

# Monmouthshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study: Main Villages and H4 Settlements

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**Final Report**  
to  
**Monmouthshire County Council**

*June 2010*



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Glossary of Terms

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 White Consultants were appointed by Monmouthshire County Council in October 2009 to undertake a landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment for areas around main villages and a landscape assessment of H4 settlements in the county. Diacono Ltd have worked with White Consultants to deliver the project.
- 1.2 A county landscape assessment based on LANDMAP has already been undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council and the analysis has been made using this information combined with other data and site assessment.
- 1.3 The study is intended to form part of the evidence base which will inform the Local Development Plan site allocations and ongoing development control.
- 1.4 This report mainly comprises of detailed assessments and sensitivity and capacity evaluations of local landscape character areas in main villages and H4 settlements assessments. It is structured in three main parts.
  - Part 1 covers the method and summary landscape sensitivity and capacity and other findings with associated figures.
  - Part 2 covers the Main Villages Local Landscape Character Areas assessments and figures.
  - Part 3 covers the H4 settlements assessments and constraints figures.

We discuss the method below.

## 2.0 MAIN VILLAGES STUDY METHOD

- 2.1 The method is the same as the method used for the main settlements report dated October 2009.
- 2.2 The study is a technical exercise and the report uses a number of technical terms for precision and as a means for reaching conclusions on sensitivity and capacity. These terms are defined in the Glossary in **Appendix 1**. We have taken into consideration Countryside Agency 'Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity [2004]'. These are defined below.
- 2.3 **Sensitivity** is taken to mean the sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change which may be under consideration. It is a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource [including its historical and ecological features and elements] and the visual sensitivity of the landscape [such as views and visibility]. For the purposes of this study it also includes landscape value [including designations]. For example, an undesignated very gently sloping landscape with large arable fenced fields and trees *may* have a lower sensitivity than a steeply sloping pastoral landscape with small fields and strong hedgerow and tree cover.

- 2.4 **Capacity** is taken to mean the ability of a landscape to accommodate different amounts of change for a development of a specific type. For example, a flat landscape with tree belts may be able to accommodate housing more easily than an open sloping landscape but the size of field may limit the scale of desirable development. A low sensitivity does not automatically mean a high capacity as this depends on the type and scale of development considered.
- 2.5 Key tasks are explained in more detail. Box 1 shows a summary of the process undertaken which is then further explained in the text.

