

A466 river views feasibility report

“Landscape is about the relationship between people and place; the interaction between nature and culture”

(Wye Valley AONB Management Plan)



**A report to the Wye Valley AONB Unit by Jessica Vuckovic and Becca Bratt
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1. Introduction

This report has been commissioned by the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit, with funding through the Sustainable Development Fund, a Welsh Assembly Government initiative in the Wye Valley AONB.

The Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) received requests for roadside and riverside vegetation to be managed along the A466 (known locally as the Wye Valley road) to open up lost views of the river. This study aims to highlight any potential areas where work could be carried out to enhance the views of the River Wye from the A466 between Monmouth and Chepstow, an area which straddles Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. By opening up views along this road, visitors may be encouraged to stop and explore the area further, benefitting local tourism, while also promoting the beauty of the landscape for the enjoyment of the locals who use the road regularly. However there may be impacts on the landscape, wildlife and tranquillity which need to be considered and balanced in any decisions.

Historically, viewpoints in the Wye Valley were, in general, more open due to the way that riparian woodlands and adjacent land were once managed. Local residents who have lived in the area for many years remember the journey along the A466 offering more frequent and extensive views of the River Wye and valley beyond. As heavy industry and the railways in the Wye Valley declined, the steep valley sides became more wooded and trees grew up along roadsides, providing habitat for wildlife and in many areas, a visual screen and noise buffer from road traffic. Roadside and bankside vegetation is now quite dense in places, obscuring previous views of the river. Whilst we must respect that the valley is a continually changing landscape, this report investigates some of the areas put forward as lost viewpoints, as well as exploring other areas that have the potential to be opened up.

Any work that is undertaken should ensure that the Special Qualities [SQ] of the Wye Valley are conserved or enhanced; the details of which are outlined in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 (Table 8). This includes looking at the impact on the landscape as a whole [SQ1]; the biodiversity of the woodlands [SQ2]; the diversity and connectivity of the river [SQ3] and boundary habitat [SQ5], existing Picturesque, extensive and dramatic views [SQ11] and the overall tranquillity and sense of remoteness and naturalness of the area [SQ12]. The Strategic Objectives in the Management Plan most relevant to this project are listed in Appendix 1.

Various considerations have been taken into account for all proposed work including the possible impacts on protected species, riverine habitats, road safety, and visual and noise disturbance to local residents, footpath, road and river users. There would need to be further surveys, including investigations into landscape and visual impacts, if any work were to be taken forward, with consultations taking place between the appropriate organisations and respective landowners.

Areas with existing views from the road towards the river or the opposite valley side have also been included in this report, together with stretches of the road where work is not possible due to safety, workload or habitat disruption.

1.1 Methodology

Survey work has been conducted primarily by vehicle along the A466, but also on foot along pavements and public rights of way adjacent to the River Wye. The risk assessment for the survey can be found in Appendix 2. Both the current and potential views looking north and south along the River Wye have been considered, as well as vistas that take in the wider landscape, historical landmarks and the woodland on the opposite valley side. Locations that were considered as 'lost' viewpoints were surveyed; opinions, memories and insights from local residents and councillors were gathered and consultation with individuals from organisations including Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire County Councils, Forest of Dean District Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Local Authority Highways departments were carried out.

This project was completed over a six week period. Initial surveys were conducted during late September before the autumn leaf fall to give a realistic idea of vegetation cover. The trees were an effective visual barrier so it was often difficult to imagine the possible views down the valley that could be enjoyed if the vegetation was thinned. A further survey was conducted in late October to give a better sense of these views but ideally, a better comparison could be made if another survey were to take place in winter when the trees are devoid of their foliage.

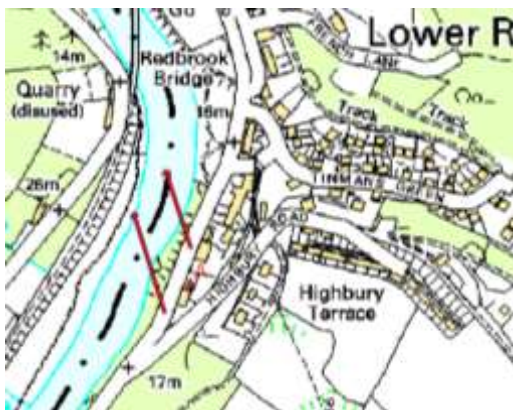
Furthermore, during the limited project period it was not possible for representatives from all organisations to respond to information requests. For example, we were unable to include more specific details regarding accident hotspots and areas of subsidence for the entire stretch of the A466.

The report aims to be used as baseline data and assist any future negotiations with highways authorities and landowners over roadside or bankside vegetation management. Landowners were not approached during this initial stage.

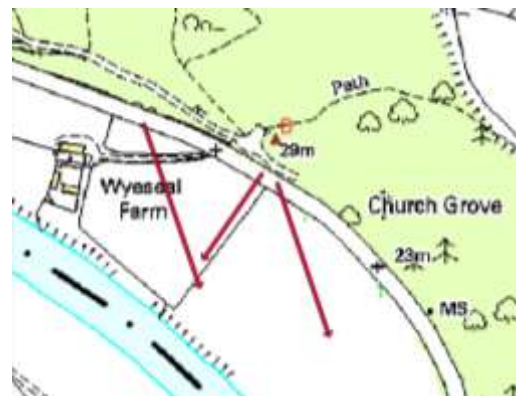
2. Existing views

Before proposing measures to reduce roadside or bankside vegetation along the A466, it was important to recognise where views exist already to avoid suggesting inappropriate work in adjacent areas. The maps below pinpoint these locations and indicate the direction of view, and Table 1 describes the extent of these views. Where opportunities occur to improve or extend some of these existing viewpoints, these have been highlighted within the table. Section 3 details these and other 'Potential view enhancement locations'.

It is important to note that more extensive views can be enjoyed during winter months when trees have lost their leaves. Some viewpoints are enhanced by the contrast of driving through an enclosed tunnel of trees before the canopy widens and reveals a more open landscape. These 'tunnels' have become a character of the A466 and can add enjoyment to the driving experience while also providing connectivity between habitats; though they have contributed towards the loss of some views of the river.



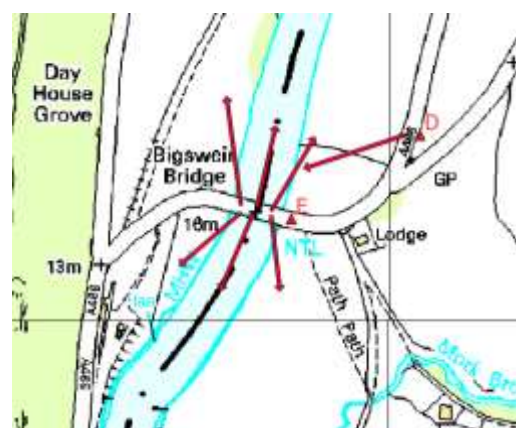
Existing view A
Northbound through Lower Redbrook



