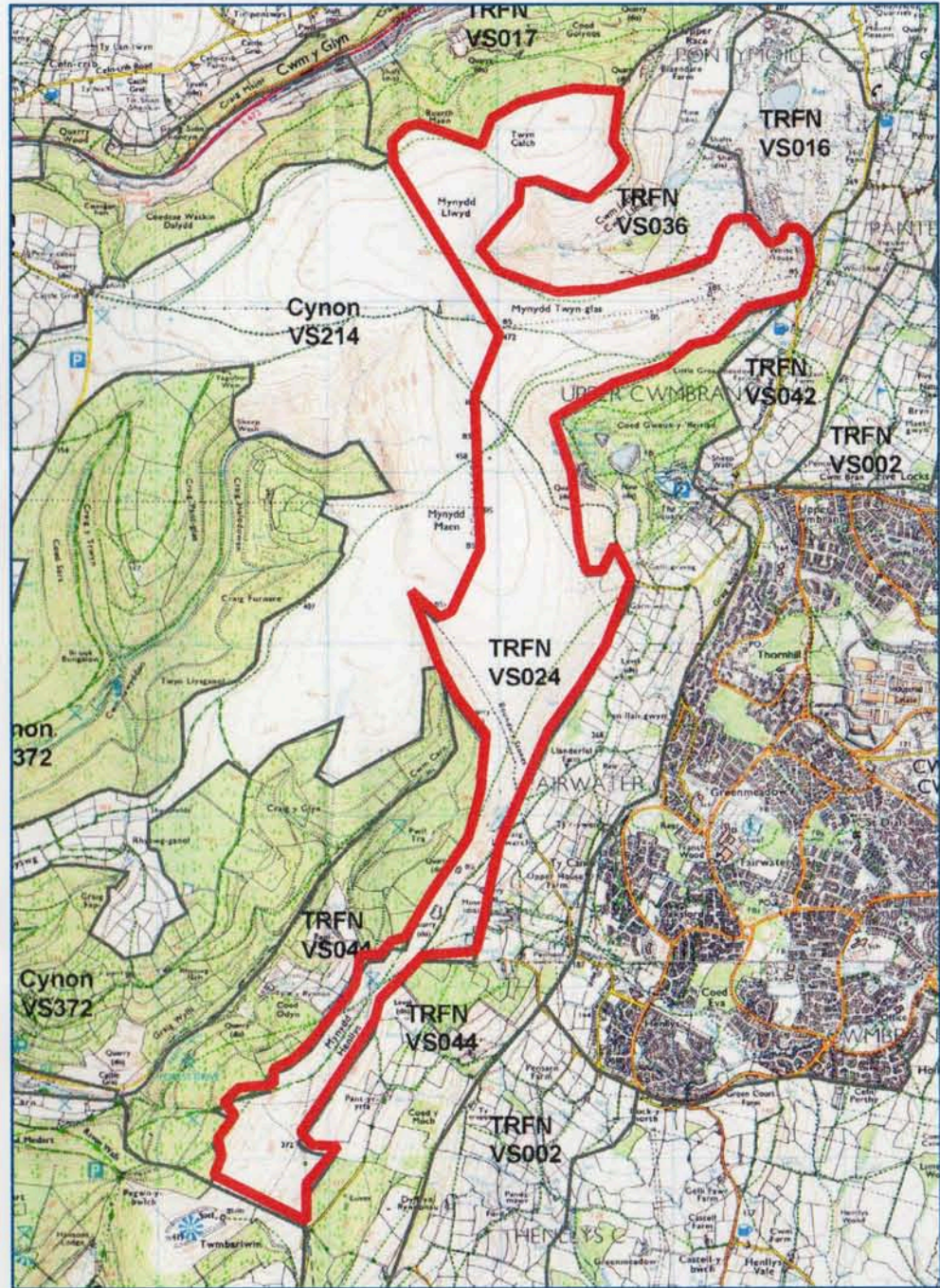
Area 8

TRFNVS024

Upland area ranging from approx. 400m to 550mAOD. Land dominated by open grazed hill tops of rough grassland/heath, exposed/windy and with panoramic views over upland areas and over valleys. Strong sense of place result of views and simple set defining/distinctive (open/hilly/rough grassland/exposure/elevation)" (extract from LANDMAP).

This is the eastern part of the upland within the study area, principally the ridges between Cwm y Glyn, Cwm Lickey and Blaen Bran and between Cwmbran and Cwm Carn (Mynydd Henllys). Views extend down these valleys across Pontypool and Cwmbran and ultimately to Wentwood and across the Bristol Channel. Views extend to the west but are normally contained by the wooded valleys.

In common with Area 3 (VS214) the upland is in places dominated by the pylons and telecoms masts and by the eroded tracks created by off road vehicles. Most notable here is a deeply worn track that runs due south from the triangulation point on Mynydd Twyn-glas; this is not a public right of way. There are numerous industrial archaeological remains, mostly quarries and tips.



Erosion on ridge and head of Cwmcarn



'Track' with pylons, looking north west



View east from above Cwm Lickey



Erosion on ridge north of Twmbarlwm (Mynydd Henllys)



View east from ridge



'Track' on ridgeway (Mynydd Twyn-glas)



View north along Mynydd Henllys - ridge



South-east corner of common



Telecom mast above Pontymoile



Erosion on the common close to Twmbarlwm



Eastern flank of Mynydd Henllys with quarry



Motorbike damage near Twmbarlwm



View across ridge



Narrowest point of ridge 'track' in foreground



View north from rear south east corner of common



View from wood across Mynydd Henllys



Edge of common (east)



View of quarry on east slope of Mynydd Henllys

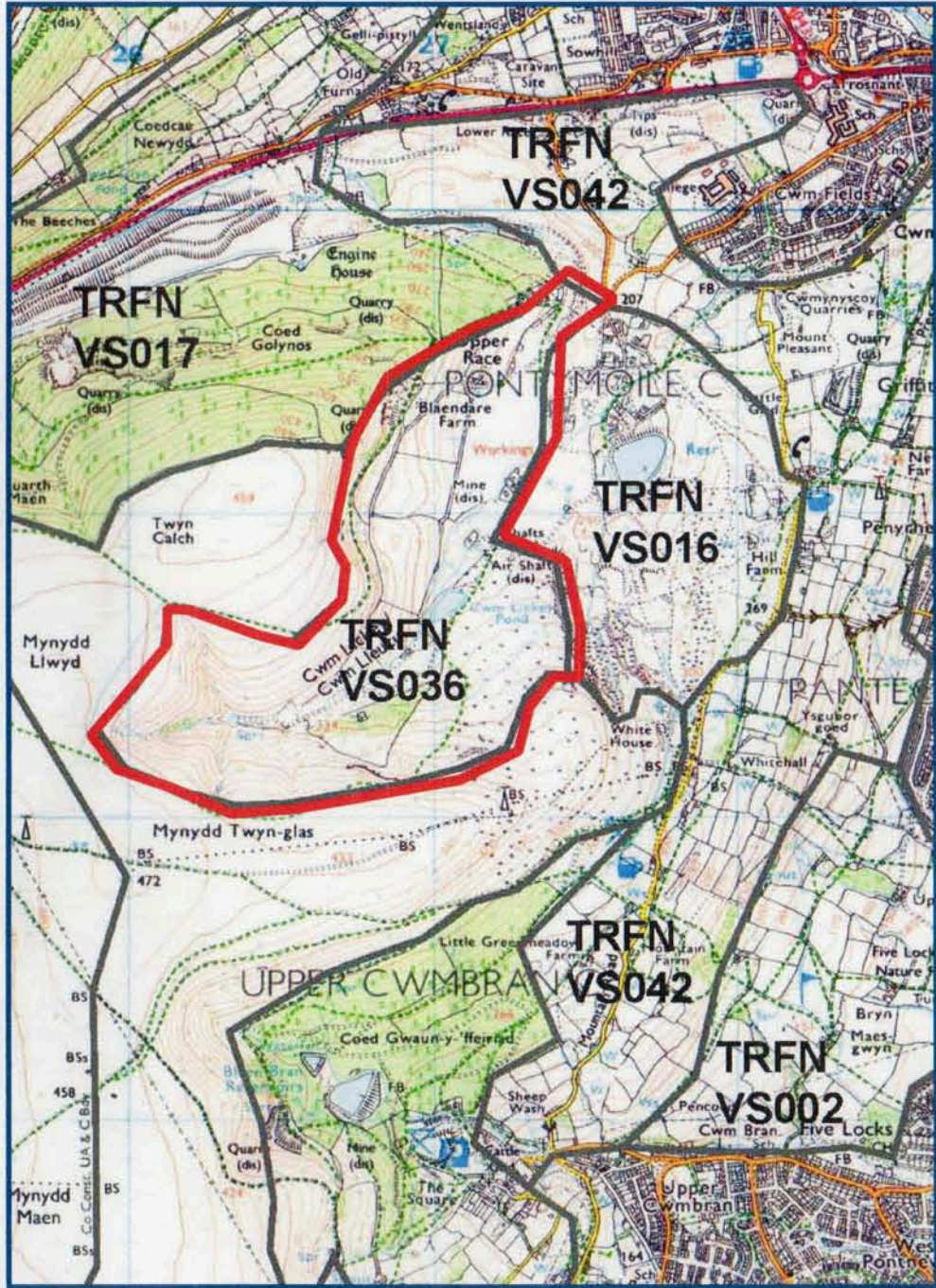
2.3.8 Photographs and Description

Area 9

"TRFNVS036

Enclosed side valley, moorland slopes, field pattern in valley bottom. Some areas of partially derelict/regenerated former mining and scattered small quarries. Land ranges from approx. 250m to 410mAOD. Views out of the urban fringe and from higher slopes to adjacent upland, generally quiet, separate and remote" (extract from LANDMAP).

Cwm Lickey is a steep sided feature that extends into the upland in the north eastern corner of the study area. The northern part of this area is farmed, comprising some pre-industrial pasture and some reclaimed land, which is associated with the workings around Pontymoile. Further west and south, the very steep slopes are partly wooded with Beech dominant. The industrial archaeological remains, including the pond are obvious in the floor of the valley, and link into the area of tips around Pontymoile reservoir to the east.