*Defining Local Landscape Character Areas:*

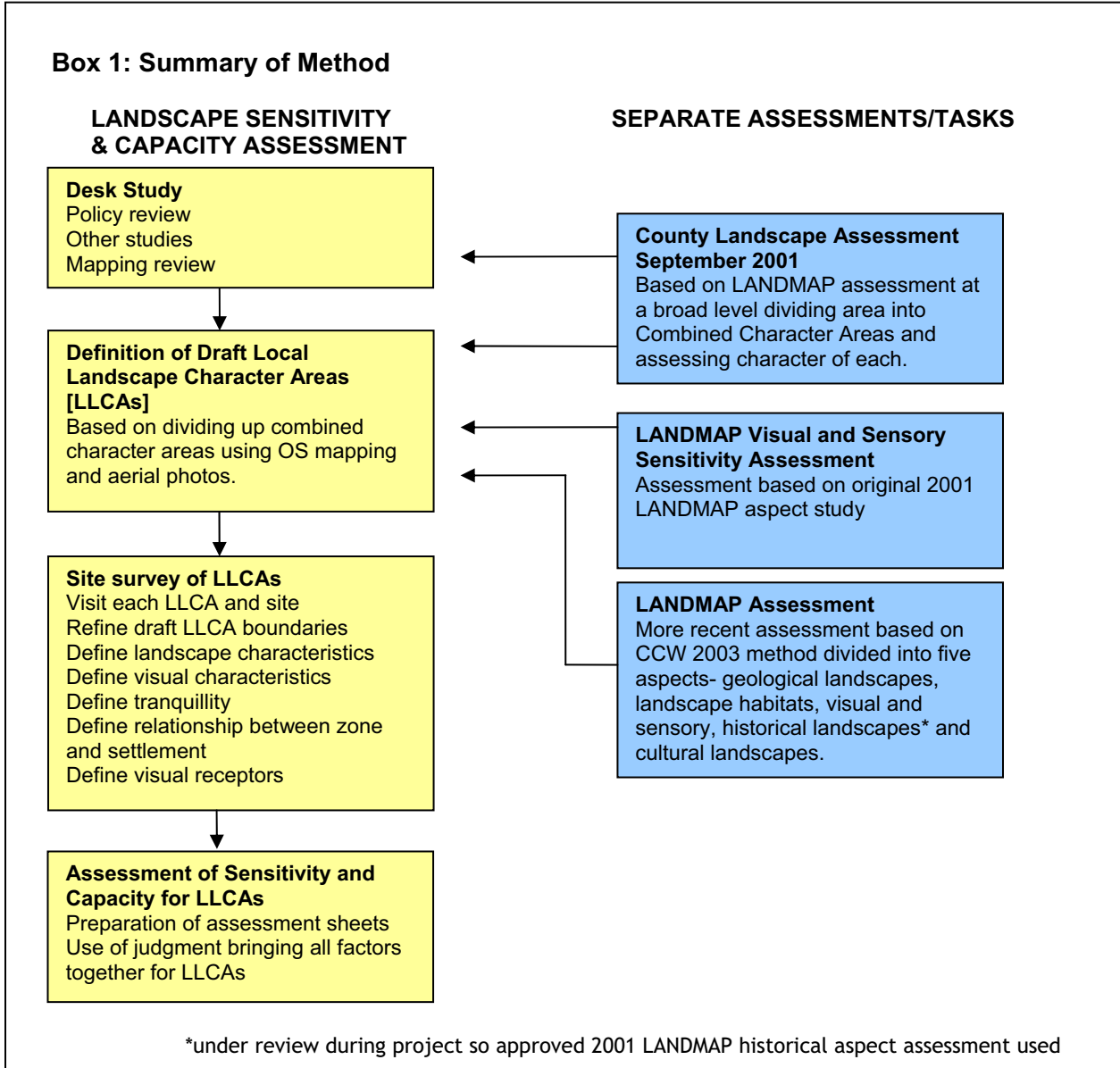
- 2.6 Draft local landscape character areas [LLCAs] are defined around each settlement taking into consideration the existing combined character areas [CCAs], LANDMAP aspect areas, OS mapping, aerial photos but also importantly, for the purposes of this study, the areas' relationship with the settlement. This may mean in some circumstances that the boundaries may not follow CCA boundaries such as where:
- These lie on the fringes of the 500m study area where development is extremely unlikely or where there is little or no relationship between the area and the settlement eg Devauden
  - Local refinement is appropriate
  - A complex series of CCA boundaries do not assist in helping to define a difference in landscape sensitivity and capacity at a local level eg the valley side to the south of Little Mill.

CCA boundaries should not be seen as being superceded by the LLCA boundaries which have a distinct purpose in this study. Factors such as landscape characteristics, elements and features are taken into account but not candidate strategic sites. The areas are defined by apparent landscape characteristics rather than designation boundaries eg Conservation Area or Scheduled Ancient Monument [SAM] boundaries eg Caerwent, Trellech and Llandogo. The study areas around each settlement are 500m from the settlement edge but in some cases may be limited by the main settlements study or H4 settlement study areas eg Caerwent and The Bryn respectively. It is not the intention of the project to define complete LLCAs. Only those that are completely within the 500m radius and encompassed by other LLCAs, can be construed as being complete LLCAs. The boundaries are checked on site and refined where necessary and then each area is digitised.