Existing view B
Over Wyeseal Farm



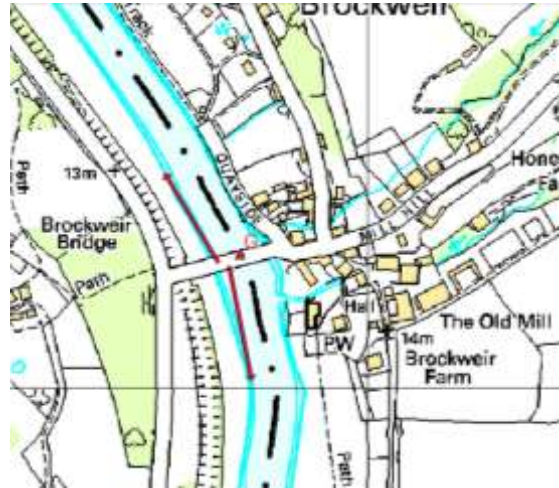
Existing view C
The Florence



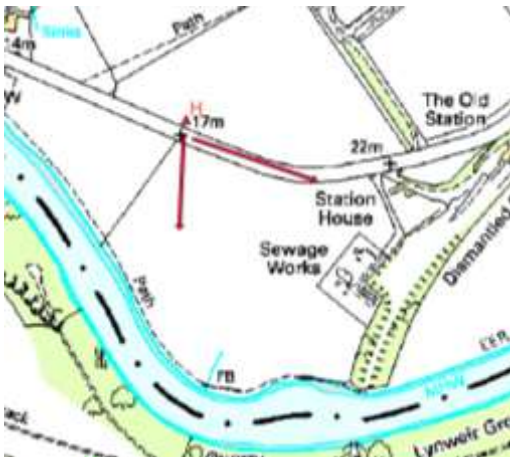
Existing views D and E
Bigsweir Bridge



Existing view F
Above Coed Ithel



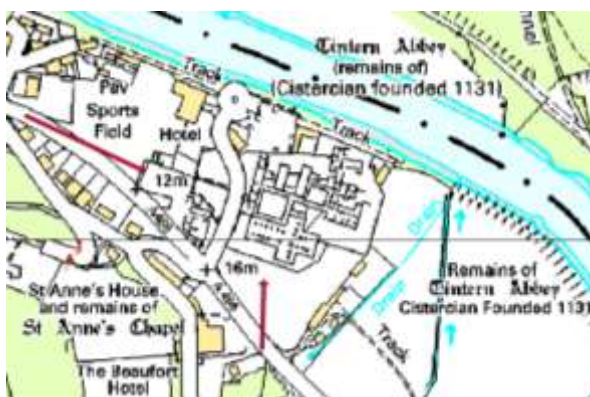
Existing view G
From Brockweir Bridge



Existing view H
Between Tintern Parva and Old Station



Existing view I
From Tintern Village



Existing view J
Tintern Abbey



Existing view K
Dead-man's Corner, Tintern

Map ref.	Grid ref.	Comments
A	SO53650960	Northbound through Lower Redbrook: Glimpses of Redbrook Bridge driving north.
B	SO54190685	Over Wyeseal Farm: Impressive but short-lived view approximately 30m north of Wyeseal Farm entrance. Opportunities to improve existing view here (See No. 9 in 'Potential view enhancement locations').
C	SO54370625	The Florence: Low hedgerow, approximately 20m long, in front of what was The Florence Hotel, provides an open view north and south, of the river and opposite bank.
D	SO54020517	Bigsweir Bridge: Open view looking south at Bigsweir Bridge starts at this point.
E	SO53860509	From Bigsweir Bridge: Open views on Bigsweir Bridge looking north and south along the river.
F	SO52850290	Above Coed Ithel: Long views down the valley in both directions, north of Coed Ithel Farm between Llandogo and Tintern. These are interrupted by short sections of vegetation so opportunities for work exist here (See No. 14 in 'Potential view enhancement locations').
G	SO53850112	From Brockweir Bridge: Open views from Brockweir Bridge looking north and south along the river.
H	SO53360069	Between Tintern Parva and Old Station: Glimpses driving east towards steep sided woodlands, and views south across field to river (although from a low vantage point) where hedgerows are low.
I	SO52790054	From Tintern Village: Open views driving through Tintern where the road is very close to the river.
J	ST53189999	Tintern Abbey: Views of Tintern Abbey approaching from north and south.
K	ST53699937	Dead-man's Corner, Tintern: Travelling south, away from Tintern there are open sections providing occasional views of the woodland on the opposite valley side. There is scope to improve the view here (See No. 17 in 'Potential view enhancement locations').

Table 1: Description of the existing views along the Wye Valley Road. 'Map ref.' refers to maps above and corresponds to larger maps in Appendix 3.

The photos below show an example of an existing view which can be found at point C (SO 54397 06266), in front of The Florence.



Open stretch in front of The Florence where the hedgerow has been cut low to provide views for residents. This offers views of the river and opposite valley driving north and south.



View from outside The Florence looking south.

In addition to those listed above, there are other areas along the A466 with either open or interrupted views but also with the possibility to be extended. These opportunities are detailed in 'Potential view enhancement locations' in section 3.

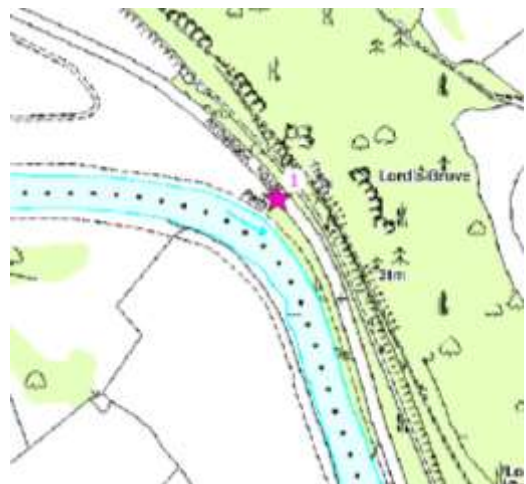
3. Potential view enhancement locations

View enhancement proposals range from canopy raising / side-pruning to selective thinning, coppicing and scrub removal over longer stretches. The appropriateness of the suggested view enhancement work should be considered in more depth on a site-by-site basis if project work is to be taken forward. Listed below are the potential opportunities to carry out view enhancement works along the A466. Specific considerations have been described for each site but more general considerations that may be relevant to many areas can be found in 'General considerations and constraints' in section 4.

A map to show the site location has been included in each instance. A pink star pinpoints the site location and red arrows show the direction of existing views. Larger maps can be found in Appendix 3 which illustrates the scope of potential works in the wider landscape. Within the photos that follow, a blue horizontal line indicates where the road is situated and a yellow arrow draws attention to the site of suggested works.

1. SO 52674 11407:

Driving north, just beyond the earth bank, tall trees have established on a steep bankside down to the river. Side-pruning and coppicing or scrub removal of the understorey rather than felling of trees would be recommended to open up a view of the river meandering from the west. The understorey consists of dog rose (*Rosa canina*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), young beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), but is not very thick here. Further north the fence line is covered in clematis (*Clematis vitalba*), although there may be no need to remove this as it may not enhance the view further and the view starts to be lost from this point.



Slightly further south of the potential view point, the trees are a good traffic screen to users of the footpath on the west side of the river. But because of the difference in road and footpath height, much of the traffic (apart from taller vehicles) is screened by the vegetated fence line. The road is much higher than the river at this point, so there would be a good vantage point from the road looking west if trees were thinned.

Considerations: This particular site is regarded as being a place of tranquillity for river users, walkers and wildlife, as the river flows away from Monmouth. Local residents have raised concerns about the noise and traffic they can hear and see from Penallt and would like more trees planted to screen the view towards Monmouth and help to reduce noise.



View of the river meandering west with encroaching bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and young trees.



Area of thicker vegetation which could be coppiced to open up views driving north.



Clematis grows over the fence line and blocks the view of the river.



Some younger trees that could be re-coppiced to open up views. The more mature trees should be retained for biodiversity reasons (refer to paragraph 4 in section 4.3.2 for explanation).

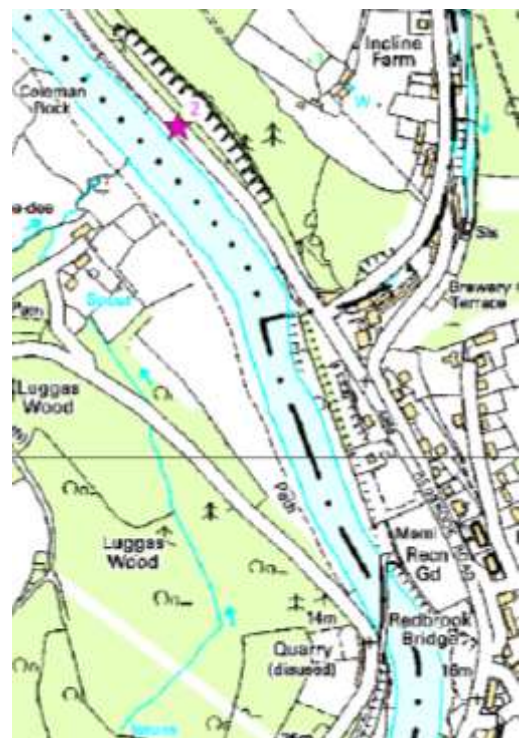




View from west side of river looking towards SO 52674 11407.

2. Redbrook Bridge view (SO 53384 10359):

There is the potential to thin or coppice for approximately 100m going south from point 2 (beyond the mature oak (*Quercus* sp.) tree, indicated by the pink star) and down towards Redbrook. This would open up glimpses of Redbrook Bridge and the river. The trees along the road (with potential to coppice) are a mixture of young and previously coppiced willow (*Salix* sp.), hazel and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The mature trees which occur occasionally help to frame the view and should be left for biodiversity reasons (refer to paragraph 4 in section 4.3.2 for explanation). There is also a bank of bramble here that would need cutting back to give a clearer outlook. The vegetation along this stretch is encroaching onto the footpath, with soil and leaf litter building up, forcing pedestrians closer to the road. If work were to be carried out, improvements to the footpath could be included as part of the project. Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is locally abundant so there would need to be a continued effort to manage this and encroaching scrub into the future.



Closer to the 30mph zone before Redbrook, the potential for a good view reduces. However, the view here could be enhanced further by coppicing or thinning willow that obscure the view of the bridge on either side of the river bank on the approach to Redbrook Bridge. Additionally, driving north, there are partially open views of the river at this point. Works here would benefit the outlook from both directions.

Considerations: There are a number of factors to consider if work were to go ahead at this location. There are steps down to a private footpath for fishing / river access just behind the potential location for works. There may be an increase in noise reaching anglers or canoeists if this stretch were to be opened up more, likewise for residents of Lone Lane, Penallt. The public footpath is on the pavement, next to the road. If scrub removal or tree works were carried out, there may need to be a fence put up to protect walkers, due to the incline down to the river. There is a house on the opposite bank with a public footpath that runs along the western side of the river, so opening up the view on the eastern side might have an impact (noise, views of cars etc.) on residents and footpath users.

Another consideration for carrying out works in this location is that there are cables going over the river here so any works that are executed should ensure that these are not made more obvious. The visual impact for visitors enjoying views northward from Redbrook Bridge should also be considered as vegetation removal may expose the road and traffic to onlookers.



Looking south towards Redbrook from pull-in.



Looking south down A466 approaching Redbrook.