Trees along boundary between fields and common, Cwm Lickey



Motorbike damage end of Cwm Lickey



Reclaimed area, northern Cwm Lickey



Upper race

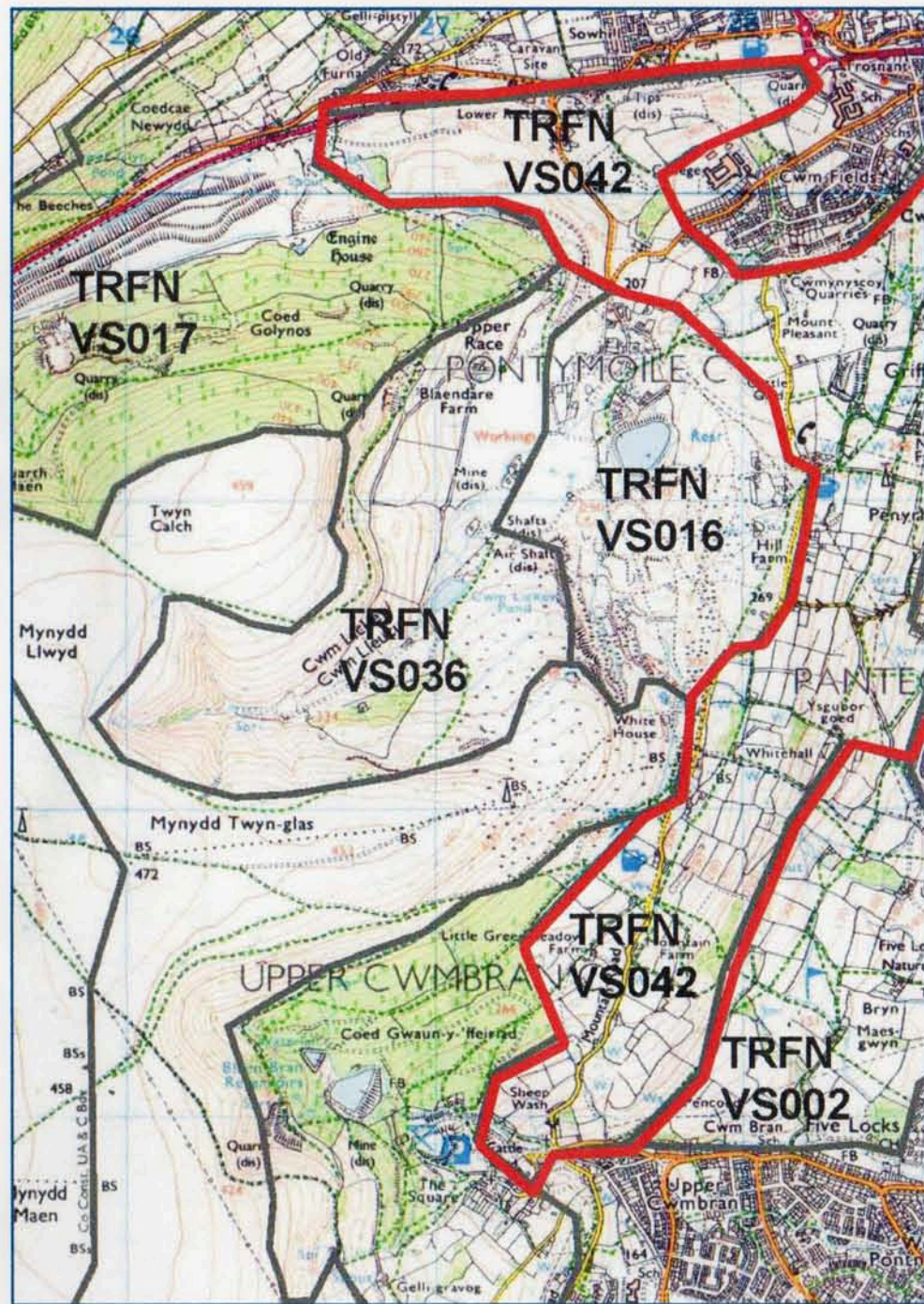


Cwm Lickey pond viewed from south



Northern part of Cwm Lickey

2.3.9 Photographs and Description



Area 10

“TRFNVS042

Upper and lower slopes of valley landscape ranging from approx. 150m to 300mAOD, with mix of both broadleaf woods and field pattern. Quiet, rural character between and above urban centres. Quality of views polarised with attractive views to upland areas and unattractive views to urban form. Excludes the urban area. Includes hedged lanes, small fields, some industrial archaeology including buildings and Cwmyrnyscoy quarry LNR. Much of the land disrupted by industrial workings and occupied by various uses. Northern part close to A472 contains semi-industrial yards” (extract from LANDMAP)

The northern part from Lower Race, close to the A472 to the area immediately south of Cwmyrnyscoy is heavily influenced by former industrial uses. There are yards and industrial era buildings, (some derelict) around the roads that link Cwm Lickey with Cwm y Glyn and Cwmyrnyscoy. Much of this northern area has been disturbed by mining or quarrying activity, a significant feature being the disused Cwmyrnyscoy quarry which is a Local Nature Reserve. There is an extensive network of paths and lanes.

Further south, this area comprises areas of pre-industrial pasture, mainly to the downhill (east) side of the Mountain road and the lower edge of the common as far as Blaen Bran.



Parking at Mountain Air



Cwmyrnyscoy Quarry (LNR)



Lane, part of network of tracks



Industrial building



Public footpath between Cwmyrnyscoy and Pontymoile



Cwmyrnyscoy



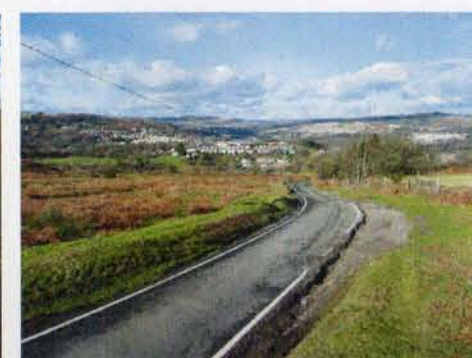
Bus Stop at road junction Pontymoile



Chapel at Cwm Fields



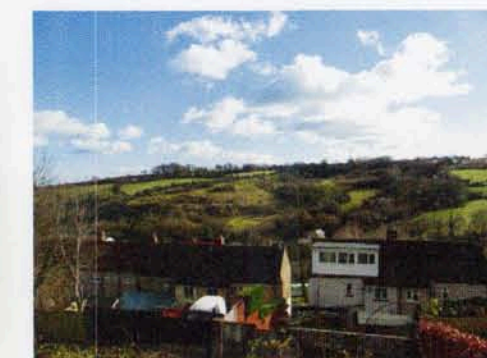
Lower Race (just off A472)



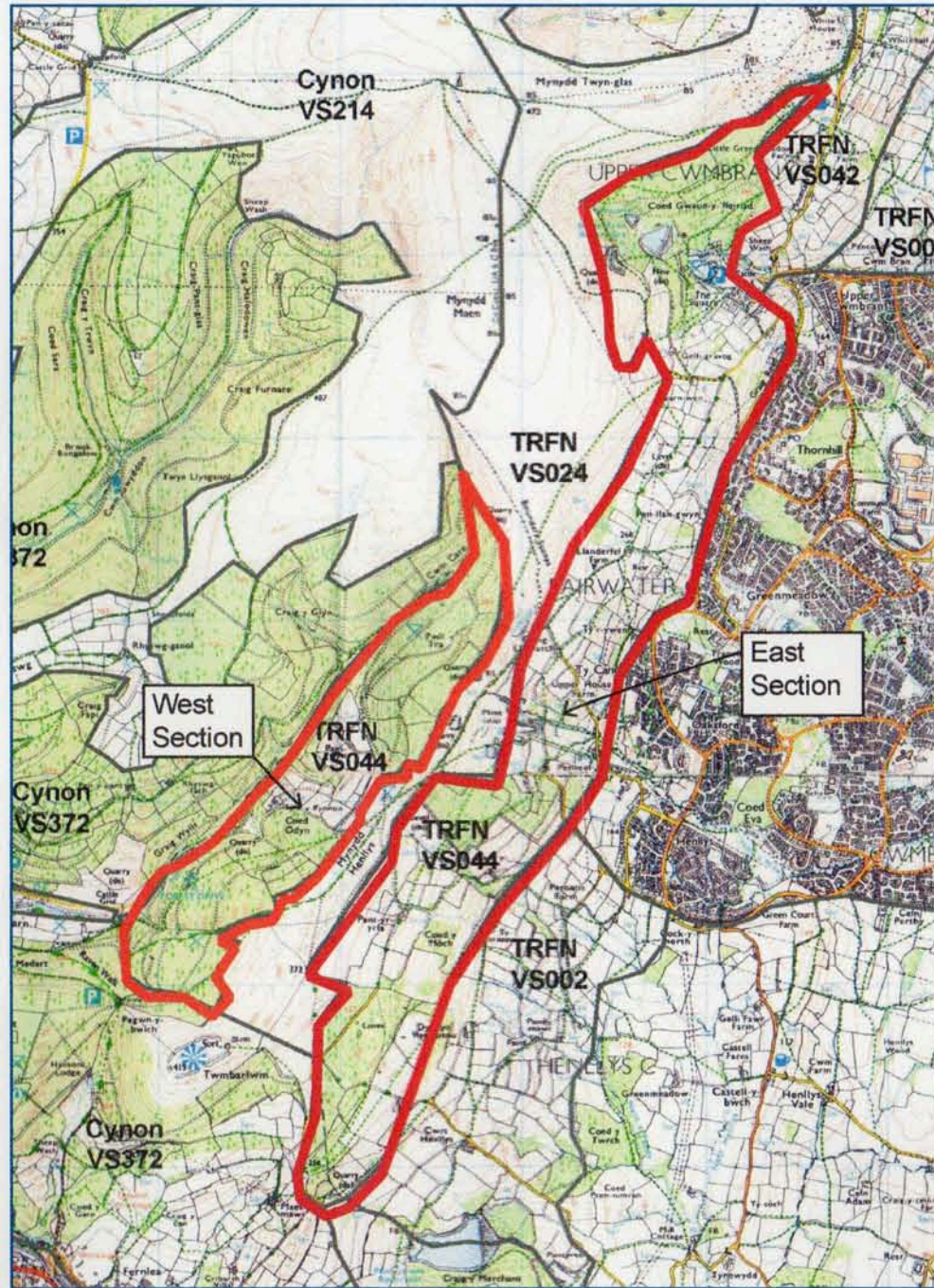
Mountain road (looking south)



View south from Mountain Air



Cwmyrnyscoy Quarry



Area 11 Western Section

“TRFNVS044

Rough grazing on slopes below upland grazing/hill tops, ranging approximately from 200m to 350mAOD. Strong relationship between higher area of Cwmbran and hills beyond. Dramatic views over valley below and rest of Cwmbran. Landscape on lower slopes dominated by urban development, elsewhere mosaic of field pattern and broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation are the dominant characteristic. Visual detractors include the sharp urban edge to east and overhead electricity cables” (extract from LANDMAP)

Western Section

This aspect area includes the west facing slope of Mynydd Henllys, the eastern side of Cwmcarn. This steep, north west-facing slope is mainly forested, and contains much of the Cwmcarn Forest Drive with its metalled roads, car parks and various attractions. The central part of the slope remains as pasture and there is evidence of the pre-forestry field pattern elsewhere within this area.