*Desk study of LLCAs and sites:*

- 2.7 Value and sensitivity information is abstracted from the LANDMAP assessment using all aspects. Historical landscapes has not been available quality assured to Countryside Council for Wales 2003 standards during the assessment as a review is under way. Instead, the approved 2001 version of the LANDMAP Historical aspect information has been used. Constraints data has been collected for each settlement and its surrounds and includes designations for landscape eg National Park, AONB,

SLA; heritage designations eg conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens and landscapes; nature conservation designations e.g. RAMSAR, SACs, SSSIs, NNRs, LNRs, SINCs; public rights of way, national trails and cycle routes, country parks, and 100 year floodplain. Maps are prepared to set out constraints.



*Site Survey of LLCAs and sites:*

2.8 Each LLCA and site is visited and their key characteristics, landscape sensitivity and capacity are assessed using a designed proforma. This includes LANDMAP values and designations. Other relevant factors are recorded including:

- Intrinsic characteristics eg landform and landcover
- Function of area
- Presence of water
- Visual characteristics
- Tranquillity
- Functional relationship of the LLCA/site with its surroundings and the settlement eg recreation.

- Visual relationship of the LLCA/site with the settlement and landscape eg key views, skyline character
- Description of settlement edge- is it a positive or negative edge to the settlement?
- Definition of sensitive receptors within and outside the area.
- Potential for improvement of the settlement edge and for overall mitigation.

*Key Characteristics and Sensitivity of LLCAs*

2.9 Bringing all the information together, the key characteristics of each area are summarised. Then an overall analysis of each LLCA’s sensitivity is made. Judgments are not based on a mathematical adding up of factors, positive or negative. Some factors will be more important than others in different areas. For instance, the function of an area in separating settlements may be considered very important and make it sensitive to development even if it is of limited inherent landscape value. A justification is given as to why it is considered that an area has a particular sensitivity. The calibration of the sensitivity is as follows:

<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Low	Key characteristics of landscape are robust and/or are of relatively low intrinsic value as a landscape resource.
Medium-low	Key characteristics of landscape are resilient to change and/or are of limited intrinsic value as a landscape resource.
Medium	Key characteristics of landscape are susceptible to change and/or have value as a landscape resource.
High-Medium	Key characteristics of landscape are vulnerable to change and/or have high value as a landscape resource.
High	Key characteristics of landscape are very vulnerable to change and/or have significant value as a landscape resource.

*Capacity of LLCAs*

2.10 A capacity rating is then defined for housing development. This is based on the sensitivity of a zone and the likely magnitude of effect and character of proposed development. Housing is taken to be around 8m high ranging from individual houses through to larger estate developments. The calibration of the capacity is as follows:

<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Definition</i>
High	Thresholds for significant change are very high and much of the area can be developed.
High-	Thresholds for significant change are high and the area is able to accommodate a significant

medium	proportion for development.
<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Medium	Thresholds for change are intermediate with some ability to accommodate development in some parts.
Medium-low	Thresholds for change are low and development can be accommodated only in limited situations.
Low	Thresholds for change are very low and the area is unable to accommodate development without significant adverse effects.

### 3.0 H4 SETTLEMENT STUDY METHOD

3.1 As with the main villages assessment this report uses a number of technical terms. These terms are defined in the Glossary in **Appendix 1**.

3.2 The policy for these settlements is for small-scale infill only. This means a different approach has been taken to the main settlements and main villages. A study area within a 500m radius from the centre point of village is defined for assessment. This centre point is derived in this study by the assessor at the geographical centre of the settlement taking into account linear or outlying development that might be construed as part of the settlement. Within this, the general sensitivity of the combined character area/s [CCAs] and settlement is assessed and key landscape characteristics defined as a context. Then the character of the settlement and its relationship with the landscape is explored with comments on particular areas of constraint. The location of settlements is shown in **Figure 3**.