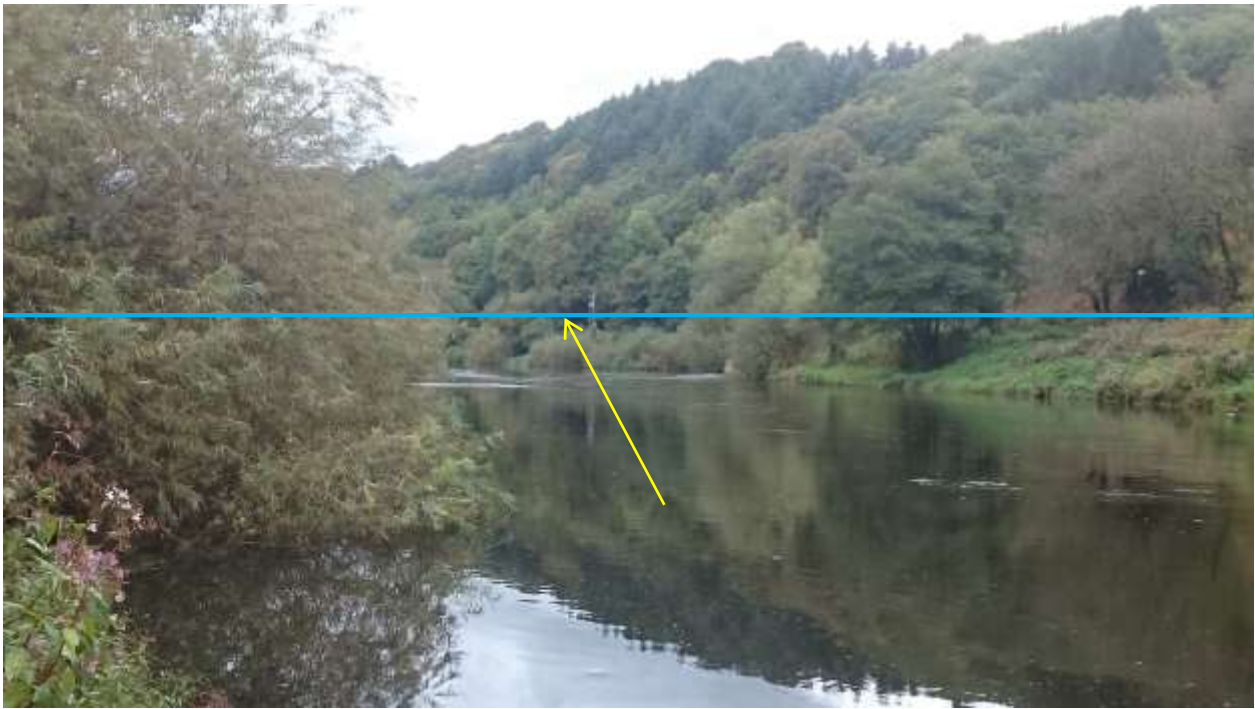
View from the footpath on the west side of the river (SO 53345 10284), looking towards potential area to coppice / thin trees. From this side, cars can already be seen through the trees as they pass. It would be important to retain the mature ash and oak for biodiversity reasons (refer to section 4.3.2 for explanation).



View from Redbrook Bridge looking north back towards site of potential view enhancement works.



View of Redbrook Bridge (from SO 53523 09967) looking south, showing the willow that could be managed to enhance the view of the bridge.

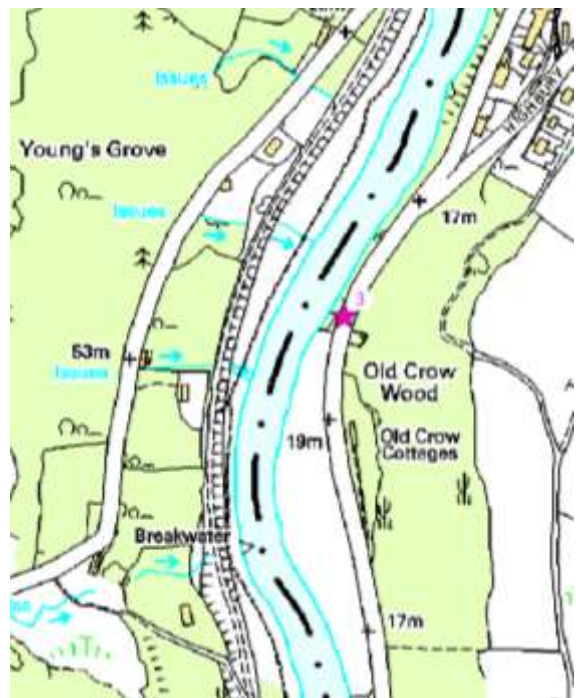


Looking from the footpath on west side of the river towards possible road viewpoint, with pylon visible.

3. SO 53530 09397:

There are some glimpses of the river along here, driving north on the approach into Redbrook before the 30 mph sign. This area could be selectively thinned a little to enhance the view. There is a young understorey consisting of holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), hawthorn and hazel, which could be thinned to open up the view further. Hazel slightly lower down the bank could be re-coppiced. There are also bramble and nettle (*Urtica dioica*) covering the fence for a distance of 5-6 metres which could be cut back to obtain a clearer view of the watercourse.

Considerations: The mature trees (sycamore and ash) along here are aesthetically pleasing and add value to the driving experience entering/ leaving Redbrook. It is important that the large branches of the mature beech which overhang the river are retained for their visual and biodiversity benefits. The visual and noise impact for residents of Lone Lane and users of the Wye Valley



Walk on the opposite bank will need to be assessed. Vehicles approaching Redbrook should be reducing their speed so there should be fewer safety concerns for drivers by extending the views here.



Both photos (above) show mature trees interspersed with a young undestorey which could be thinned.



Glimpses of the river which could be enhanced by coppicing younger trees.



Large branches overhanging the river which add to the charm and character of this area.

4. SO 53526 08765:

From the start of the lay-by (800m south of Redbrook) driving north, there is potential to carry out thinning work to provide glimpses of the valley to road users and partially expose the curve of the river. The elm (*Ulmus minor*) next to the roadside could be re-coppiced and the young hazel and sycamore lower down on the bank could be coppiced or thinned. Additionally the bramble would need to be removed from the fence line. It would not be necessary for any management works on the mature ash at the northern end of the lay-by. There are mature trees scattered along this stretch of the A466 between the road and river and while some of these may still interrupt the views, they also contribute towards the natural character of the road.



Considerations: The fence line here is defunct and the elm is growing through it. If works were to go ahead, a new fence line may be required by the landowner. Making the river more visible here could encourage more drivers to pull into the small lay-by in this location, which may have safety implications.



Areas where there could be some minor work carried out to enhance views, such as coppicing.

5. SO 53427 08541:

Near to the lay-by, driving south, there is the potential to enhance the view where there are already flashes of the watercourse as you drive past. There are a number of mature sycamore trees, of which the lower branches could be cut to reveal the view beneath the canopy. There are several smaller hazels that have been coppiced in the past and could be re-coppiced to extend the view further.

Considerations: There are several alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) situated close to the river along this stretch. Due to a lack of access at the time of surveying, it is recommended that they are surveyed to assess whether they are suitable for management. Without management, they may block some of the view that is trying to be achieved.



Opening up the views may have impacts on other users in the area; there are public footpaths, the Wye Valley Walk and fishing platforms on the west side of the river that should be taken into consideration. In this instance, leaving the canopy intact and coppicing alternate trees would reduce the visibility of cars to the public and minimise impact. There is the possibility that opening up a view by a lay-by may encourage drivers to pull over at short notice, which would be detrimental to road safety.



Smaller trees could be coppiced to expand existing glimpses of the river.

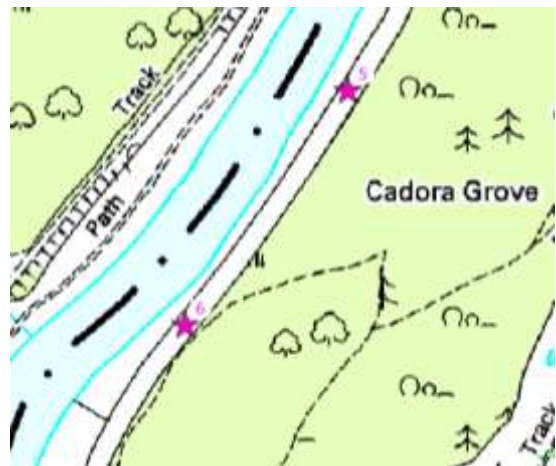


The lower branches of mature trees could be managed in order to raise the canopy and offer clearer views of the watercourse.

6. SO 53297 08365:

The road is close to the river here and more glimpses of the Wye (north and south) could be revealed if there was some side-pruning of larger trees and thinning of the younger understorey including beech, hazel, hawthorn and sycamore.

Considerations: Mature trees should be retained for biodiversity. New fencing may have to be installed as part of the works. Landscape and visual impact on local footpaths, fisheries and the Wye Valley Walk will need assessment.





Photos showing bushy hazel coppice and potential for thinning / side-pruning.

7. Between SO 53312 07805 and SO 53529 0740:

There are existing glimpses of the river through the trees along this section. Some selective re-coppicing of thick hazel may enhance views further and benefit the views driving north and south.

Considerations: Retain mature trees for biodiversity (refer to paragraph 4 in section 4.3.2 for explanation). New fencing may have to be installed as part of the works. Landscape and visual impact on local footpaths, fisheries and Wye Valley Walk will need assessment.



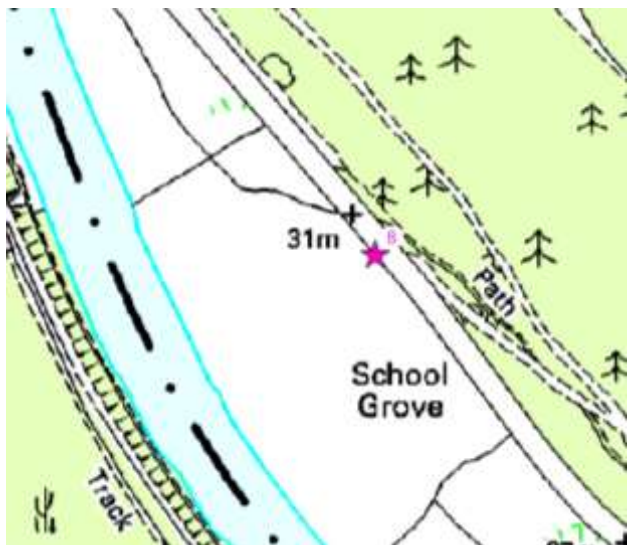


Both photos show thick hazel coppice, which could be re-coppiced to provide glimpses of the river to drivers.

8. SO 53710 07193:

Opposite the pull in for Cadora Woods the view is already relatively extensive and open, offering more southerly views of the river and the woodland on the opposite valley side. There is a copse closer to the river, which prevents the viewer from seeing down river slightly but is an attractive addition to the landscape.

The view could be extended slightly by cutting back the scrub (bramble, bracken, nettle etc.) and coppicing or thinning the small trees (mainly hazel) that line the roadside. The work should be carried out in-between the mature ash and mature sycamore, which should be left to frame the view.





Scrub could be cut back to enhance the view but the mature ash and sycamore should be left un-managed.