View west across farmland in forestry

Area 11 Eastern Section, North



Blaen Bran viewed from north



Western edge of Blaen Bran



Access along hillside from B & B



Approach to Blaen Bran from common showing bike erosion



Blaen Bran car park



Blaen Bran woods and reservoir



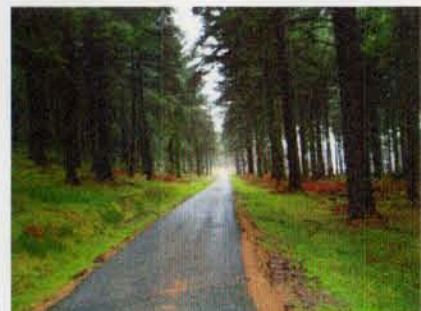
Access to common, south of Blaen Bran



The Square, Upper Cwmbran



Former parking area, Blaen Bran



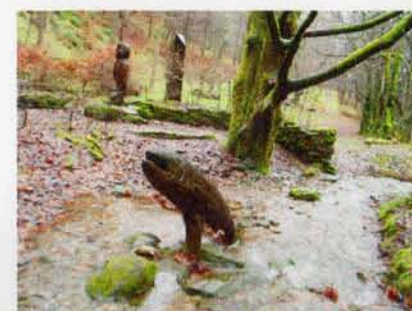
Forest Drive



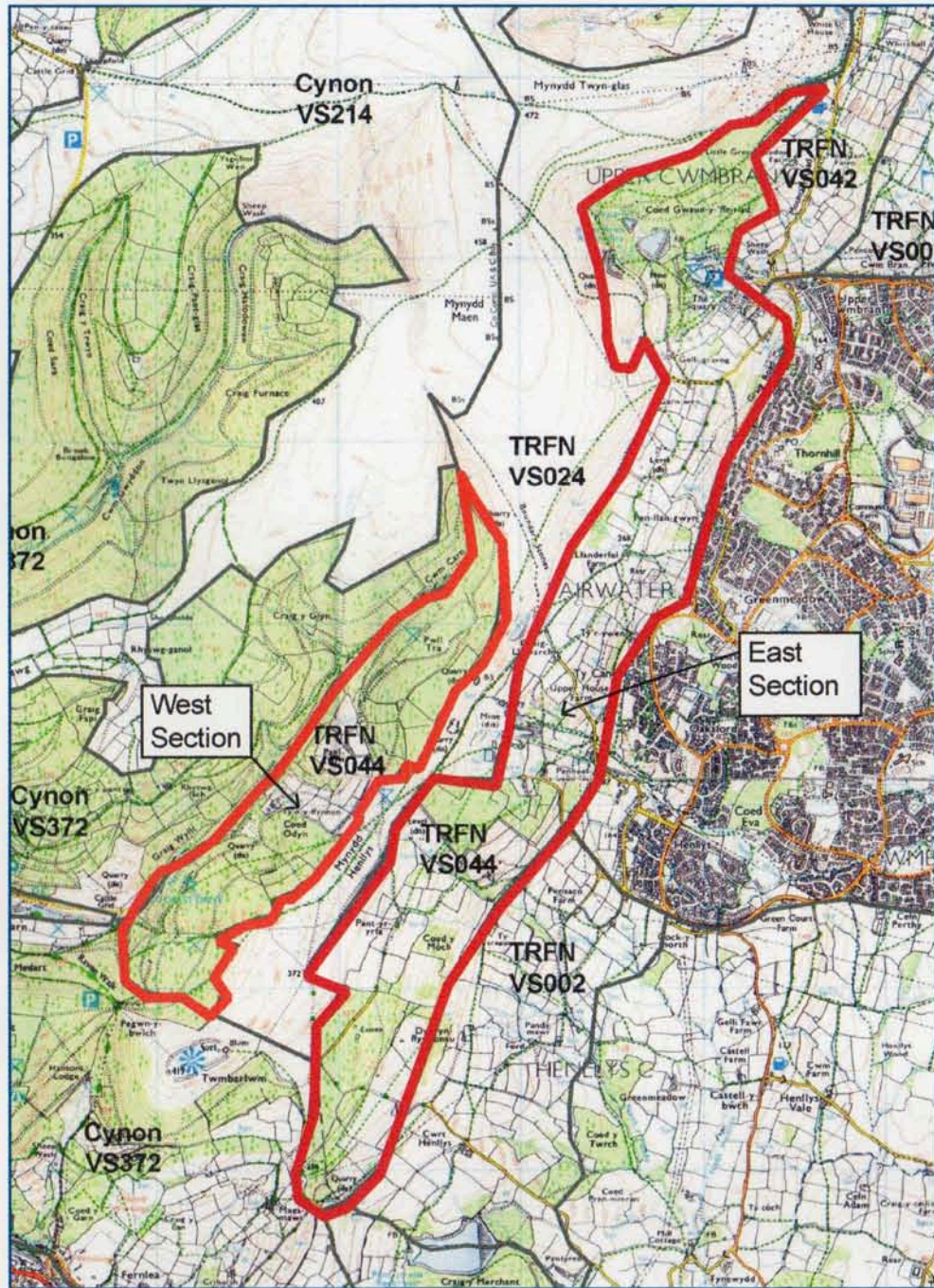
Sensory Garden



Picnic area



Sculpture, Giant's Court



Area 11 Eastern Section

TRFNVS044

Rough grazing on slopes below upland grazing/hill tops, ranging approximately from 200m to 350mAOD. Strong relationship between higher area of Cwmbran and hills beyond. Dramatic views over valley below and rest of Cwmbran. Landscape on lower slopes dominated by urban development, elsewhere mosaic of field pattern and broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation are the dominant characteristic. Visual detractors include the sharp urban edge to east and overhead electricity cables" (extract from LANDMAP)

Eastern Section

Includes Blaen Bran, steep sided valley with some woodland cover. Dense woodland around reservoir and industrial archaeology. Recently constructed car park at Blaen Bran and active community group involved in management of this area. Field pattern and plantations extends southward skirting the unenclosed common. Mainly steeply sloping with occasional quarries, tips and ponds. There are numerous opportunities to access the upland via public footpaths and tracks but due to the steepness of the topography, these will be used only by a small proportion of the population. This area does not include Twmbarlwm but the hill fort lies close to its southern end. A new car park has been constructed here which is accessed from a minor road that defines the southern edge of this area.



View east across Cwmbran



View north towards Pontypool



Regenerating woodland



Lane up hillside from southern edge of Cwmbran

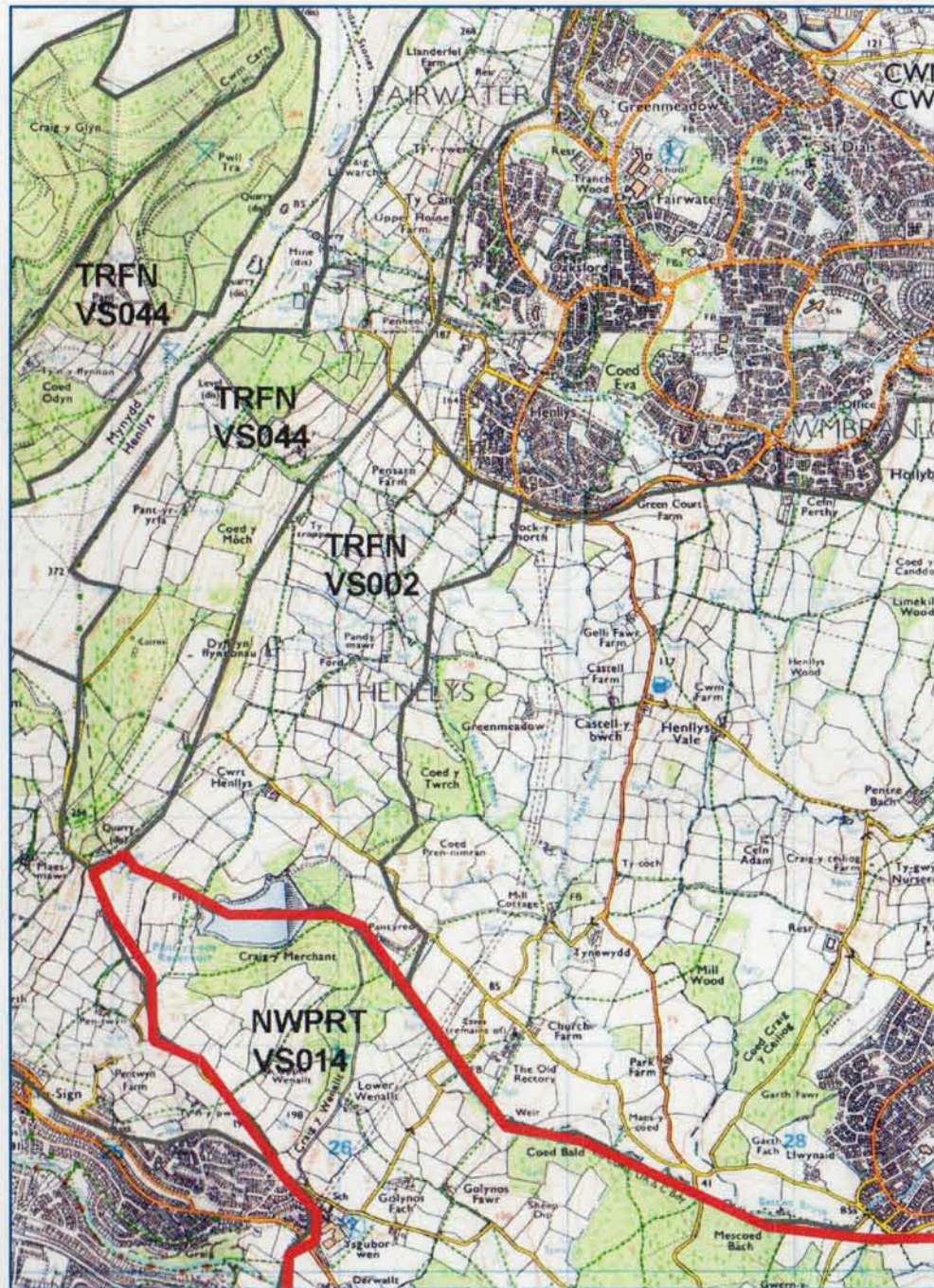


Access to Pant-yr-yrfa



Track down from common towards Cwrt Henllys





Area 12

"NWPRTVS014

Ridge of steep slopes in places rising from 60m up to 213m AOD. The land-cover consists of coniferous woodland, spruce and some deciduous woodland on the lower northern and a mosaic of small-medium scale pastures bounded by cut hedges, overgrown in parts. Trees are prominent in some field boundaries and on skylines. The area is accessed by narrow hedged lanes sometimes with holly and scattered settlement with occasional farmhouses. The area borders expanded settlements with housing estates which cause pressure on the landscape with signs of vandalism, worn road verges and rubbish dumping. The area acts as an important rural blackcloth to these settlements. There are two reservoirs one, the tranquil and hidden Pant-yr-Eos to the north and at the more accessible YnysFro to the south. These add interest to the landscape. There is evidence of horseculture, a small hilltop reservoir and there is an established golf course which breaks up the field pattern, all of which introduce an urban fringe character. The area is generally tranquil, disturbed only by adjacent housing" (extract from LANDMAP).

This is the extreme southern edge of the study area. Views extend across it northward from the narrow lane that allows access to the Twmbarlwm car park. This lane extends through this aspect area almost to the outskirts of Newport. Close to the M4, the lane crosses the Brecon and Monmouthshire canal at the Fourteen Locks visitor centre. This is linked to the study area via the canal towpath (off road cycleway) which extends as far as Cwm Carn.