#### *Desk study*

3.3 Value and sensitivity information has been abstracted from the LANDMAP assessment using all aspects as for the main villages. Constraints data has been collected for each settlement and its surrounds and includes designations for landscape eg National Park, AONB, SLA; heritage designations eg conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens and landscapes; nature conservation designations e.g. RAMSAR, SACs, SSSIs, NNRs, LNRs, SINCS; public rights of way, national trails and cycle routes, country parks, and 100 year floodplain. Maps are prepared to set out constraints. Where two settlements lie close together they are considered in the same assessment and map as their relationship is often important.

#### *Site Survey:*

2.8 Each settlement and its surrounding landscape has been visited and the key characteristics, elements and features noted.

#### *Overall assessment:*

2.9 Bringing all the information together in a designed proforma the assessment for each settlement includes the following:



- Key landscape characteristics
- Settlement characteristics
- Relationship of settlement to the landscape
- Constraints summary
- Combined character area/s number/s
- Discussion of CCA sensitivity
- Potential environmental improvements
- Relevant CCAs
- LANDMAP context including aspect area value
- Designations- landscape, heritage and biodiversity.

## 4.0 MAIN VILLAGES- SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Overall, the study has found that there may be limited capacity for housing in some of Monmouthshire's main villages.
- 4.2 Areas of higher sensitivity and lower capacity have tended to be those of intrinsically higher value, those in open countryside not closely associated with a settlement, acting as setting to Conservation Areas or listed buildings, in valley and river corridors, in floodplains, on steep or prominent slopes or those forming gaps between settlements. There is a need to protect in particular the landscapes of the valley bottoms and maintain green fingers of open space penetrating into settlements. Some areas assessed form an important visual setting to parts of a settlement and act as recreational and wildlife corridors and reservoirs.
- 4.3 Any indication of capacity for development is based on the proviso that the development itself will present a positive edge to the landscape. This can only be achieved with good design with the recognition of the need for a hierarchy of built form and lower density at certain points. Significant planting may also be required in order to integrate the development and enhance the landscape. This is best achieved by a design or development brief including landscape, nature conservation and urban design/settlement edge objectives taking design polices and guidelines into account.
- 4.5 The landscape sensitivities and capacities of each LLCAs are summarised in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively. The LLCAs are summarised in **Figures 1 and 2** and in detail in figures for each settlement in Part 2.
- 3.6 LLCAs' landscape sensitivity can be summarised as follows:

<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Number of LLCAs</i>	<i>Comment</i>
High	21	LLCAs associated with national landscape designations, historic parkland and its setting, SAMs, Conservation Areas, steep slopes or river valley floors/floodplains
High/ medium	54	The majority of LLCAs which are sensitive.
Medium	10	Some LLCAs located around Caerwent, Little Mill, Llanarth, Llandewi

		Rhydderch, Llanfair Discoed, Penallt, Pwllmeyric, St Arvans and The Bryn.
Medium/low	None	-
Low	None	-

3.7 LLCAs' landscape capacity for housing can be summarised as follows:

<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Number of LLCAs</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Low	44	The majority of LLCAs associated with national landscape designations, historic parkland and its setting, SAMs, Conservation Areas, steep slopes or river valley floors/floodplains
Medium/low	33	LLCAs with low thresholds for change.
Medium	8	Some sites located around Caerwent, Little Mill, Penallt, St Arvans and The Bryn.
High/ medium	None	-
High	None	-