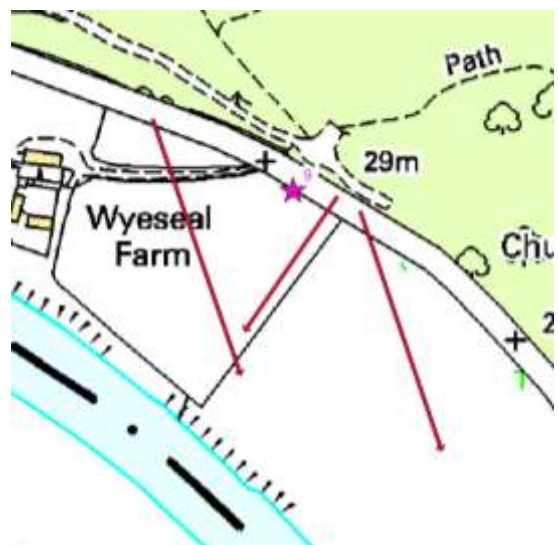


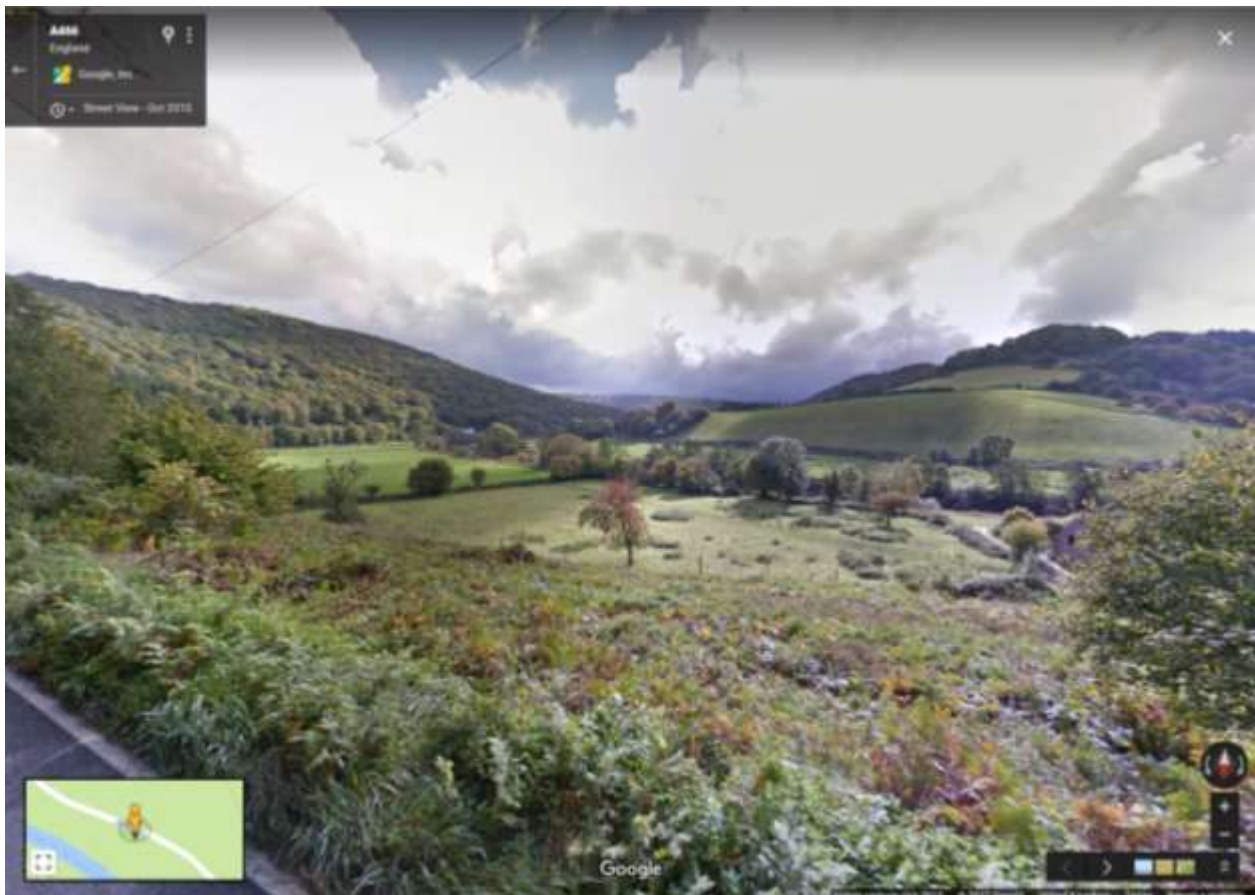
The two photos above show the extent of the hedgerow and small trees which could be thinned or coppiced.

9. SO 54192 06860:

Approximately 30 metres before the entrance to Wyeseal Farm, driving south, there is already an impressive, sweeping view of the valley. However, this is relatively short-lived before being interrupted by patches of scrub, which could be managed to ensure it is maintained at a low level. After passing the drive down to Wyeseal Farm, there are glimpses of the valley and river which could be extended further by thinning the scrub along the roadside and keeping the bracken low along the fence line.

Considerations: The impact of noise on residents of Wyeseal Farm and Lower Whitebrook, on the opposite bank, would need to be assessed before any works were carried out.





Sweeping view of the valley before the entrance to Wyeseal Farm (Google Earth imagery). Note that the bracken is currently taller than when this photo was taken.



View looking straight across valley at the entrance to Wyeseal Farm.



View looking south from the entrance to Wyeseal Farm.



Opportunity for management works to reveal the view south down the valley.

10. SO 54395 06678:

There is a small gap offering a view of the valley to the south at this point which could be extended by selective thinning or re-coppicing of hazel on either side, to lengthen the view.

Considerations: There is a telephone pole along this stretch, which is currently obscured by vegetation. It is important to leave enough vegetation to hide the pole, which would be unsightly otherwise. Work should cease before the telephone pole to avoid distracting drivers approaching the bend.





Small opening of vegetation where there is currently a glimpse of the river and opposite valley.

11. Between SO 54341 06060 and SO 54210 05733:

There is the opportunity to thin smaller trees or raise the canopy here to improve the view of the river facing north. Currently, the vegetation isn't particularly thick so coppicing or thinning alternate trees would offer glimpses of the river to road users without creating long open stretches that may make the road more obvious to river or footpath users.

Considerations: As this site is in close proximity to Bigsweir Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / Special Area of Conservation (SAC), care should be taken to avoid any work which may be damaging to their status. Maps showing SSSIs and SACs for both England and Wales can be found in Appendix 4.

It may be necessary to apply for a licence if work here is thought to contain 'Operations Requiring Consent' (ORC) which are described in more detail in Appendix 5.



Photo showing the vegetated road verge looking north.



Opportunities for thinning facing south.

12. Bigsweir Bridge view (SO 54069 05362):

There is a 'secondary' hedgerow here, which is becoming a thin, straggly line of trees. There is the potential to manage this at the same height as the primary hedgerow in front, starting from the bus stop and continuing south, to have a clearer view of the bridge on the southbound approach. A more ambitious option is to focus on a larger section, beginning work beyond the bus stop further north where bracken is dominating the boundary line. This would involve cutting the bracken and remnant hedge plants down to ground level to give a more extensive view of the bridge from further away.



Considerations: A fence line would need to be erected in place of the lowered boundary as it would not be stock proof. This in itself may have implications visually as it would not be as in-keeping with the aesthetic of the surroundings as a green hedgerow. Lowering the hedge could improve safety for pedestrians waiting at the bus stop by extending their line of sight and traffic visibility around the corner and make them more visible to oncoming traffic. However, low, cropped hedgerows are not ideal for biodiversity and cutting a large section back would have negative impacts on any species that use the hedgerow. An alternative could be to lay the identified section of hedge and maintain it as a low, but thick hedgerow which may go some way towards mitigating against the height loss. Lesser horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) are known to use the toll house on the bridge in low numbers and may use these hedgerows as linear foraging routes. Lowering the hedgerow could increase the chances of bats being hit by vehicles.

By cutting back the hedgerow, it is important to ensure that the road signs do not become eyesores to river users and pedestrians on the opposite side of the river. The nearest dwellings (including Pilston Farm) should not be impacted by this work, as they are either surrounded by woodland or screened by hedges and trees.





The two photos above show where the hedgerow could be cut or laid to offer clearer views of the bridge.



This photo, taken from further north, shows bracken and remnant hedgerow along the field boundary which could be cut to enhance views of Bigsweir Bridge.

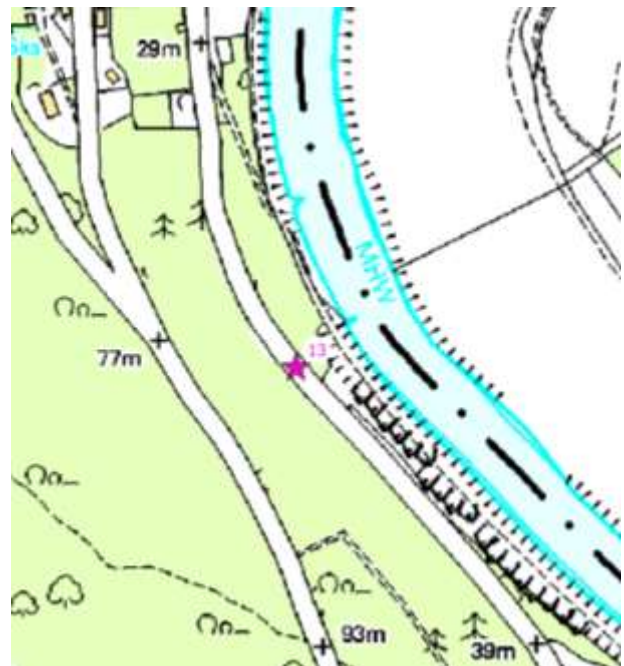


View from Bigsweir Bridge looking north back towards area of potential works.