Landscape east of Twmbarlwm



View north west to Lower Wenallt Farm



Pant yr Eos brook



View north towards reservoir



Small approach road to Twmbarlwm



Approach road to Twmbarlwm by Ysgaborwen School

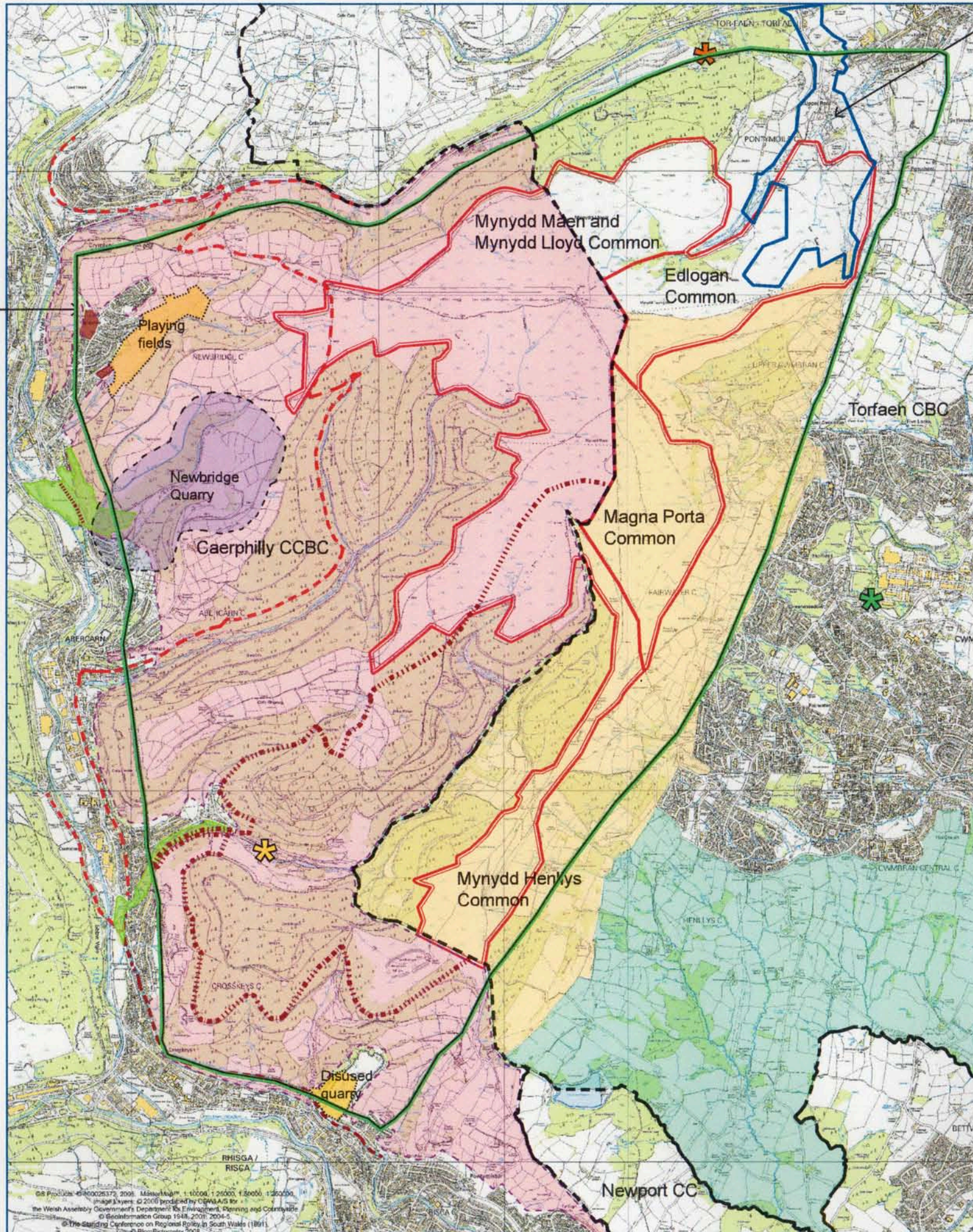


View east over Pant yr eos Reservoir from Twmbarlwm road



Pant yr Eos Reservoir


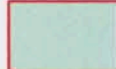



Study Area



Lower and Upper race and Cwm Lickey

KEY:

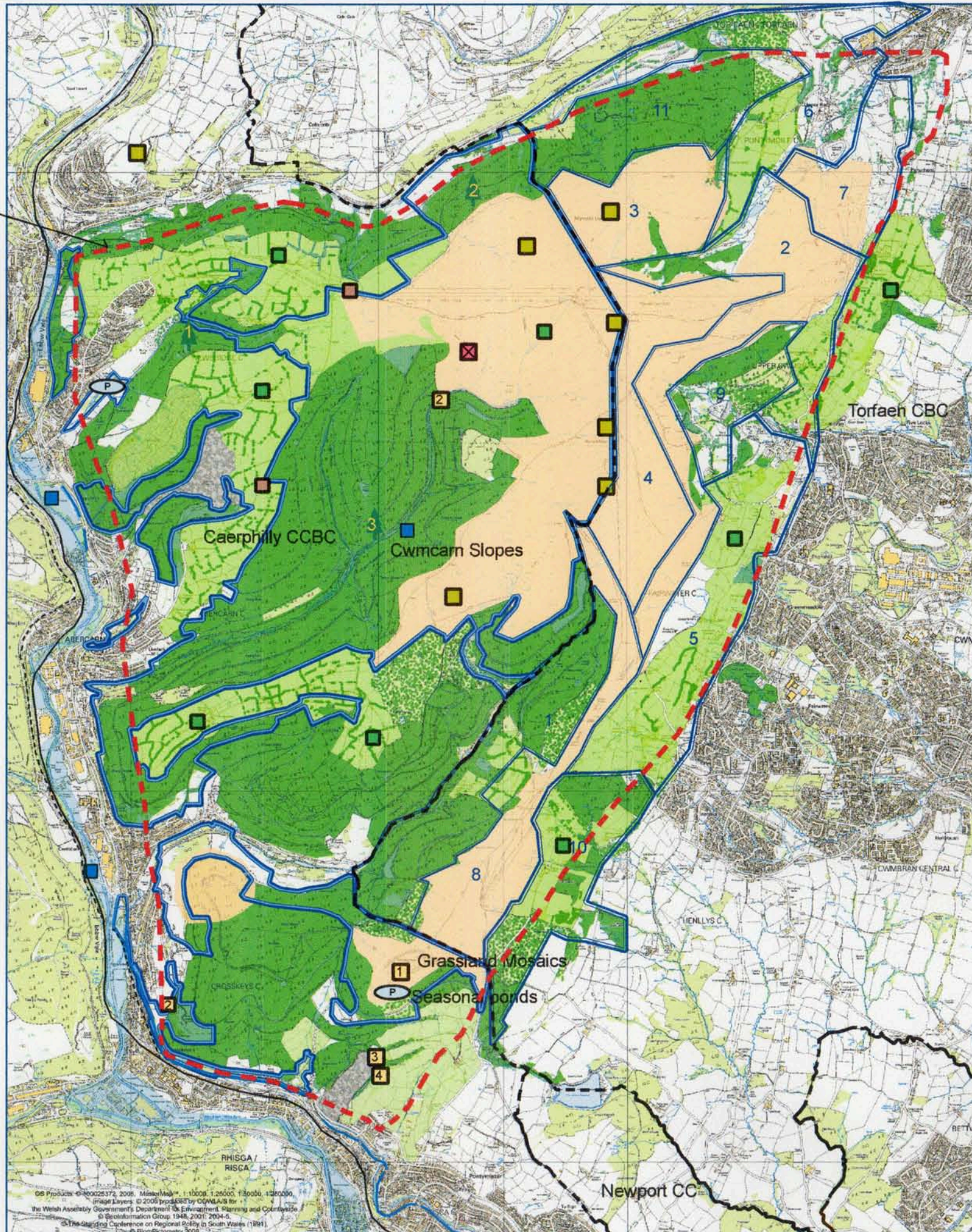
Special Landscape areas:

-  South west uplands
-  Southern lowlands
-  Common land boundaries
-  Visually important local landscape
-  Landscape improvement Areas

Tourism

-  Tourism related development: Greenmeadow Community Farm
-  Glyn Pits
-  Cwmcarn Visitor Centre
-  Tourism
-  Tourism route
-  Cycleways
-  Leisure
-  Green Wedges
-  Housing sites
-  Mineral buffer zone

Study Area



KEY:

Refer CCBC Action Plan Overview and Habitat Statements including SINC's for more info.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

Wetlands

Rivers and Floodplains

SINC Sites

149: Cwmcam slopes - Nant Carn stream habitats

Ponds and small reservoirs

SINC Sites

151: Twmbarlwm seasonal ponds

Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, incomplete: now a series of short linear water bodies connected with pipes beneath roads.

Planted Coniferous Woodland

SINC Sites

112: Coed Cil-Lonydd

113: Coedcae Watkins Dafydd

114: Gwyddon Valley and Mynydd Maen

Wildlife Corridors

Hedgerows: ancient and/or species rich

Railway lines

active

inactive

Stone walls: general

Species-Rich Grasslands

SINC Sites

151: Twmbarlwm Grassland Mosaics

Acid grassland

Calcareous grassland

Rhos grassland

Pasture - Improved grassland

Common Land

Mainly dry dwarf shrub heath, dry heath / acid grassland mosaic and wet dwarf shrub heath

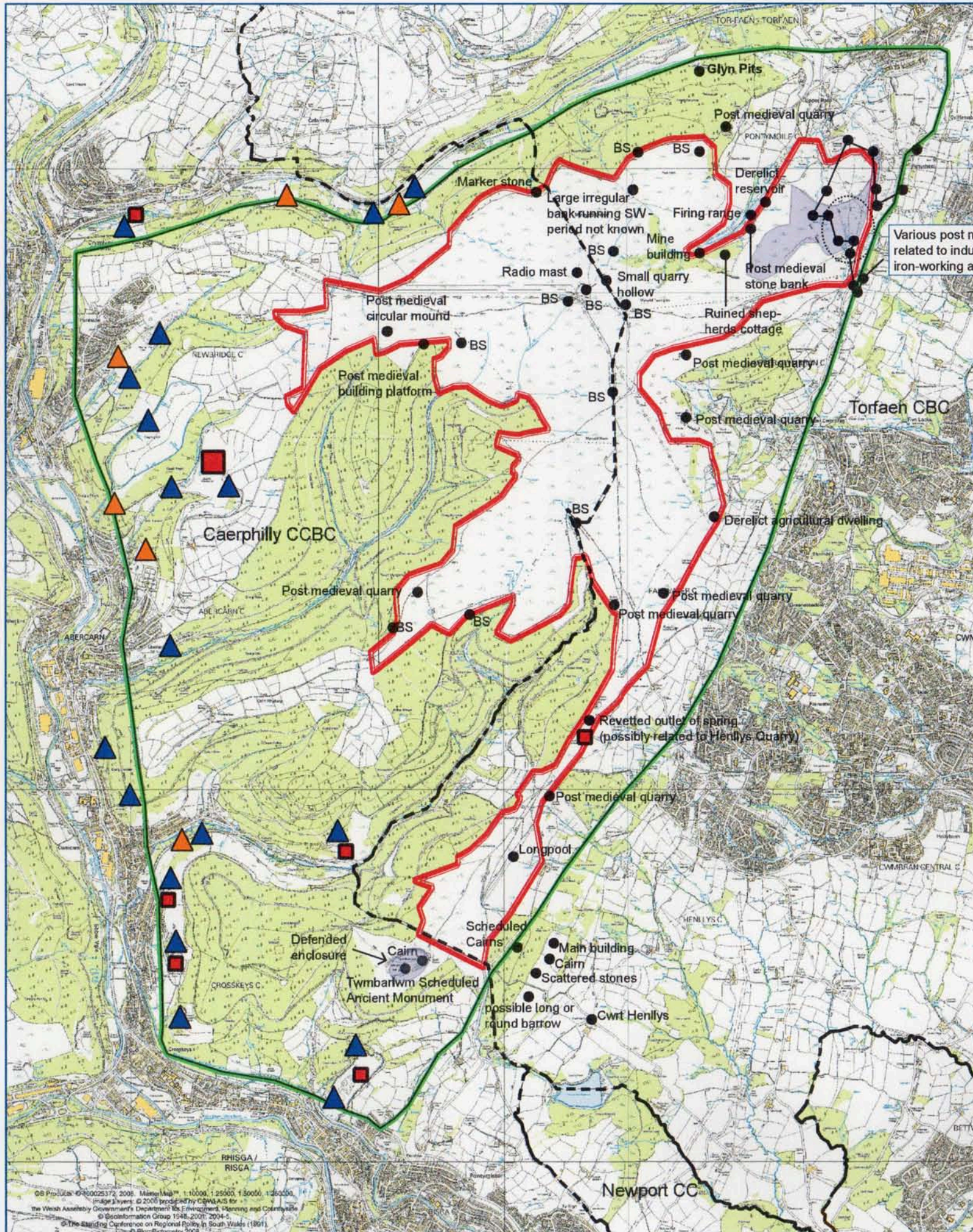
Ffrith / Coedcae landscape

Heathland

Aspect Areas (Torfaen)







Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

1	Mynydd Henllys	Low
2	Mynydd Maen Slopes	Moderate
3	Mynydd Llwydd	High
4	Mynydd Maen/ Mybydd Twyn-Glas	High
5	Llanderfel/Cwmbran	High
6	Upper Race	Moderate
7	Cwm Lickey	Moderate
8	Mynydd Henllys	Moderate
9	Coed Gwaun	Moderate
10	Coed y Moch (Henllys)	Moderate
11	Coes Golynos	Moderate



KEY:

Archeological sites

-  Scheduled ancient monuments
-  **Post-Industrial**
Tip Register - no systematic ecological surveys for wildlife importance exist
-  Landscape Tips
-  Quarries
-  Active
-  Inactive

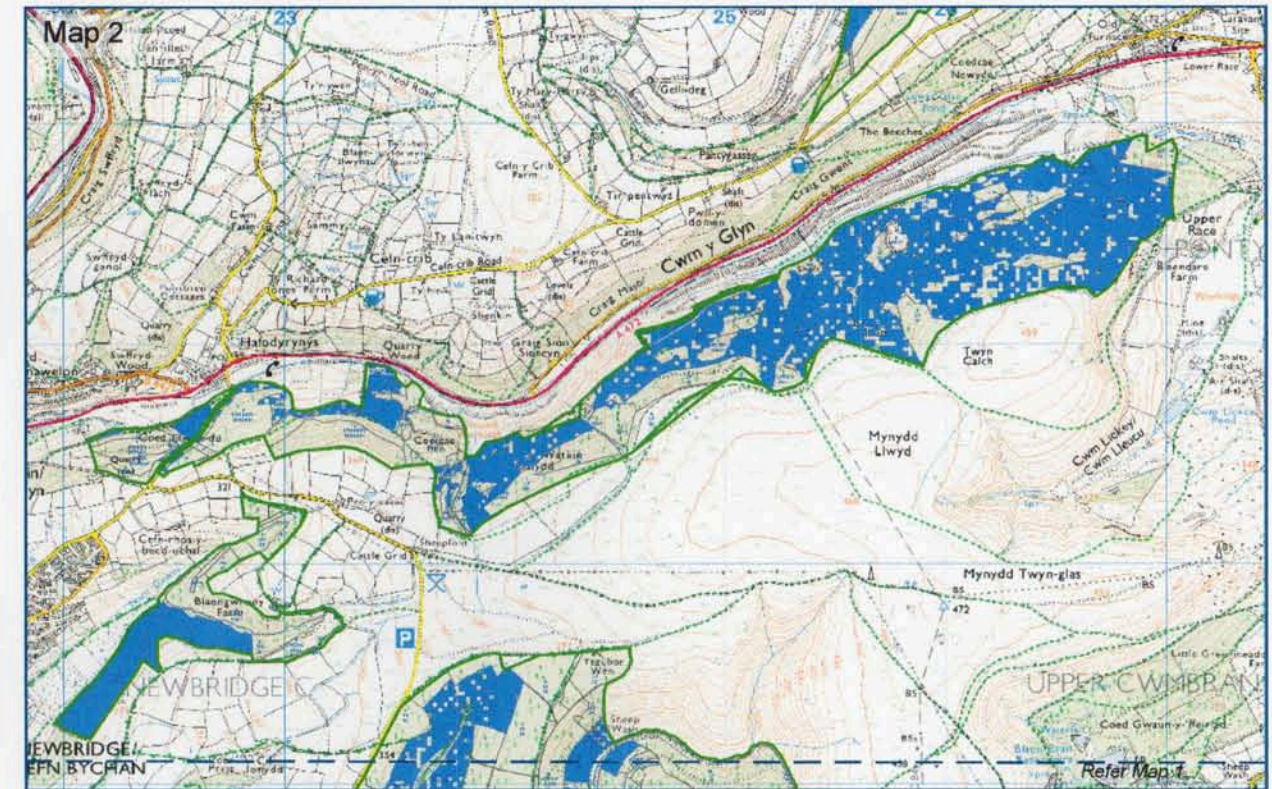
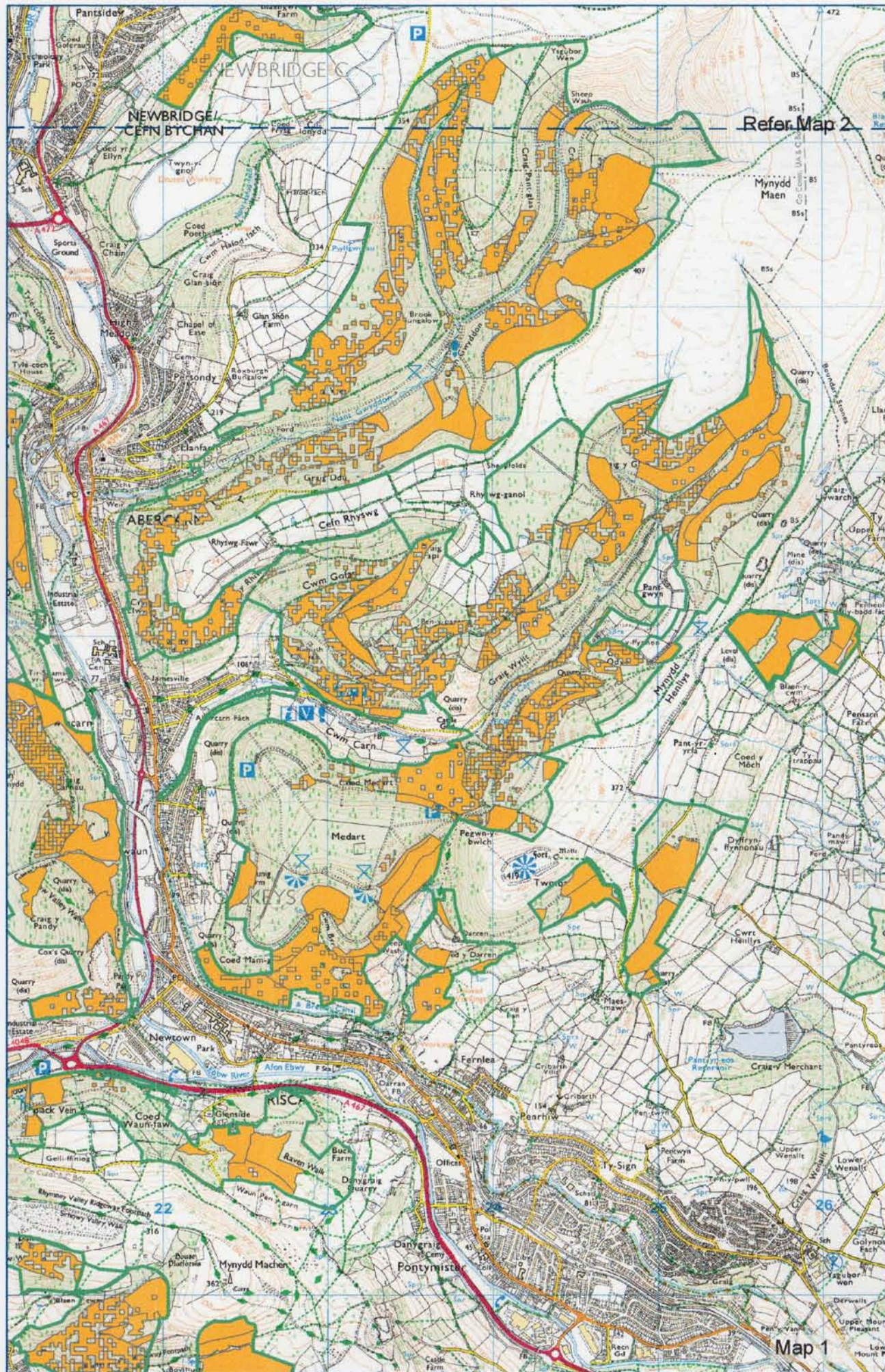
Glyn Pits (Pontymoile community)
Glyn Collieries, Race colliery, Pontypool

NPRN	Site Name	Site Type
337290	Beam pumping engine house and engine,	Engine house engine
405691	Nos. 1 and 2 shafts,	Mine shaft
405690	Reservoir and leat system	Reservoir and leat system
33730	Vertical winding engine house and engine	Engine engine house
33566	Nos 1 and 2 pits	Coal mine

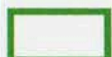


2.5 Historical, heritage Archaeological (SAM)

The extent of the archaeological resource is not fully established. There is a great deal of interest in this subject locally as exemplified by the CTS and the Ancient Cwmbran Society. This drawing identifies the main areas of interest.