**Table 1 Local Landscape Character Areas Sensitivity and Capacity**

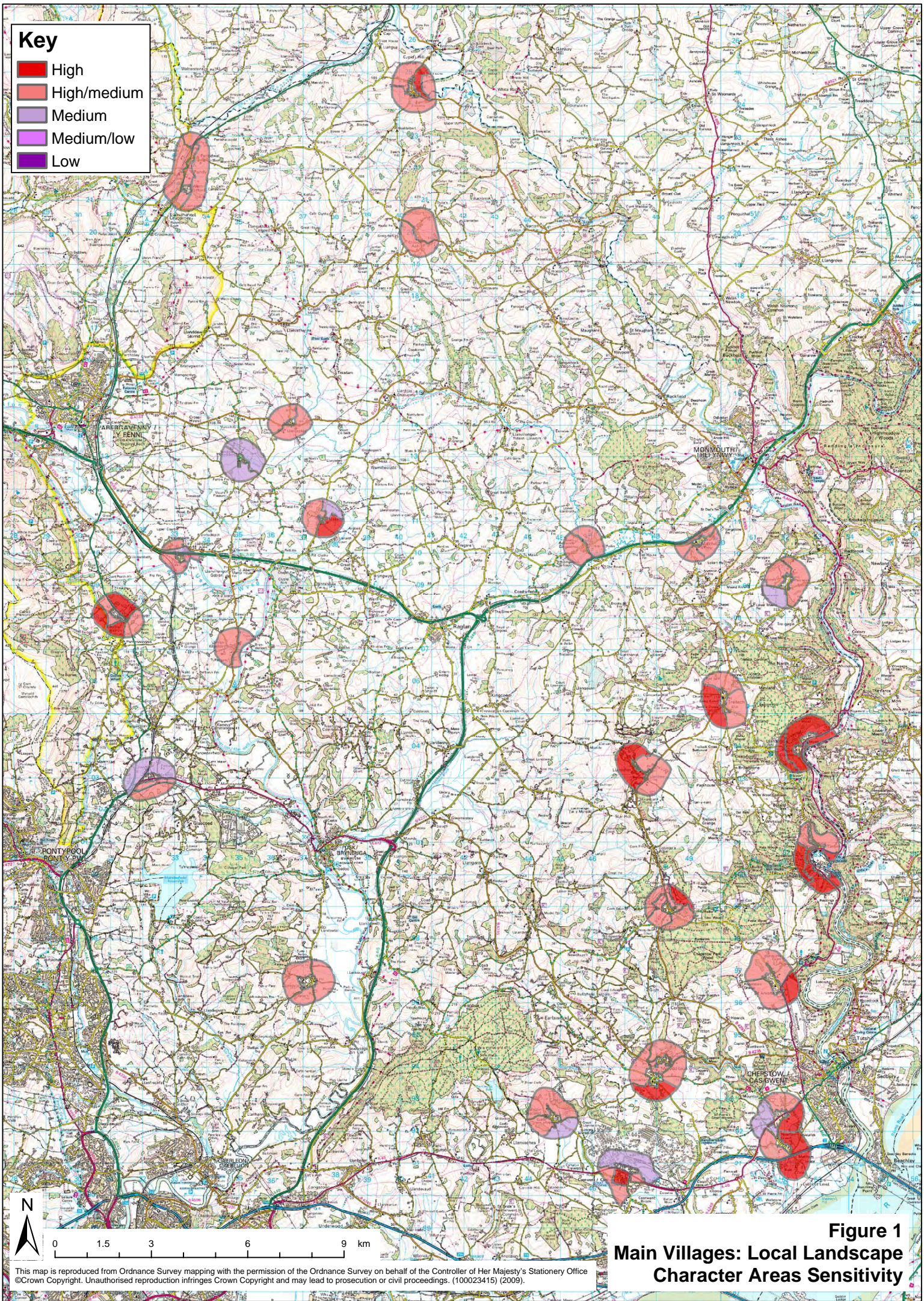
LLCA reference	Settlement	Sensitivity	Capacity
CAE01	Caerwent	medium	medium
CAE02	Caerwent	high/medium	low
CAE03	Caerwent	high	low
CAE04	Caerwent	high/medium	low
CR01	Cross Ash	high/medium	medium
CR02	Cross Ash	high/medium	low
DE01	Devauden	high/medium	medium
DE02	Devauden	high/medium	low
DE03	Devauden	high/medium	medium/low
DE04	Devauden	high/medium	medium/low
DE05	Devauden	high	low
DI01	Dingestow	high/medium	medium/low
DI02	Dingestow	high/medium	medium/low
GR01	Grosmont	high	low
GR02	Grosmont	high/medium	medium/low
GR03	Grosmont	high/medium	low
GR04	Grosmont	high/medium	low
LI01	Little Mill	medium	low
LI02	Little Mill	medium	medium
LI03	Little Mill	high/medium	medium/low
LI04	Little Mill	high/medium	low
LLA01	Llanarth	high	low
LLA02	Llanarth	medium	low
LLA03	Llanarth	high/medium	medium/low
LLC01	Llandewi Rhydderch	medium	medium/low
LLC02	Llandewi Rhydderch	medium	medium/low
LLD01	Llandogo	high	low
LLD02	Llandogo	high	low
LLD03	Llandogo	high	low
LLG01	Llangybi	high/medium	medium/low
LLG02	Llangybi	high/medium	medium/low
LLG03	Llangybi	high/medium	medium/low
LLH01	Llanishen	high	medium/low
LLH02	Llanishen	high/medium	low
LLH03	Llanishen	high/medium	medium/low
LLO01	Llanover	high/medium	medium/low
LLO02	Llanover	high	low
LLO03	Llanover	high	low
LLO04	Llanover	high/medium	low
LLO05	Llanover	high	low
LLR01	Llanvair Discoed	high/medium	medium/low
LLR02	Llanvair Discoed	high/medium	low
LLR03	Llanvair Discoed	medium	low
LLV01	Llanfair Kilgeddin	high/medium	medium/low
LLV02	Llanfair Kilgeddin	high/medium	low
LLY01	Llanvapley	high/medium	medium/low
LLY02	Llanvapley	high/medium	medium/low
MH01	Mathern	high	low
MH02	Mathern	high/medium	medium
MH03	Mathern	high	low
MT01	Mitchell Troy	high/medium	medium/low
MT02	Mitchell Troy	high/medium	medium/low
MT03	Mitchell Troy	high/medium	low