13. SO 52612 03496:

The northbound approach to Llandogo was noted as having one of the lost viewpoints along this road, when the trees were less dense. There are lots of mature trees along this stretch, so instead of felling these, management should focus on side-pruning / crown lifting of more mature trees and coppicing or thinning of younger trees for biodiversity reasons (refer to paragraph 4 in section 4.3.2 for explanation). Carrying out this work would provide glimpses along this section.

Considerations: Trees and roadside vegetation can offer some protection for motorists against the steep drop down to the river. Carrying out work along here may compromise driver safety. Work required to open the view would be considerable for short glimpses of the river, and may be considered too much work for too little gain.



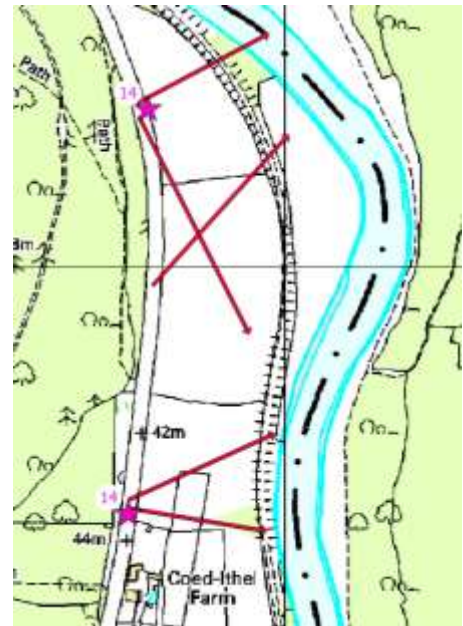


Photos above indicate where thinning and side-pruning / crown lifting along this stretch would provide glimpses of the valley.

14. Between SO 52834 03166 and SO 52829 02736:

There are long views, north and south, over the opposite valley side from here but they are interrupted in places. The view of the river is blocked by bankside vegetation in some areas but the outlook down the valley and over the wooded hillsides is impressive.

There is scope to extend the views by cutting back scrub (consisting of bracken, bramble and nettle) and young trees (which could be coppiced) that are developing in small patches along the roadside. This would benefit views looking both north and south and provide an extended, uninterrupted panorama without excessive disturbance to habitats.



Existing view looking south down the valley. It should be noted that this view was reopened about 5 years ago, as a result of highway reconstruction work and the removal of the hedgerow.



Areas of tall scrub and young trees along the fence line which could be managed.

15. SO 53191 01795:

This location has been highlighted as a lost view to the north and has developed into linear woodland with some mature trees. It currently acts as a screen to traffic for local residents and recreational users. To restore this fully to the view that once was, there would have to be considerable felling of trees along the roadside. The trees here have developed into dense stands but have relatively small diameters, less than 30cm (approximately).

Considerations: While each individual tree may not be significantly large in circumference, the volume of trees needing to be removed to create a substantial enough view would be quite high. Due to the steep valley side which drops away from the road down to the river, the canopies of the trees growing below do not currently impact on the view from the road significantly. Therefore, only trees growing along the roadside would require management at this time. However, this may change as these trees continue to grow in height.



Due to the large-scale works that this would entail, there would be several potential impacts including considerable habitat disturbance over a large area and high associated financial costs. The views of the road would be opened up to river users, footpath users and residents on the opposite side of the river (particularly Brockweir Lodge, which has some tree screening in front but may still be affected by noise, car headlights etc.). Many of the other houses are surrounded by trees so the impact for these residents would be lessened.

A more sensitive approach towards restoring the old viewpoint would be to limit the number of trees felled and raise some of the tree canopies by side-pruning. This would provide a far reaching view north up the river but it would be more interrupted than if more trees were felled.



Tree canopies could be raised to open up the view.

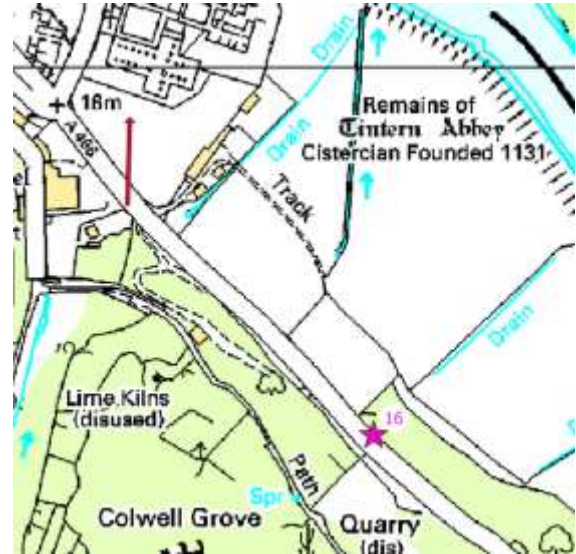


The view up the river from SO 53150 02049 on the eastern side. There is no access on the west side, but this photo gives an impression of the long view that may be obtained.

16. ST 53529 99656:

Driving north, there are small glimpses of Tintern Abbey but to reveal it further, one section could be opened up to frame the Abbey as you approach. This could involve thinning and coppicing small trees, including hazel and hawthorn and the removal or control of scrub. The height advantage from the road would provide a good vista of the Abbey and the valley beyond and additionally, the view of the Abbey at night would be enhanced.

Considerations: Visitors within the grounds of the Abbey may experience increased road noise and possible visual disturbance from passing vehicles.





The two photos above show the patchy roadside vegetation leading north towards Tintern.

17. ST 53692 99383:

A view across to the opposite side of the valley already exists here and can be experienced from the north or south. There is a 10m stretch which is completely open, then 25m of vegetation, including hazel and a mature field maple (*Acer campestre*). The hazel could be re-coppiced, but the field maple should be left without management as it is a valuable specimen for wildlife due to its age and form. Continuing past the field maple, there is then roughly 35m of clematis, nettle and bramble growing over the fence line, some of which could be cut back to give a clearer view.

Considerations: The road bends on either end of this stretch, known locally as Dead-man's Corner, so road safety should be considered before any work commences. A fence line already exists here which offers some protection to pedestrians and drivers from the incline beyond.



Open stretch looking south with small hazel and mature field maple that should be left unmanaged.



View looking north where scrub could be cut back.

18. ST 53649 99197:

Glimpses of the opposite valley side occur here in both directions, beginning approximately 10m further north than the start of the lay-by. There is the possibility to pollard the hazel at the northern end of the lay-by (next to the sign) and 2 or 3 hazels towards the southern end of the lay-by to extend the views. The first hazel grows on a slope, therefore it's only the top of the canopy that obscures the view. If management works were to go ahead, the bramble and clematis would also need removing from the fence so that views can be seen from vehicles. Carrying out works here would provide a good, extended view of the valley side and exposed cliff face, benefitting the views driving south and north.



Considerations: There are two mature ash trees here which should be left without management as they appear to be healthy specimens (currently no signs of ash dieback). Beyond the pavement, the land drops away steeply and considerations need to be made for pedestrian safety.



View looking towards the north-east showing a glimpse of the valley side.



View looking south-east across a fence covered with clematis and bramble, to the valley beyond.

4. General considerations and constraints

In addition to the considerations addressed above for individual sites, there are also other factors to take into account before any works go ahead.

4.1 Health and safety

4.1.1 Air pollution and run-off

Roadside vegetation is known to capture particles emitted from vehicle exhausts, therefore reducing the volume of potentially harmful pollutants and providing cleaner air for pedestrians and cyclists. During wet weather, substances such as oil and other residues from vehicles and farmland are washed from the road towards the watercourse. By removing roadside and bankside vegetation, the barrier that helps to soak up this pollution is taken away.

4.1.2 Subsidence and erosion

Several sections of the A466, particularly between Bigsweir and Blackcliff woods, are susceptible to subsidence and rock fall due to the road's location and surrounding geology and topography. Removal of large trees would need to be avoided in these particular areas as this action may have a de-stabilising effect on the road and surrounding banks. There are also concerns about carriageway stability between site 2 at Cadora Grove and site 12 near The Florence; an area monitored by the Highway Authority (Gloucestershire County Council) on an annual basis. The Highway Authorities would not want to see any work undertaken that impacts on the stability of the ground.

4.1.3 Road safety

Opening up views can create a distraction for drivers, either making them pull over at short notice to see the view, or 'rubber-necking' to watch the view rather than the road while driving.

Where there are currently dark, tunnel-like areas on the road created by dense tree canopies overhead, opening up sections may allow more light to reach the road, improving visibility and reducing the need for drivers to use headlights during the day time. However, vegetation clearance of shorter sections can create intermittent light and dark stretches of road, which can reduce driver visibility under certain conditions. Clearance of longer sections gives a greater sense of space and creates the impression that the road is wider. This may encourage drivers to speed up which increases the chances of accidents occurring.

The section of road between site 2 at Cadora Grove and site 12 near The Florence has the highest frequency and severity of accidents along the A466 within Gloucestershire. Sites need to be selected thoughtfully, as creating too many distractions could result in a change in driver behaviour and may jeopardise road safety.

Any works which involve vegetation removal in tight spaces beside the road may involve road closures which would be inconvenient for local people and visitors to the area. Road closure permissions and any protected species consents may take several weeks to be granted so forward planning is key.

4.2 Landscape and visual impact

The survey work for the report aimed to take into consideration the perspectives of all users of the River Wye and A466. Before any work is carried out, the impact that each potential view point may have on all users and local residents should be examined in depth.

4.2.1 Noise

Road noise can be a problem, affecting tranquillity in some places and quality of life in others. It has been indicated that for local residents, noise from traffic along the A466 is more audible in winter when there is no foliage to provide sound proofing up the valley. Any view enhancement works which remove larger amounts of vegetation along the roadside will increase road traffic noise reaching river users, walkers and local residents in the vicinity. Considerations must be given to the level of impact this may have upon the users mentioned. Wildlife may also be negatively impacted by increased noise levels. With this in mind, species records along the A466 should be used in conjunction with all other considerations to help inform areas that are suitable for view enhancement work. Vegetation management should aim to avoid areas known to be tranquil spots or valuable habitats for protected species such as otter, bats and birds.