2.6 Historical, Heritage, Archeological



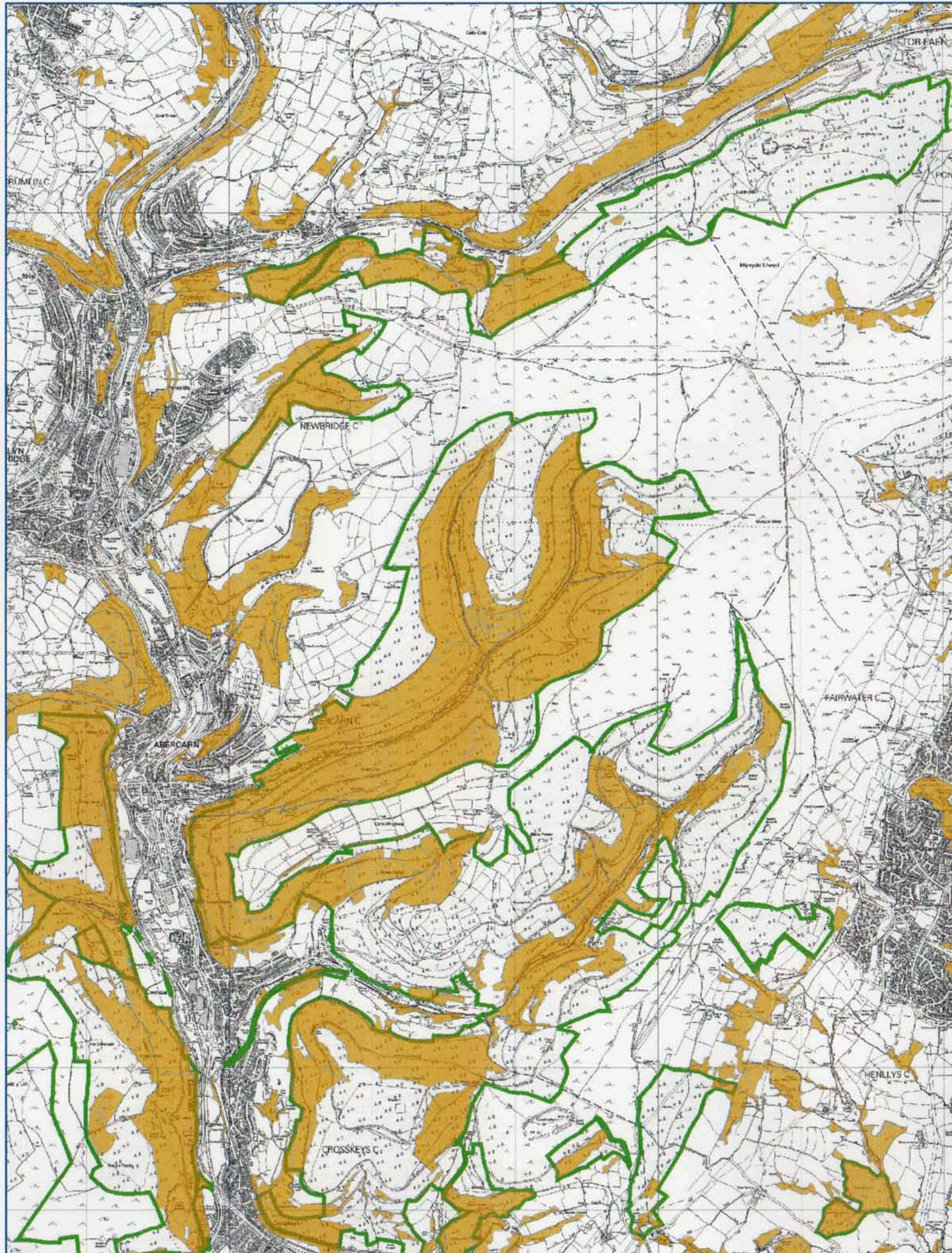
KEY:

-  Forestry management areas
-  Sub compartments
-  Larch crops



The plan shows the approximate extent of Larch plantations on NRW land (and on private land). As a result of the spread of *Phytophthora ramorum*, all Larch crops will be removed from these areas as a priority. The timing of this was being considered in summer 2013.

Plantations

Note: Information as supplied by NRW



KEY:

-  Ancient Woodland Inventory 2011
-  Forestry management areas

The Ancient Natural Woodland areas identified will be restored gradually as the existing coniferous timber crops are removed.

Ancient Woodland

Note: Information as supplied by NRW

Twmbarlwm & Mynydd Maen Scoping Study

<p>BRIEF FOR THE PREPARATION OF A SCOPING STUDY FOR THE TWMBARLWM AND MYNYDD MAEN UPLAND AREA BETWEEN CWMBRAM AND THE LOWER EBBW VALLEY.</p> <p>1. Introduction.</p> <p>1.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council in partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council is seeking to appoint Consultants to prepare a Scoping Study for the future sustainable management and enhancement of the upland landscape between southwest Torfaen and eastern Caerphilly. It is recognised that changing agricultural and recreational practices have a marked impact on land use and landscape quality. The study will focus on opportunities for improved management of the upland landscape including access and informal recreation, biodiversity, education, crime, education, community engagement, particularly volunteering.</p> <p>1.2 There are a number of issues that require investigation in order to identify the opportunities for sustainable management. The active involvement of community, interest groups and statutory bodies within the development of the management plans is essential. Officers of both authorities and other organisations will be able to provide some support throughout the Commission.</p> <p>1.3 Caerphilly County Borough Council will act as the commissioning body, however both Caerphilly and Torfaen CBC should be regarded as the Client. The completed study must be received by the County Borough Councils no later than 16 weeks from the date of commissioning.</p> <p>1.4 This brief outlines the areas to be included within the study, summarises the available background information, sets the objectives of the study and the requirements for its conduct.</p> <p>2. The Study Area.</p> <p>2.1 The study area is centred on Mynydd Maen and Twmbarlwm, the upland area separating the lower Ebbw Valley from Cwmbram. The area is largely comprised of upland common and forestry with large urban areas on the lower lying ground notably Cwmbram to the East, Newport to the south and the settlements of the lower Ebbw to the West. The natural boundary to the north is Cwm y Glyn. The study area is shown on map 1 and covers an approximate area of 35 square kilometres.</p> <p>2.2 There are a number of historic sites throughout the area, some ancient and others which are more recent. These sites include the iconic Tumbleton, the Iron Age Maiden Beacon, Glyn Iŷa and Cwm Llokey, Cwmcam Forest Drive on the west of the study area is an</p>	<p>important regional visitor attraction with an excellent visitor centre and outstanding facilities for walking and mountain biking.</p> <p>2.3 A large population live within 10 miles of the Cwmcam Visitor Centre as the area takes in the County boroughs of Caerphilly and Torfaen, parts of Blaenau Gwent and much of the cities of Cardiff and Newport. In addition to the historic, recreational and landscape importance of the area there are also a range of sites which are important for the biodiversity of the area, notably the upland moorland.</p> <p>2.4 Anti social activities such as illegal off roading, fly tipping and arson have come to the fore recently causing a considerable amount of distress to local residents, visitors and the farming community and causing damage to the landscape. In particular the upland common has been damaged by vehicles leading to a deterioration of the moorland and many of the ancient and industrial areas of archaeology. There are significant visitor pressure in some areas, particularly at Tumbleton and this has to be managed carefully to prevent damage to land.</p> <p>2.5 The study area falls within the administrative boundaries of Caerphilly and Torfaen and County borough councils however many of the users come from a wider area given the facilities on offer and proximity of urban centres. Both authorities have in the past undertaken a range of projects to promote or safeguard the area most of which have, whilst being fairly ad hoc, been relatively successful. However it is recognised that consistency more could be achieved through greater collaborative working particularly in light of the current austerity programme.</p> <p>3. Background information.</p> <p>3.1 The following documents and photographs can be viewed at the relevant Council Offices on request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caerphilly C.B.C. Local Development Plan Torfaen C.B.C. Local Development Plan Isafryn Landscape Strategy Torfaen Landscape Strategy Torfaen Landscape Action Plan Aerial Photographs Community Strategies LANDMAP Strategies Local Biodiversity Action Plans Forgotten Landscapes Project www.valleianavon.co.uk/en/WorldHeritageSite/ForogthenLandscape/ForogthenLandscapes.aspx Valleys Regional Park http://www.visitvalleys.org.uk/ Caerphilly Rural Boundaries Study Commons Management Plan for Mynydd Maen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDNT LIFE Application Cwmcam Forest Drive Development Plan Glyn Iŷa study Cwm Llokey study <p>3.2 The provision of background information of the site and its context does not diminish the consultants responsibility for investigating all matters relevant to the study.</p> <p>4. Objectives of the Study / Client Requirements.</p> <p>4.1 The key aim of the report will be to identify options for environmental projects and initiatives in the area which can be taken forward by the local authorities in partnership with the local community. These will include co-ordinated actions (both short and long term) within the context of a long-term strategy. It is felt that a strategy covering a 10 year period is appropriate. Any protection and/or enhancement of the area will include improved holistic land management including links between the attractions and assets of the area and the adjacent communities. It may be appropriate that such aims can be achieved through either targeting specific areas e.g. Tumbleton or dealing with specific issues e.g. inappropriate use of off road vehicles.</p> <p>4.2 This commission is funded jointly by Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils and it is hoped that the findings of the study will act as a basis for future grant applications the success of which are likely to be largely dependent upon buy in of interested parties. Of particular importance, in European terms, are both the forthcoming Convergence programme which will run until 2020 and funding through the Rural Development Programme.</p> <p>4.3 The European Programmes will need to fit with the Valleys Regional Park aspirations which seeks to be both inclusive and demonstrate economic benefits. At a national level it is possible that Lottery funds will prove significant and again these require significant community buy in. Again, there is a desire that the commission demonstrates a model that can be rolled out across both authorities and indeed to a potentially wider audience. Both authorities have experience of developing and managing regeneration programmes centred on 'volunteer' type elements e.g. landscape and the consultant is required to consider both the Blaenau Gwent Forgotten Landscape project and the Caerphilly Commons Management project as exemplars. An objective view to the manpower resources required is needed and recommendations made.</p> <p>4.4 In order to meet these objectives the study will be required to prepare a Strategy setting out an achievable long term management vision supported by a range of capital investments and other land management initiatives focusing on identified key issues. Options considered for the identification of themes and management proposals</p>	<p>should be clearly identified and justifications given to support recommendations.</p> <p>4.5 Issues that need to be considered include, the protection of landscape as the majority of the area is subject to local designation. The area is also rich in archaeology, notably Tumbleton and the uplands and the protection, enhancement and presentation of these is important. Agriculture and forestry make up much of the area and management guidance as how this may be improved should also be considered, particularly for areas of common land. This should include consideration of wildlife and proposals should be developed that safeguard biodiversity through active and coordinated management of the landscape, possibly through the reconstruction of traditional techniques.</p> <p>4.6 Consideration should be given as to how to increase the quality of experience for existing visitors and increase the actual number of visitors, possibly building upon the main visitor hub at Cwmcam Forest Drive.</p> <p>4.7 The aspirations of both the local communities and landowners should be sought and considered as part of the development of the proposals. Several local interest groups eg the Ancient Cwmbram Society and Tumbleton Society currently have an interest in the area and it is hoped to foster this on a long-term basis. Similar considerations should be given to the role that volunteers, the voluntary sector and public bodies could play in the on going development and implementation of proposals. This could identify possible roles for bodies eg Gwent Police and particular training needs.</p> <p>4.8 The future management structure required to successfully implement the proposals should also be considered and recommendations made eg the establishment of a Project Board, a Project Executive and possible support groups.</p> <p>4.9 Consider sources of both capital and revenue funding during the development of the proposals and identify potential partners to help secure the implementation of the proposals with the long-term sustainability of the project in mind.</p> <p>5. Consultancy Services.</p> <p>5.1 The information required by the client at the conclusion of this contract is contained in clause 4 above and can be summarised as:</p> <p>5.2 Prepare a Scoping Study for the future sustainable management and enhancement of the upland landscape between south west Torfaen and eastern Caerphilly covering a period of 10 years. The study will focus on opportunities for improved management of the upland</p>	<p>landscape including access and informal recreation, biodiversity, education, crime, education, community engagement, particularly volunteering.</p> <p>5.3 Coated illustrative proposals are required which can be progressed singularly or collectively as circumstances and finances permit.</p> <p>5.4 To undertake necessary consultations with existing stakeholders to ascertain aspirations and build these into the recommended actions contained in the Management Plan.</p> <p>5.5 To hold one stakeholder workshop, the venue being provided by the Client at no cost to the Consultant.</p> <p>5.6 Following a Commissioning meeting have a minimum of two progress meetings with the Client, the last of these presenting the draft report and proposals and should be held a minimum of two weeks prior to the completion date for the Study. To provide minutes of the meetings held with the Client group.</p> <p>5.7 Present final report to a select audience.</p> <p>5.8 Should the Consultant identify any additional works that are not included within this brief then the Client should be informed and approval obtained prior to undertaking any additional works or services.</p> <p>5.9 To advise on the establishment of Management and support structures to ensure the democratic implementation of the Management Plan.</p> <p>5.10 To hold and provide minutes of meetings held with the Client group. Present the final proposals to an invited audience.</p> <p>6. Conduct of the Study.</p> <p>6.1 The appointed consultants will undertake all necessary research and analysis to achieve the objectives set out in sections 5 and 6.</p> <p>6.2 The time allowed for this commission is 16 weeks.</p> <p>6.3 Consultants are to undertake all necessary consultations with representatives / land owners, organisations and individuals having interest in the subject of the study but with no disclosure of conclusions or recommendations until they have been presented to, and accepted by the Client Group. The Client Group will consist of Officers representing both Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils.</p> <p>6.4 Allow for one commissioning briefing, two progress meetings and a workshop with stakeholders at appropriate stages of the Study. The third of these progress meetings shall include the presentation of the draft</p>	<p>report and proposals. This shall be no later than two weeks before the completion date for the Study.</p> <p>6.5 Delivery of 8 No copies of the 'glossy' final A4 reports and proposals on completion of the Study, together with all originals and 2 No CDs so that the Client can produce further copies on demand. Additional copies of the 'glossy' final report to be provided to the client at cost upon request.</p> <p>6.6 Presentation of the Final Report and Management Plans to a select audience of stakeholders. The Client will be responsible for organising and funding the direct costs of this meeting which should take place no later than 6 weeks after completion of the commission.</p> <p>6.7 All research papers, reports, proposals and illustrative materials will be passed to the client together with the copyright on all documents and illustrations. The Client will make due acknowledgements to the consultant in any publication of the Study.</p> <p>7. Selection of Consultants.</p> <p>7.1 The client for the study is Caerphilly County Borough Council. The following selection procedure and programme is envisaged.</p> <p>7.2 A short list of 4 No consultants have been invited to submit proposals for carrying out the Study. The initial view of the client group is that a total budget of a maximum of £10,000 inclusive of all fees, expenses, and other charges. However bids will be assessed in terms of both innovative approach and value for money. This will be scored on the basis of equal weighting to both cost (price) and quality using an approved method for the cost weighting and the quality being assessed equally against the sustainability, robustness and innovation of the proposals. The client will consider the submissions / fee bids and may call up to 3 No consultants to selection interviews, should they be required prior to making a decision. The probable date for any interviews would be during the afternoon of Thursday 20th November 2012. The client also reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any tender.</p> <p>7.4 Proposals should include the C.V.'s for key people to be employed on the Study, the approach to the brief, the daily rates of staff, the proposed allocation of staff days, the allowance for expenses, printing, graphics and examples of similar studies and relevant experience. It is considered that the consultancy team should probably contain a blend of the following disciplines: Land Management, Landscape Architecture, Recreation, and Public Relations. Sub consultants may be appointed by the main consultant.</p>
<p>7.5 Written submissions shall be made by 1.00 pm on Wednesday 21st November 2012 to:-</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration and Planning, Directorate of Environment, Council Offices, Purdianhall, Blackwood, NP12 2YW.</p> <p>8. Appointment of Consultants.</p> <p>8.1 The successful consultant will be required to enter into an agreement based on "The Landscape Consultants Appointment", published in May 1988 (revised 1989), by the Landscape Institute.</p> <p>8.2 The consultant's attention is drawn to clause 3.19 of the conditions of appointment, this shall be amended to read, "copyright in all documents and drawings prepared by the Landscape Consultant shall be the property of the client."</p> <p>8.3 Submissions Programme</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The submission of the "Consultants Bid / Proposal" will be made on 21st November 2012. Interview date (if required) 26th November 2012. Appointment of Consultants will be made by 3rd December 2012. Site meeting/commissioning meeting with principal members of the Client's study team on 6th December 2012. Progress meetings will be held on an approximate 4 week cycle. Fourth Presentation, the Consultants "Draft" proposals 25th February 2013. Presentation of the Consultants "Final" proposals to Client audience on 25th March 2013. <p>Stages such as indicative dates which will be confirmed with the agreement of the consultant after appointment.</p> <p>8.4 The appointment will be made by completion of the Memorandum of Agreement (appendix 11 of "The Landscape Consultants Appointment" Revised edition (May 1988), which will be attached to a letter of appointment and a council order.</p> <p>8.5 The Fee is a fixed sum. Payments will be made in four stages, 50% upon commissioning, 25% upon completion of "Draft" proposals and the final 25% upon completion of and acceptance by the Client of the "Final" proposals.</p>	<p>8.6 It will be a condition of appointment that the consultants will indemnify the Client against any claims arising from the commission whether caused by negligence or otherwise. Confirmation will be required that the appointed consultant carries a professional indemnity insurance for the minimum sum of £1,000,000.</p> <p>8.7 The appointment may be terminated at any time by the Commissioning body upon payment of all fees and expenses incurred to the date of termination.</p> <p>8.8 The Consultant is not to undertake any additional works that incur costs to the Client without the express written approval of the Commissioning body. Should the Consultant be requested to undertake additional works as part of this or any following commission it shall be at the rates provided as part of the submission.</p> <p>9. Consultations.</p> <p>9.1 The consultants will be responsible for all meetings, correspondence etc. required to obtain information necessary to achieve the main objectives.</p> <p>9.2 A list of contacts is given below. The Client will also inform of other key contacts eg landowners and community partnerships upon appointment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norman Llewellyn, Manager Countryside and Landscape Services Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) Philip Griffiths, Senior Planner Countryside and Landscape Services CCBC Mike Owen, Manager Cwmcam Forest Drive Centre, CCBC Caprity Phillips, Group Leader Environmental Regeneration, Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) Andrew Navill, Team Leader Environmental projects, TCBC Steve Williams, Senior Ecologist, TCBC Mark Palmer, Senior Access Officer, TCBC Jo Gossage, Countryside & Conservation Manager, Newport City Council Robert Soumail, Twmbarlwm Society Richard Davies, Ancient Cwmbram Society PC Simon James, Gwent Police Jeanne Anstey, Forestry Commission Martin Lennan, Llancover Estate Martin Lennan, Trustees of Llancararth Estate Byron Williams, Mynydd Maen Commons Association Neil Maylan, Giamorgan/Gwent Archaeological Trust 	<p>10. Plans.</p> <p>Location Plan 1:37,000 scale. Commons Location Plan 1:37,000 scale</p>	<p>Quotation: Twmbarlwm Scoping Study</p> <p>To: Caerphilly County Borough Council Ladies and Gentlemen.</p> <p>I/We the undersigned hereby offer and undertake, on acceptance of this quotation, to undertake the preparation of the Twmbarlwm Scoping Study as described in the project brief and covering entire to the entire satisfaction of the client for the sum of:</p> <p>(in words) _____</p> <p>(in figures) _____</p> <p>which is not subject to any fluctuation in the cost of labour and materials.</p> <p>I/We agree this quotation will remain open for consideration for four weeks.</p> <p>We understand that you are not bound to accept the lowest or any tender you may receive.</p> <p>We are: Ladies and Gentlemen.</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>Signature _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>Approximate Area of Common</p>	<p>STUDY AREA</p>