LLCA reference	Settlement	Sensitivity	Capacity
MT04	Mitchell Troy	high/medium	low
PN01	Penallt	medium	medium
PN02	Penallt	high/medium	medium
PN03	Penallt	high/medium	low
PW01	Pwllmeyric	medium	medium/low
PW02	Pwllmeyric	high/medium	medium
PW03	Pwllmeyric	high	low
SM01	Shirenewton/ Mynydd Bach	high/medium	medium/low
SM02	Shirenewton/ Mynydd Bach	high/medium	low
SM03	Shirenewton/ Mynydd Bach	high/medium	low
SM04	Shirenewton/ Mynydd Bach	high/medium	low
SM05	Shirenewton/ Mynydd Bach	high	low
ST01	St Arvans	high/medium	medium/low
ST02	St Arvans	high	low
ST03	St Arvans	high/medium	medium/low
TB01	The Bryn	high/medium	medium/low
TB02	The Bryn	high/medium	low
TB03	The Bryn	medium	medium/low
TB04	The Bryn	high/medium	low
TN01	Tintern	high	low
TN02	Tintern	high/medium	medium/low
TN03	Tintern	high/medium	medium/low
TN04	Tintern	high	medium/low
TN05	Tintern	high	medium/low
TN06	Tintern	high	low
TR01	Trellech	high	low
TR02	Trellech	high/medium	low
TR03	Trellech	high/medium	medium/low
WP01	Werngifford/Pandy	high/medium	low
WP02	Werngifford/Pandy	high/medium	medium/low
WP03	Werngifford/Pandy	high/medium	low
WP04	Werngifford/Pandy	high/medium	low