4.2.2 Cyclists

The lower Wye Valley is very popular with cyclists and much of the A466 can pose considerable danger as it is sometimes busy, fast and narrow with cars overtaking at speed. It is possible that the creation of viewpoints along the road could create further distractions to drivers and cyclists alike. Places of dense vegetation offer some protection to cyclists against steep drops to the river below. Conversely, opening up views could also benefit the cycling experience.

4.2.3 Footpath and river users

There is a possibility that opening up views to drivers along the A466 may affect anglers, canoeists and also walkers on public footpaths along the river and the Wye Valley Walk or Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Opening up a view of the river to drivers may have a negative visual impact upon other users, as views of the road (and therefore traffic) will also be opened up, reducing the quality of their experience of the area. Some parts of the river are known for their tranquillity and feeling of remoteness where vegetation along the roadside creates a visual and audio screen.

4.2.4 Local residents

The opinions of local residents need to be considered; initially it appears that attitudes towards such a project are split. As well as there being requests for views to be opened up, the AONB Unit has received requests from local residents for there to be more tree-planting to screen the traffic along various stretches of the A466, particularly in the Penallt area which is affected by vehicle noise coming along the road to and from Monmouth. The proposed removal of trees in some places may therefore become contentious.

4.2.5 Light Pollution

Another factor that should be taken into account is the possibility of increased light spill at night from car headlights towards local houses, from thinning or removal where vegetation would have previously screened or filtered this.

4.2.6 Landowners

The majority of roadside land is in private ownership. Therefore any work could only proceed with the landowner's permission. It is important to maintain good relationships with landowners and ensure that any project works does not compromise the landowner's responsibility of safety for the public where trees have been managed. This is particularly relevant for trees beside highways and public rights of way (including the navigation on the river). For example, where views are opened up by thinning, trees that are left may now be less protected in harsher weather conditions and may be subject to a domino effect where other trees and large branches become unstable in windy weather.

4.2.7 Visitors and tourists

Information gathered from visitor surveys identified that the most important factor in the decision to visit the area is the landscape of the Wye Valley itself. "The informality and apparent 'naturalness' of many of the roads in the AONB is fundamental to the appeal of the area" (Wye Valley AONB Management Plan). A positive outcome from viewpoint enhancement should be increased appreciation of the unique landscape of the Wye Valley by visitors, promoting a better understanding of the region and its special qualities, while encouraging tourists to stop and explore the wider area. This is in line with the AONB Management Plan objectives WV-T3 and WV-S2 (see Appendix 1). However the tourism offer will need to avoid risking the area becoming a scenic 'drive-through' with little incentive for tourists to stop once they have 'seen the views'. This could be exacerbated by the removal of bridge tolls on the M48 Old Severn Bridge, scheduled for 2018.

While any work is being carried out, road users and local residents will inevitably experience some disruption in the form of temporary traffic lights or road closures and diversions, and their associated increases in journey time. This may lead to negative feelings about the area and the way in which authorities are managing the landscape. Good communications with local communities and the public via parish and community councils, local councillors, newsletters, social media and signage is essential, to ensure there is an understanding about what is being carried out and why.

4.3 Licences and legal requirements

One of the biggest impacts of creating view points along the A466 is the effect these may have at an ecological level. The River Wye, some of the surrounding woodlands and a number of bat roost sites are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). There are also European Protected Species within the Lower Wye Valley which need to be taken into account. Any management of trees or scrub should be carried out sensitively to ensure that habitats and species populations don't become too fragmented and that there is still sufficient connectivity to provide corridors for wildlife.

4.3.1 Works by the River Wye SSSI and SAC

Due to the proximity of some of the potential projects to the River Wye SAC / SSSI, some work may require licences from Natural England (NE) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Consent will need to be sought where the potential works fall within the 'River Wye (Lower Wye) SSSI' and involve one or more 'Operations Requiring Consent' (ORCs) (described in Appendix 5). It is still usually possible to carry out some works under specific terms (e.g. time of year) depending on the amount of work and where it is within the SSSI.

It is unlikely that the work will require an Environment Agency (EA) environmental permit for bankside work, however, a permit is required if there is going to be any in-channel work or revetment. At this stage, the few trees by the riverside that have been identified for potential management appear to be on the bank rather than in the watercourse itself. Should the project go ahead, this would need confirmation with landowner consent.

Where the potential works fall within the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) then the competent authority (Monmouthshire County Council / Gloucestershire County council) will have to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to determine whether the proposals will have an impact on the features of the River Wye SAC. There are a number of species listed under Annex II of the EC Directive 92/43/EEC which are a primary reason for the designation of the River Wye as a SAC including: white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*), Atlantic salmon (*salmo salar*), bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), otter (*lutra lutra*) and lesser horseshoe bats. It is likely that the work that is being proposed on the bankside wouldn't affect the species listed previously, due to it being small-scale. Therefore, a survey of the specific trees that obscure the view of Redbrook Bridge may need to be carried out to assess the impact any management works may have on any protected species within the river.

Tree root systems help to stabilise the river bank and also provide cover and feeding grounds for otters, fish and nesting birds. As such, where vegetation is managed alongside the river, there is an increased risk of erosion and bankside destabilisation. However, sensible maintenance of bankside trees and scrub is encouraged by NRW and NE and should include coppicing, pollarding and thinning which can help prevent the trees and the banks around the trees being lost when the river floods.

4.3.2 Tree-works

The considered works fall within close proximity to one of the SSSI woodlands in the Wye Valley: Bigsweir Woods SSSI and SAC in Gloucestershire.

The tree-felling licences have the same prescriptions for both NE and NRW. A felling licence is not required if less than 5 cubic metres is felled in a calendar quarter and for trees that have the following diameters when measured at 1.3m from the ground: 8cm or less, 10cm or less for thinning work and 15cm or less for cutting coppice. It is also important to check with the Local Planning Authority in order to check for any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on those that are intended to be managed. Felling licences are not needed if pruning, lopping, pollarding or topping trees and all work should take place outside of bird nesting season.

It is also worth noting that for coppicing of timber over a certain amount, there needs to be a level of natural restocking, which would not be appropriate when attempting to open up a viewpoint long term. To maintain a view, the coppice would need to be continually managed instead of allowing it to regrow. Restocking may also include the installation of deer fencing as one of the conditions of the work, which may or may not be appropriate for the site or the landowner.

Additionally, the Lower Wye Valley woodlands are known to have many rare and important local tree species including large-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*) and whitebeams (*Sorbus* spp.). It is vital that the vegetation management that has been proposed doesn't impact on any of the species of significance for the area.

For the most part, the removal of mature trees has not been advised because of their ecological value. Mature trees develop certain characteristics which provide habitat for a wider range of wildlife than younger trees and may become the veterans of the future. They are more likely to have developed cavities which provide nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats and they support the growth of fungi and lichen. Aging trees provide greater potential for dead wood to occur, which is a habitat in its own right.

4.3.3 Species considerations and licences

There is a wide range of breeding birds known to be associated with the riverine habitats in the lower parts of the Wye. Any major vegetation management should be carried out in winter to avoid impacting on breeding bird populations. As well as the protected species listed under Annex II of the EC Directive 92/43/EEC, the River Wye SSSI is also of international importance for Atlantic stream crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), common otter (*Lutra lutra*) and beds of water crowfoot (*Ranunculus* spp.).

Otters often use the roots of mature bankside trees as their holts, so a survey would need to be carried out before coppicing or thinning the willows by Redbrook Bridge. Roads are linear features which can act as corridors for wildlife as well as vehicles. The woodlands along the Wye also provide valuable feeding and roosting habitats for several bat species including the greater horseshoe (*Rhinolephus ferrumequium*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and lesser horseshoe bat for which the Wye Valley is an important European stronghold. Therefore a bat survey may also have to be carried out before the implementation of any project work.

To assess the impact of any works on protected species an ecological consultant would be required. They would also be responsible for writing a Method Statement for the work, even if a licence is not needed. Species licences are required for any work that would knowingly disturb European Protected Species (EPS) including bats, dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), badgers (*Meles meles*), and otter, damage a bat roost or destroy a breeding site of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). Where there are known protected species within an area, individual licences need to be applied for from NE and NRW. Where work is small scale, does not impact on protected species and is undertaken at the correct time of year, a licence may not be required.

The invasive plant species Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) are present along the riverbanks and may spread into areas where vegetation has been cleared. This should ideally be monitored and managed as part of any project work taken forward.

5. Areas not considered for work

Whilst surveying and after gaining advice from various organisations, some stretches along the A466 were deemed unsuitable for any enhancement work. Areas that had particularly thick vegetation and a number

of mature trees were considered too valuable for wildlife. More specifically, in areas of dense linear woodland along the road, an extensive amount of work would be required to clear-fell a section big enough to offer a substantial viewpoint to drivers. This would be costly in both monetary and biodiversity terms and may also impact on the landscape and visual character.

Areas that were considered too dangerous to have view enhancement work carried out were also rejected. These sites tended to be where there was a particularly steep drop beside the road, along tight bends and in other areas where opening up the view would compromise safety by being too much of a distraction to road users.

Particular stretches may have also been rejected if they were in proximity to existing views and therefore unnecessary. The following table details stretches of the A466 that have not been considered for work for the reasons described above. Associated maps can be found in Appendix 3.