Twmbarlwm & Mynydd Maen Scoping Study Consultation Workshop

The 'Scoping Study' will guide the development and management of the Study Area over the next 10 years

Wednesday 13th March 2013

Morning - Site Visit - 10.30am

Meet at Cwm Carn visitor centre 10.30am (tea and coffee provided). Site visit to Twmbarlwm and ridge by the Forest Drive. This will involve a short walk on to the common from car park 2 and a steep walk up Twmbarlwm from car park 7.

Afternoon - Workshop - 1.30pm

Meet at conference room, Cwmcarn Visitor Centre at 1.30pm (tea and coffee provided).

1. Introduction
2. Pros and Cons
3. Solutions and ideas
4. Barriers and motivators

The workshop will end at 4.30pm

Notes

There is a café at the visitor centre
Parking charges apply



Tel: 01874 754066
Email: mike@hairelandscapeconsultants.co.uk
www.hairelandscapeconsultants.co.uk



Tel: 01691 830399 / Mobile: 07815 861480
E-mail: steve@r4c.org.uk
Web: r4c.org.uk

Key emerging points from the interviews

● Problems / Concerns:

- Illegal motorbikes (much is felt to be local, mainly a few people and has become accepted by the culprits as 'allowed').
- Fly tipping
- Road to the pylons and other facilities provides easy access to motorbikes and other illegal transport, especially when contractors (of which there are a number) leave gates open.
- Lack of local use of the area in general and lack of local knowledge of its importance (one respondent said, "the nearest 200,000 people in the population don't come here").
- Lack of use of the area and its benefits for local education and health
- Provision and focus tends to be on distant visitors / tourists rather than local
- Concern over placement of wind turbines with the area as it will open up access tracks into the Common even more.
- The whole area lacks a clear and common identity
- Poor signage for information, restrictions, etc
- Poor waymarking and route definition.
- Much activity is contained within the surrounding margins of the Common (especially the forest) so leaving the Common and less used spaces open to abuse

● Opportunities / Ideas for solutions:

- Existing relationships and a positive joint working started
- Positive impact of volunteers and joint work, especially around the fort, already showing benefits
- Visitor centres and the canal path plus walking and cycling routes provide a basis on which to build
- Good Friday walk to Twmbarlwm provides an opportunity to build on
- Increase local knowledge and usage
- Visual and historic importance of the site which could be build upon
- Opportunities for greater linkage and facilities for visitors (local and distant alike) offered by Cwm Carn and Forest drive
- Beating the boundary is important for bringing some of the community together
- Fence barriers (log hedges) at key access points to stop / make motor vehicle access difficult
- Close the old green lane (on south eastern side)
- Increase visitor use through new routes across the common and linkage with existing facilities
- Volunteer wardens
- A partnership could bring together all the small groups to common cause
- Keep the community police presence through broadening the role to cover a wider area (so its justified) and support with local volunteers wardens to greater level of self-policing

- Start an organised vehicle rally to help encourage responsible use only
- Use income from wind turbine to help fund projects and policing needs
- Willingness to discuss general land management and habitat management options from all parties, including the Commoners
- More research of the historic features
- Develop a landscape partnership bid building on the working relationships which are already developing positively

● Constraints

- Open Spaces Society may fight any fencing
- Wind turbine may cause conflict of views between partners
- Large and increasing visitor numbers to the area, driven by Cwm Carn (206,000 visitors per year) provide an opportunity but also a potential constraint / problem
- Poor access roads
- Quarrying
- Commoners and the possible stocking needs / constraints – must remain a working common
- Less engagement as move north and particularly weak around north east industrial remains and other features. Need to overcome this and build awareness and involvement across whole site. Danger of over-focus on Twmbarlwm
- Strong involvement from those directly involved or obvious interest groups (e.g. conservation; mountain biking; land management; history) but equally lack of involvement from wider local community and wider interests (e.g. health; education; community amenity; local wellbeing)
- Tree disease and its impact (also an opportunity)
- Obviously money and time
- Boundary between two authorities and a number of departments

● Ideas we also discussed / came up with

- Concession for a café van with information point on the east side to link to cycle and walk routes crossing over the common. This would mean no direct cost to council, provide opportunity for income and increase visitor flow to support self-policing.
- School and leisure facility on the access road from the south provides an opportunity for greater community outreach. Also existing volunteer programmes, Community First and Come Outside Project all with overlapping and complimentary agendas.