# FIGURES

**Key**

- High
- High/medium
- Medium
- Medium/low
- Low

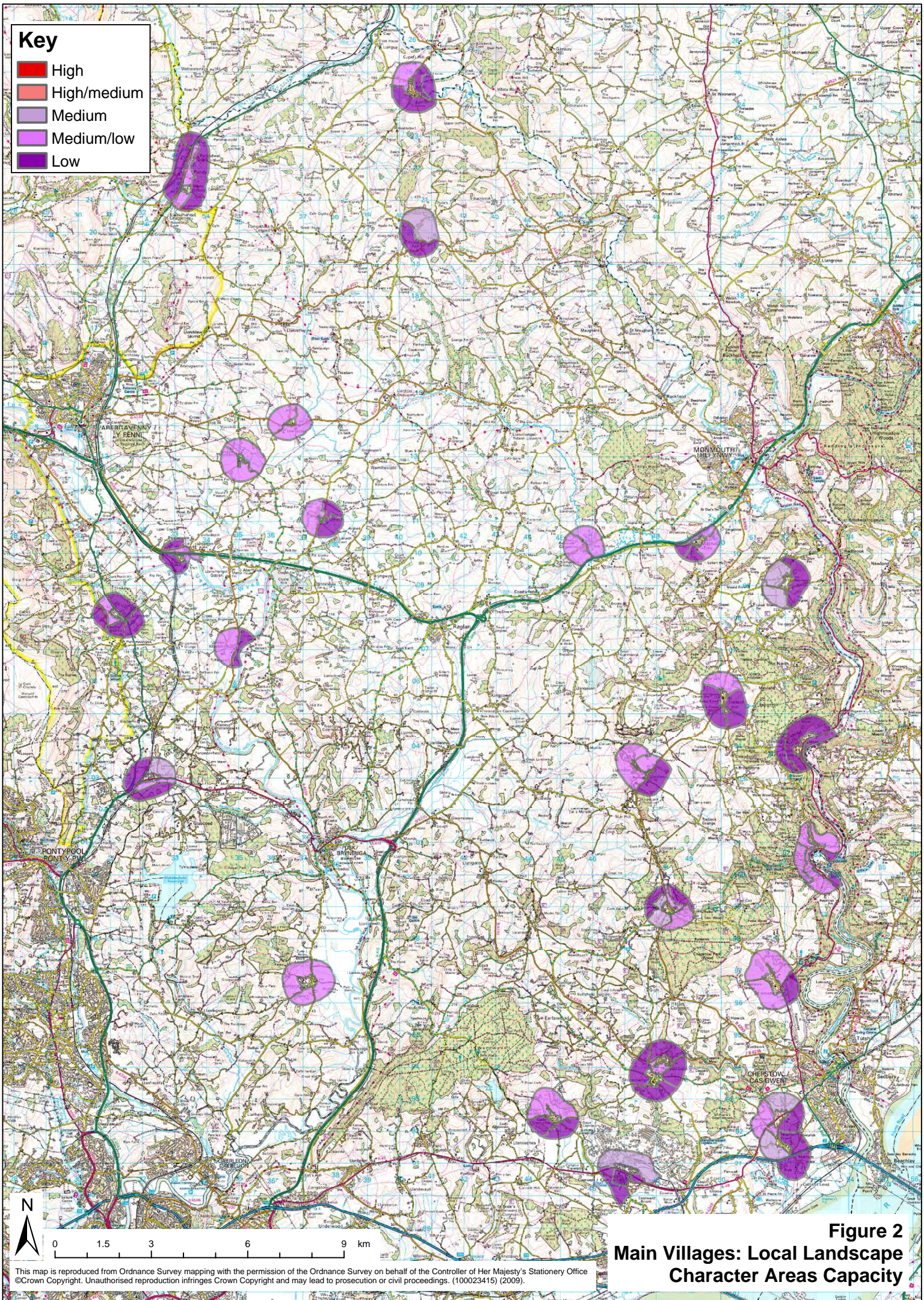


**Figure 1**  
**Main Villages: Local Landscape**  
**Character Areas Sensitivity**

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**Key**

- High
- High/medium
- Medium