Map ref.	Mature trees	Thick vegetation	View not impressive	Good views close by	Impacts	Safety	Comments
X1			Yes				Low vantage point and far away from the river – no opportunity for views.
X2			Yes				The pumping station is very visible - would be more exposed if vegetation was cleared.
X3	Yes	Yes		Yes			Road through Redbrook not close to the river and thick vegetation / mature trees block the view. Additionally vegetation provides a screen to hide pumping station and signs.
X4	Yes		Yes				Lot of work for limited gain.
X5						Yes	Dangerous bend – too distracting for drivers.
X6				Yes		Yes	Accidents previously known along stretch – dangerous.
X7	Yes			Yes			Thicker vegetation (mature trees) provides a good screen of the traffic from the footpath on the eastern side of the river in the northern section. There are already good views from Bigsweir Bridge a short distance north of here. Tall crops obscuring view of woodland on opposite valley side in the southern section of X7. Continually changing land-use in adjacent field. Views may exist depending on land-use and time of year.
X8		Yes		Yes	Local residents		Band of woodland next to road which forms part of private garden / grounds (Catchmays Court). Already glimpses / views of opposite woodland slightly further north. Road at wrong angle to river for good views.
X9	Yes	Yes			Local residents	Yes	Would break up linear woodland and impact (visually and audibly) on local residents at Brockweir. Also a dangerous corner - avoid doing work as it may be too distracting.
X10	Yes	Yes			Ecological		Wooded next to road here, too thick to open up view.
X11			Yes		Ecological		Small section of taller hedgerow - valuable section in terms of biodiversity and connectivity. Poorer quality view.
X12	Yes	Yes	Yes		Ecological	Yes	Most of this section is too wooded for work to be carried out – lot of work for limited gain. There are also safety concerns with some dangerous bends and steep drops. The road also comes away from the river in some sections.

Table 2: Areas not considered for work. 'Map ref.' corresponds to the areas on the maps in Appendix 3.

6. Potential funding for landowners

Recommended funding opportunities currently available:

1. Heritage Lottery Fund - Landscape Partnerships Grant

Grants from £100,000 to £3,000,000 are available to help conserve habitats at landscape-scale. It is for schemes led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK. The area has already benefited from two Landscape Partnership schemes; Overlooking the Wye (2008-2012) and The Foresters Forest (2017-2022).

2. Government agri-environment schemes

Existing funding opportunities under the current Countryside Stewardship Scheme include the Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant and Water Capital Grants. The UK's departure from the EU will inevitably change the way our current agri-environment schemes look, but there may be new opportunities in the future.

- Natural England Countryside Stewardship grants
 - BE3: £8 per 100 metres for one side of hedgerow management
 - BN6: £4 per metre for hedgerow coppicing
 - TE10: £52 per tree to coppice bankside trees
- Glastir Small Grants
 - 'Landscape and Pollinators.' Activities under this option are chosen for their ability to 'contribute to restoring landscape features and providing habitat for pollinator species.'
 - Bracken Control (Mechanical Clearance) along boundaries may be funded via this option.

3. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) - Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grants

Facilitated by the Wye Valley AONB Unit, on behalf of Welsh Government, and available to landowners in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. Grants are currently limited to £1,000 with 50% matched funding from the landowner.

4. Greggs Foundation

Environmental grant fund for improving the local environment with a maximum grant of £2000.

When looking for grants to assist with projects, NRW, NE, EA and the local authorities may be able to inform of any available funding via their organisations or further sources.

7. Going forward / conclusion

For this report it was not feasible to gather all relevant landowner information. However, some information was gained in the process of carrying out the feasibility study and is now held at the AONB office. The respective landowners will need to be contacted with regard to the view enhancement projects and resources will need to be identified to take any of them forward, along with all the relevant permissions.

Currently there are no funding sources that could be immediately applied to comprehensively deliver this work. The SDF Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grants could be used on an ad hoc basis for smaller individual sites in Monmouthshire, but not Gloucestershire. Further work is required to identify funding that could more easily be directed towards this work.

It is important to consider the long-term management of the sites that may be opened up, how they will be funded and who will carry out the work. Views are likely to close up again within 5-10 years without continued management; it would be advisable to have a 5-10 year management plan in place in conjunction with landowners to ensure that viewpoints continue to be managed appropriately to ensure their longevity. Alternatively, a strategy or rolling programme of viewpoint creation and management could maintain a selection of views throughout the valley.

When coppicing, it may be advisable to cut different trees along the same stretch in rotation, to allow individuals to re-grow. In this way, views through to the river will change slightly over time but will be maintained into the future, whilst also diversifying the age structure of the coppiced trees.

Licences take time to organise so when a potential project is considered, it is important to apply for permissions (landowner, NE, NRW, Highways Authority etc.) well in advance. It is recommended to organise licences in the summer before works that are due to be carried out in the winter. Similarly, local community engagement can take extended periods of time, with regard to Parish and Community Council meeting cycles and organising or responding to public consultations.

Areas with good potential views which have fewer constraints should be considered the most feasible. But additional surveying needs to take place in these specific areas to investigate their potential more accurately. Ecological surveys, landscape and visual appraisals and habitats regulations assessments may need to be included in further investigations.

In the face of an ever changing climate, green infrastructure and ecological connectivity will become more and more important in providing habitat and to allow wildlife to move across the landscape. Care should be taken not to fragment the most important habitats adjacent to the A466 particularly where protected species are known to be present.

8. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to our partners who contributed to the research, ideas and survey work within this document:

Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean District Council

Cllr Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council

Ashley Thomas, Joint Advisory Committee

Brian Watkins, Gloucestershire County Council

Colette Bosley, Monmouthshire County Council

Kate Stinchcombe, Monmouthshire County Council

Lis Harris, Natural England

Rob Bacon, Natural Resources Wales

Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council

Google Earth 'street view' used to provide images where surveying along the road was too unsafe.

9. Appendix

Appendix 1: Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives relating to the project

WV-L1: *Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features.*

WV-L4: *Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change.*

WV-L5: Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB.

AONB Aim: Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley AONB with its natural and cultural features and processes and the Special Qualities and features of the Landscape Management Zones.

WV-T2: *Ensure the design of transport infrastructure and traffic management and control schemes are consistent with the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB, and monitor their effectiveness.*

WV-T3: *Conserve the character of rural roads in the AONB by conserving existing traditional features, reducing excessive signage and lighting and sympathetically managing verges for biodiversity, unless there are proven public safety grounds.*

AONB Aim: Ensure transport in the AONB is sustainable and integrated and compatible with the purposes of AONB designation.

WV-C2: *Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape.*

AONB Aim: To engender thriving local communities which have a high quality of life with a healthy economy that supports the natural beauty of the area.

WV-S2: *Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs.*

AONB Aim: Sustainable tourism based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB continues to enrich the lives of visitors, operators and employees while contributing positively to the conservation and enhancement of the area.

WV-R3: *Support appropriate levels of sustainable design, repair, signage and maintenance on public rights of way, recreational trails and sites, using materials in keeping, in order to conserve or enhance the character and natural beauty of the AONB.*

AONB Aim: People continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area.

Appendix 2: Risk assessment

Department: Environment	Assessed By: Nick Critchley	Persons or groups at risk: Surveyors
		Approx. Numbers of persons at risk: 2
Site: A466 riverside view surveying	Date: 11th September 2017	Persons especially at risk: None

Evidence of Safety

Area	Hazards	Potential Harm	Likelihood / 5	Severity / 5	Risk Factor L x S	Precautions
Activity						
Driving / parking car	Driving at slow speed. Parking on roadsides	Road Traffic accident	2	5	10	Do not drive unduly slowly when assessing views from the car. Only park in locations which do not put surveyors or other road users at risk.
Walking verges / surveying	Narrow paths / dense vegetation – all adjacent to busy road	Accident with vehicles. Slips trips and falls	2	5	10	Viewpoints to only be surveyed from easily accessible locations such as wide verges, pavements, lay-bys and car parks. If access to the roadside is not safely available, binoculars to be used from nearest available hard surface, or survey to be undertaken from the vehicle by passenger only. When surveying directly adjacent to the road from paths / pavements, high visibility jackets to be worn. Do not walk on narrow verges or on verges with dense vegetation which presents a trip hazard.
All survey areas	Extreme weather conditions: hot weather	Sunburn, sunstroke, dehydration	2	3	6	Wear appropriate clothing ie sun hat, warm clothes, walking boots. Take sufficient food and water Apply sun lotion
All survey areas	insects	Injury: bites, stings	3	1	3	Wear insect repellent. Carry epipen if allergy is known – ensure everyone present knows where epipen is and how to use it.

Additional safety measures include: A first aid kit always to hand with trained 1st Aider. A mobile phone for emergency contact will also be on hand. Office aware of location.

Signed.....