Steve Evison
20.3.13

Twmbarlwm & Mynydd Maen Study – Consultation workshop

List of consultees

Landowners

- Forestry Commission Wales
- TCBC
- CCBC (to include manager of Cwm Carn)
- Llanover Estates
- Llanarth Estates
- Pontypool Park Estates
- Blaen Bran Community Group

Commoners' Association

Organisations

- Twmbarlwm Society
- Blaen Bran Community Group
- Ancient Cwmbran Society
- Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust
- Wildlife trusts
- CADW

PC Simon James

Politicians/Councillors

Education representative

Caerphilly Rural Boundaries Study, October 2002 (White Consultants)

Summary:

Prioritises areas/treatments to have greatest visual impact, public enjoyment, economic benefit, landscape, wildlife, training and employment.

Mynydd Maen and Cwm Carn Special Landscape Area (now classified as Visually Important Local Landscape)

p.11.

The most significant issue relating to traditional field boundaries is lack of management. Hedges are often overgrown and gappy and fail to function as effective barriers. Wire fencing has been used in many cases to make fields stockproof. In places, fields have been abandoned for use by stock with subsequent effect on the grass sward. The boundaries therefore appear neglected and can detract from the character of the landscape.

The study area is not identified as an 'Action Plan Area for management or improvement works as listed in LANDMAP and Rhymney Valley Strategy'

Areas above Newbridge and Abercarn are identified as 'Areas with hedgerows in most urgent need of restoration to provide the greatest gain to wildlife'. Fig 4

Also 'area of importance for stone walls for wildlife value' (above Hafodyrynys)

There are no well used roads (4000-8000 or above) within the study area. There is a long distance footpath (Raven Walk). These factors influenced CRBS priorities.

Also, settlement edges identified Pantside, Hafodyrynys, Abercarn, Cwmcarn Fig 8

Specific walls and hedges identified above Newbridge Area 9

Mynydd Maen ranks 9 out of 12 in Target Areas (p44) Training initiatives most likely to help

Cwm Lickey, Cwmynysycoy Reclamation Feasibility Study, June 2007 (Halcrow Group Ltd)

Summary:

The objective of the study was to review reclamation options for the extensive area of derelict land at Cwm Lickey, Cwmynysycoy. The area contains numerous features of archaeological and cultural heritage significance, including a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

The area also includes significant biodiversity resources including upland heath and mire habitats, and bryophyte communities, in particular associated with the spoil heaps around Penyrheol Reservoir.

There is the potential to recover quantities of coal from the area immediately to the south of Penyrheol reservoir. This area is currently a jumbled landscape of naturally vegetated tips, together with the reservoir structure. Any coal recovery would resolve ground instability remaining from the industrial era.

The study examines 3 options
Coal extraction
Conventional Reclamation Method
Landscape only

The study assesses the impact of this on the SAM and other receptors

Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) position. Based on meeting with Peter Cloke (Deputy Area Forest Manager)

A lot of the FCW stock is Larch and this is almost bound to be infected with Phytophthora ramorum. This means that all of the Larch will be removed although the timescale for this is not known at present (mapping to be provided).

The removal of the Larch will affect other crops such as Sitka because of adjacency issues

Ancient Natural Woodland is to be restored. This policy will be reviewed in 2013/14

It is likely that access arrangements to the FCW estate will be reviewed in the near future, with emphasis being on practical local arrangements put in place to encourage countryside access for community and health benefits

Some discussion about the Forest Drive and mountain biking at Cwm Carn and potential expansion. To be discussed with Mike Owen (manager)

Outline HLF Landscape Partnership Application

Twmbarlwm - An historic landscape

Twmbarlwm fort, Twmbarlwm Common and the surrounding area host a wealth of historic features. The area provides an excellent opportunity to engage with large numbers of people, both local and visitors, containing significant recreational use, especially mountain biking and walking. However, much of this is focused on the plantation forest slopes, especially Cwm Carn and does not extend onto the open hill land. In addition there is very little interpretation or information available within the forest or on the open land, and links between sites are poor. Despite the fact that the land stands as the entrance to the Welsh hills from the English border, visitor facilities apart from the mountain bike facility at Cwm Carn are very limited though there are a number of interesting locations and routes existing (e.g. canal and cycle routes, Industrial history sites, etc). The area also suffers from extensive abusive activities, most significantly illegal motorbike activity.

A proposal could:

- Extend the visitor offer
- Build interpretation
- Improve routes, links and signage
- Develop effective interpretation and education
- Increase appropriate use as a counter to negative behaviours.

Vision

A historic landscape at the gateway to South Wales connected to the local communities and the key visitor attractions by a network of well signed vehicle, canal, cycle, bridleway and walking routes. Linked interpretational and educational materials will bring together the joint offer of the existing landscape, attractions, facilities and services into a clear common and joined up offer. The site will be used to raise local and visitor understanding of the fascinating landscape history of the area and seek to build local community engagement with their unique local greenspace.

The Landscape Partnership Project

The following summarises the focus for HLF Landscape Partnership Projects (in bold) which appears to fit perfectly with the Twmbarlwm area and suggestions (in italics).

Landscape Partnership schemes need to contribute towards all of the nine outcomes listed below.

Outcomes for heritage

With HLF investment, heritage will be:

- **better managed**
- **in better condition**
- **identified/recorded**

The proposal will:

- *Improve the management*
- *Reduce negative behaviours and keep key sites (especially the fort) in much better condition*
- *Could include community recording, interpretation and other relevant activities*

Outcomes for people

With HLF investment, people will have:

- **developed skills**
- **learned about heritage**
- **volunteered time**

The proposal will:

- *Volunteer involvement and training*
- *Could incorporate a training element for unemployed / NEETS / etc*
- *Involvement of local schools and development of educational materials*
- *Strengthen educational links especially with the secondary school*
- *There is already a significant amount of voluntary activity which could be included as match time funding*

Outcomes for communities

With HLF investment:

- **environmental impacts will be reduced**
- **more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage**
- **your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit**

The proposal will:

- *Reduce negative environmental impacts (especially motorbike damage)*
- *Involve a wider diversity of local community through events, volunteer activity, training opportunities and outreach into the local community plus schools activity*
- *Community art project*
- *Craft and local goods outlets increase opportunities for income generation*
- *Support networking and commissioning of local leaders of heritage walks and activities within Cwm Carn and wider area.*

Application

To apply for the HLF funding, the partnership should consider registering interest and potentially submitting a proposal for May 2015.

"Landscape Partnership applications go through a two-round process. This is so that you can apply at an early stage of planning your scheme and get an idea of whether you have a good chance of getting a grant before you send us your proposals in greater detail.

- *First-round applications and all supporting documents need to be received by HLF no later than 31 May for a decision in October*
- *Your development phase can take up to 24 months, depending on the complexity of your scheme*
- *When we receive your second-round submission, we assess it in four months and then it goes to your local Committee for a decision. Local committees meet four times a year, usually in March, June, September and December. Contact your local HLF office for more information on deadline and meeting dates*
- *We recommend that you send us a project enquiry form before you apply. Register a project enquiry".*

Outline of proposal

Heritage focus

The natural and cultural history of the commons and their place in the landscape of the South Wales Valleys

Story for interpretation

In addition this is part of a bigger story for interpretation - A landscape in transition - Heritage focus will be on a border landscape, changing landscape from early forts through industrial period and into modern recreation. It is a landscape that has had major influences by man and has had to recover.

- Border fighting
- Coal mining and industrialisation
- Afforestation
- Impacts of 'modern' recreation
- Current major felling

This project will help learn and interpret the past and create a link with the present providing a focus for an engagement around future landscapes, climate change and satisfying changing societal needs.

Difference for people?

The difference people is significant and includes:

- Reduction of negative behaviours affecting the ability of many to enjoy the area and its rich heritage
- Improvement for local residents and those who work the land
- Improvement for local communities in terms of access, green economy and opportunities
- Greater range of facilities for visitors and more to do beyond the boundaries (confines) of Cwm Carn
- Joining up of all that is on offer in the area to make a meaningful and well interpreted package
- Encourage heritage and wildlife learning and understanding
- Improve knowledge and understanding amongst local urban populations to use the location in a more positive way

Difference for communities

Many of the local communities have large numbers of people unemployed or on low income and work in the Valleys generally has found that many of these groups are disconnected from the surrounding countryside, despite its proximity. As a result they are also often unaware of its rich heritage and all that is on offer. This project will seek to use the natural and industrial heritage to develop opportunities within the Green and heritage economy.

It is likely to create an important opportunity for many people as volunteers, training programmes and potential new jobs, as well as encourage healthier more active lifestyles and engagement in their rich local heritage.

Main beneficiaries

- The main beneficiaries will be the local communities in and near to the site
- The secondary beneficiaries will be a wider audience of people from the south Wales urban areas, mainly Newport and Cardiff plus a smaller number who visit from England.
- In addition it is hoped the project will benefit a wider range of tourists and other visitors, extending the 'offer' of Cwm Carn and encouraging family and other visitors to explore and benefit from the areas rich wildlife and industrial heritage, not just visit the mountain bike centre.

Does your project involve heritage that attracts visitors?

- Twmbarlwm hill fort (current)
- Cwm Carn and car driving trail (could include a lot more heritage interpretation)
- Common land (limited current positive use)
- Blaen Bran woods (important local heritage and well used by community and local visitors)
- Industrial heritage area in the north (little current use but significant potential)
- The canal (good current use)

Plus other local visitor centres and attractions

Project elements

A training programme

- The project could contain a training element which would include:
- Trail construction
- Interpretation
- Practical countryside skills (building on existing work at Blaen Bran woods)
- Archaeology
- Interpretation
- Mountain bike and walk leader
- Woodland skills
- Heritage skills

Volunteer involvement

Community volunteering already exists at Twmbarlwm and Blaen Bran as well as within local communities but could be significantly expanded and joined up through this project creating more opportunity, greater diversity and a better 'learning route' for those seeking work.

Examples include:

- Wardening
- Guiding visitors
- Project management tasks – mainly practical countryside management
- Archaeological research
- Industrial research and interpretation
- Access support (e.g. similar to some Ramblers groups work and community access projects as Glyncorwg ponds in the Afan valley)

Education

The project contains numerous strands for education. There are a number of colleges and universities within easy reach of the area, a secondary school at one end of the project area and numerous primary schools within the neighbouring communities.

Interpretation

Currently there are significant numbers of visitors of the area, especially Cwm Carn, yet interpretation is very limited. This provides a significant opportunity to engage with large numbers of people and raise awareness of the areas rich heritage. In addition the area is surrounded by large numbers of local communities as well as being close to two of the biggest populations in South Wales of Newport and Cardiff.

Practical works

There are many practical activities that can be included:

- access provision
- trail construction
- fencing and drystone walling
- mountain bike routes
- practical signage and interpretation
- consolidation and preservation of artefacts

Local wellbeing

The project will help support numerous aspects of local wellbeing in an area where there are large pocket of deprivation

This will include:

- Development of opportunities within the green economy, through an Ecosystem Approach
- Increased recreation – health, wellbeing, mental wellbeing, etc.
- Improved knowledge and links to sense of place and the local heritage developing local pride