- Medium/low
- Low



**Figure 2**  
**Main Villages: Local Landscape**  
**Character Areas Capacity**

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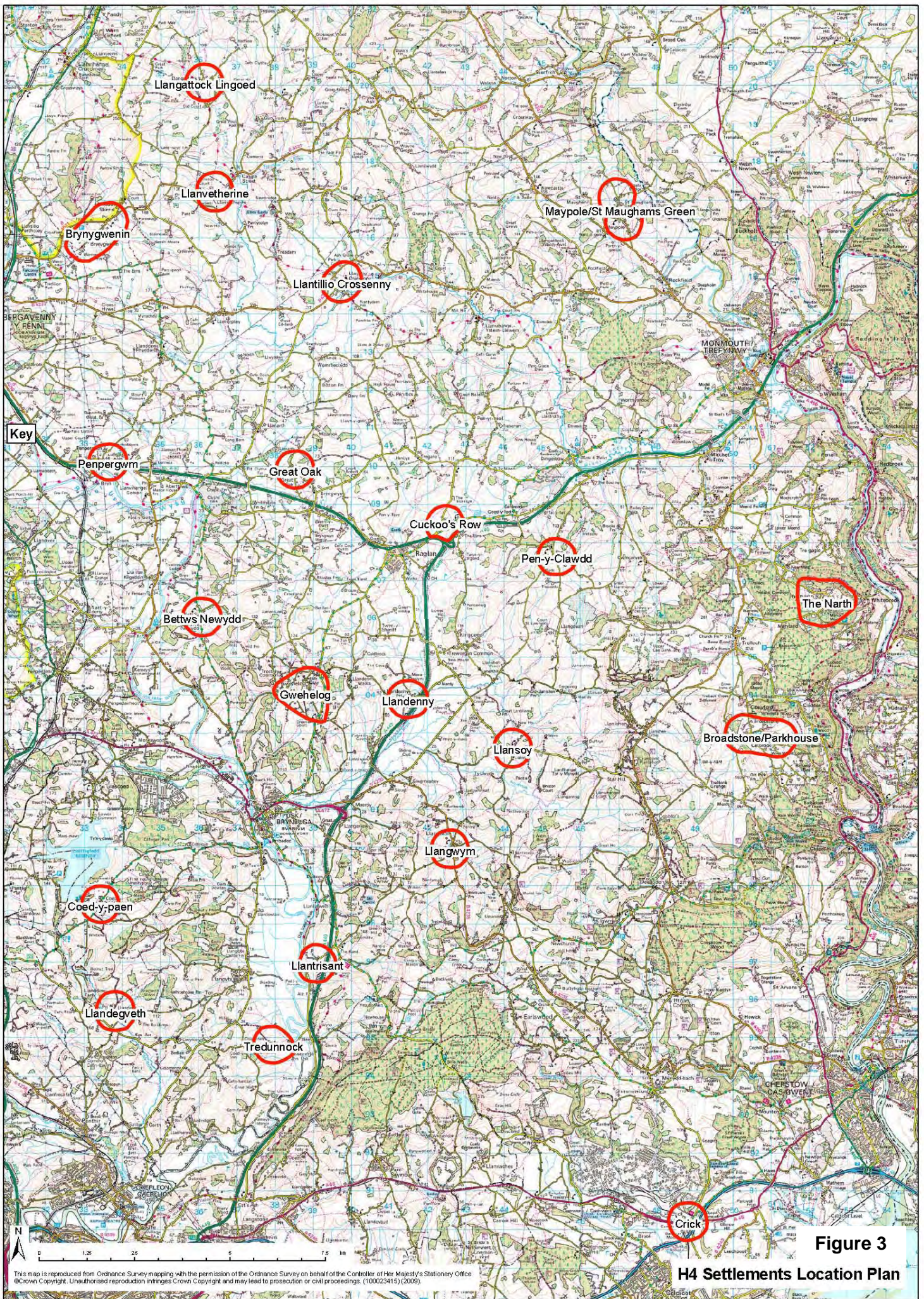


Figure 3

H4 Settlements Location Plan

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