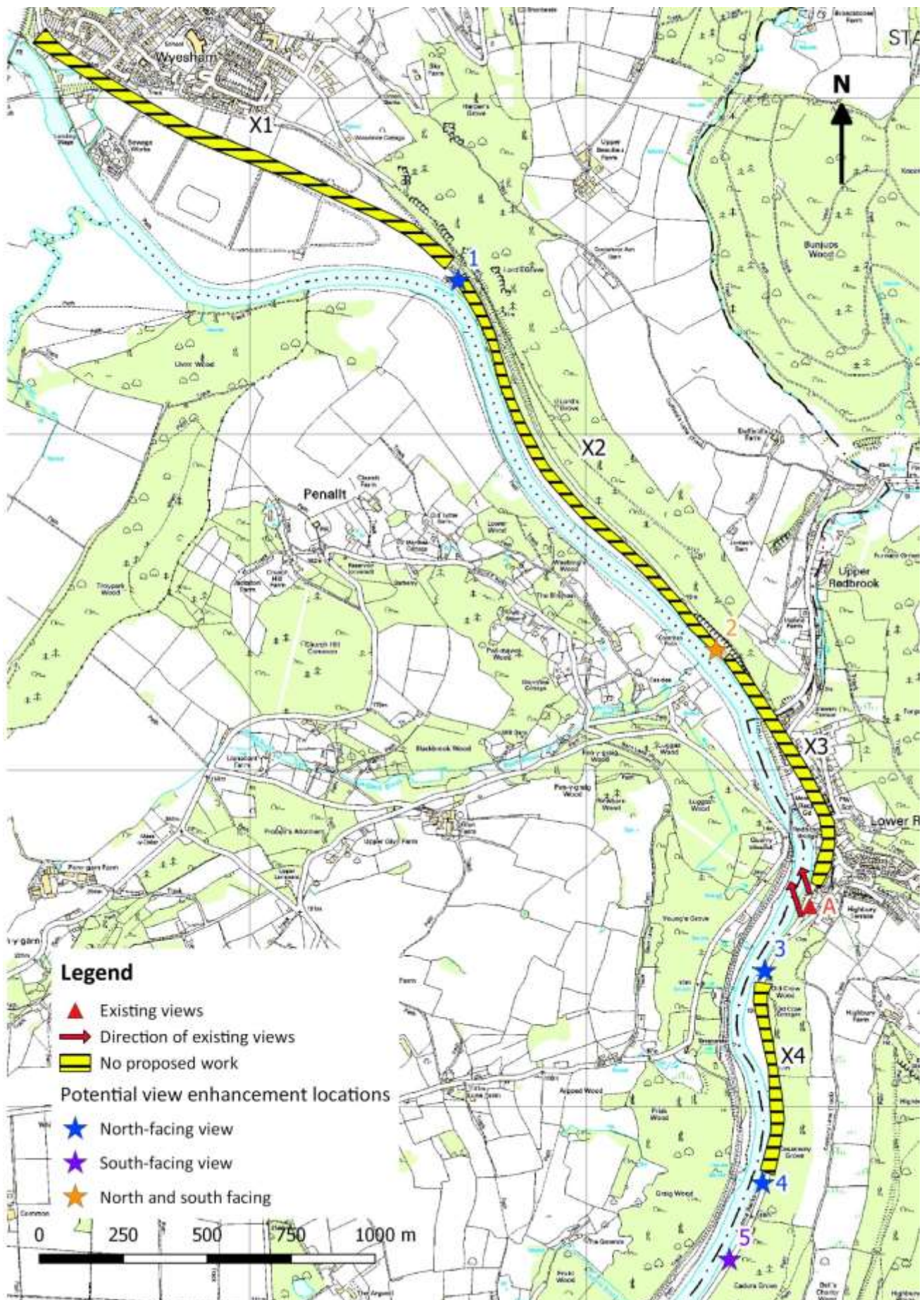


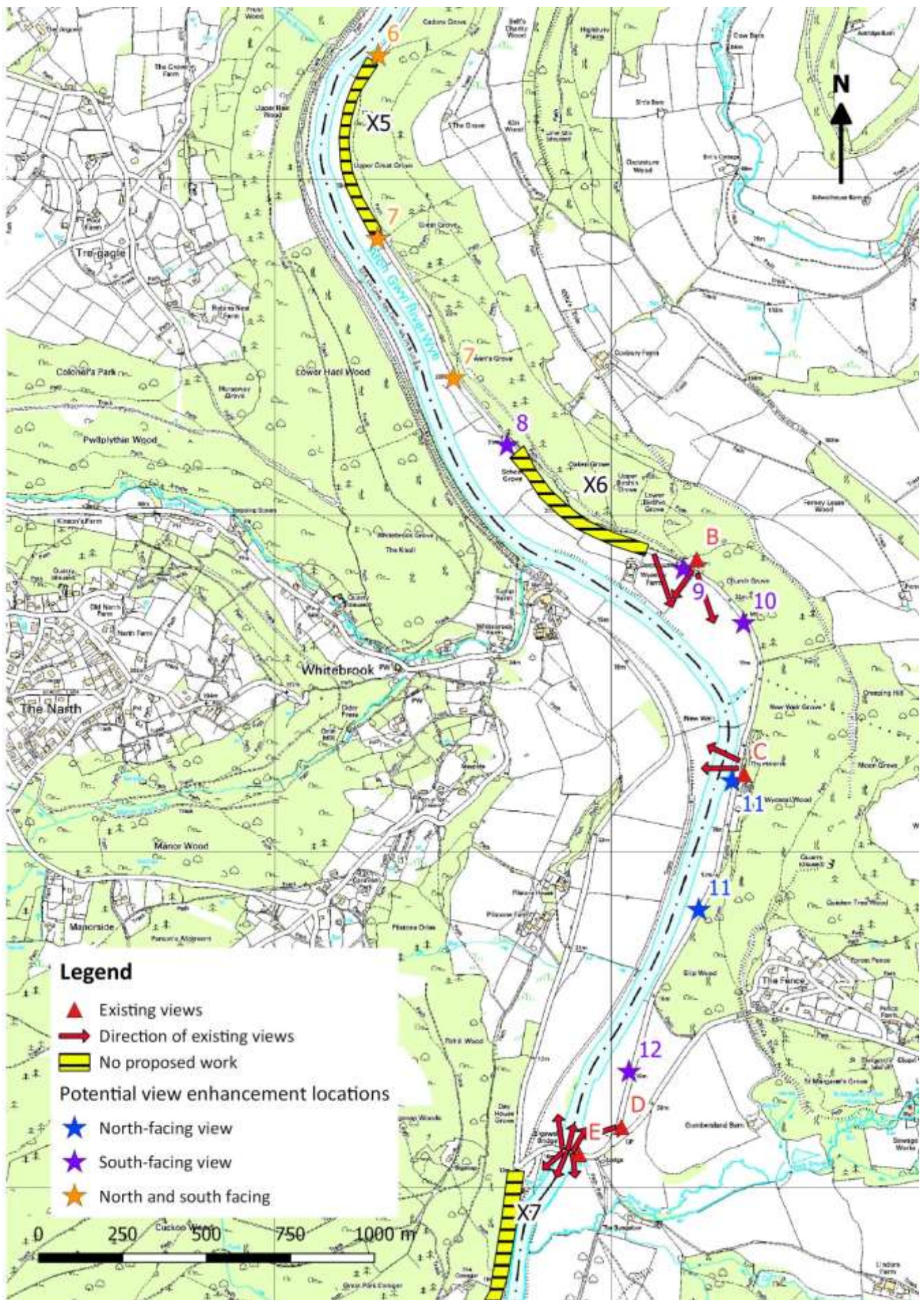
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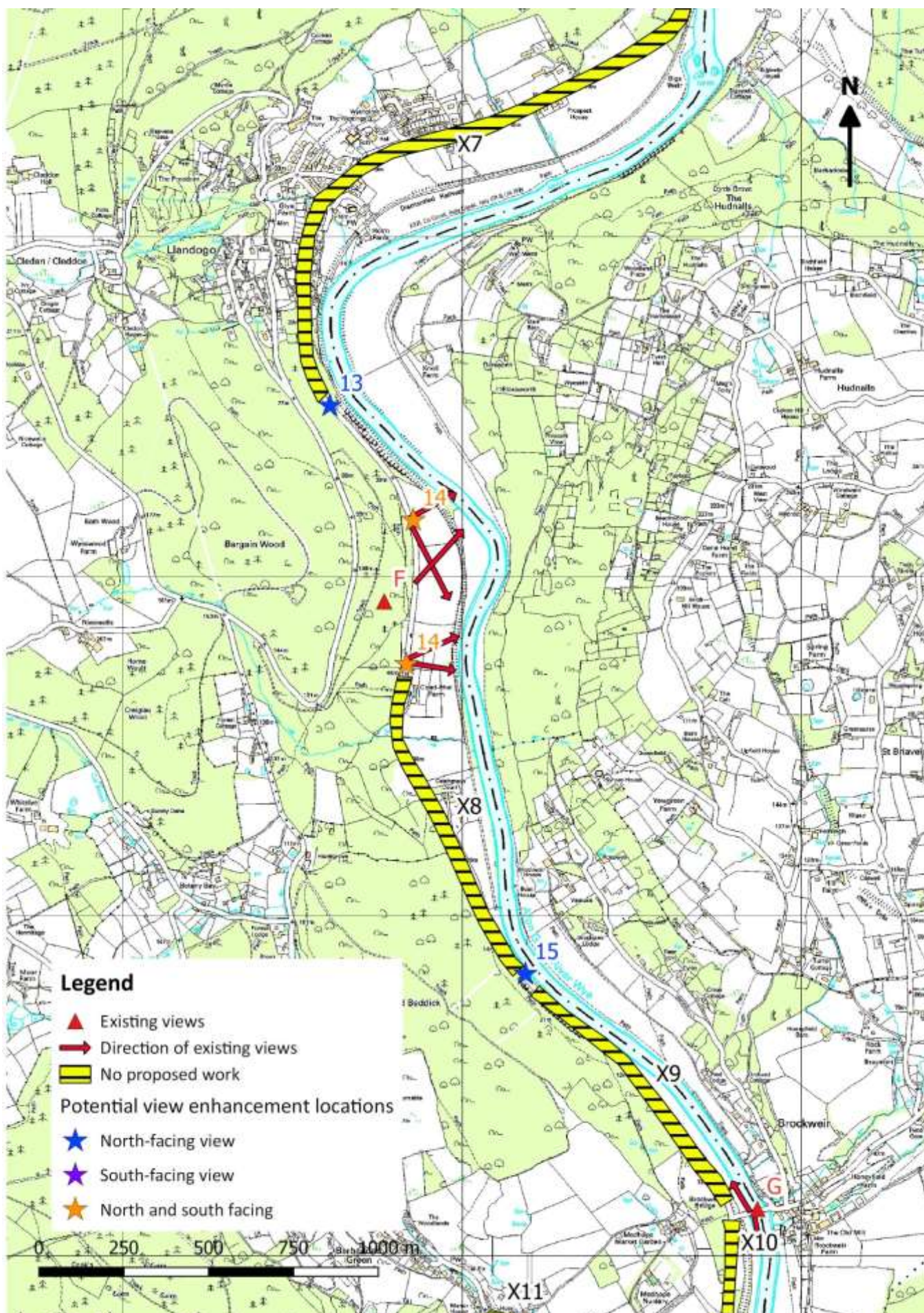
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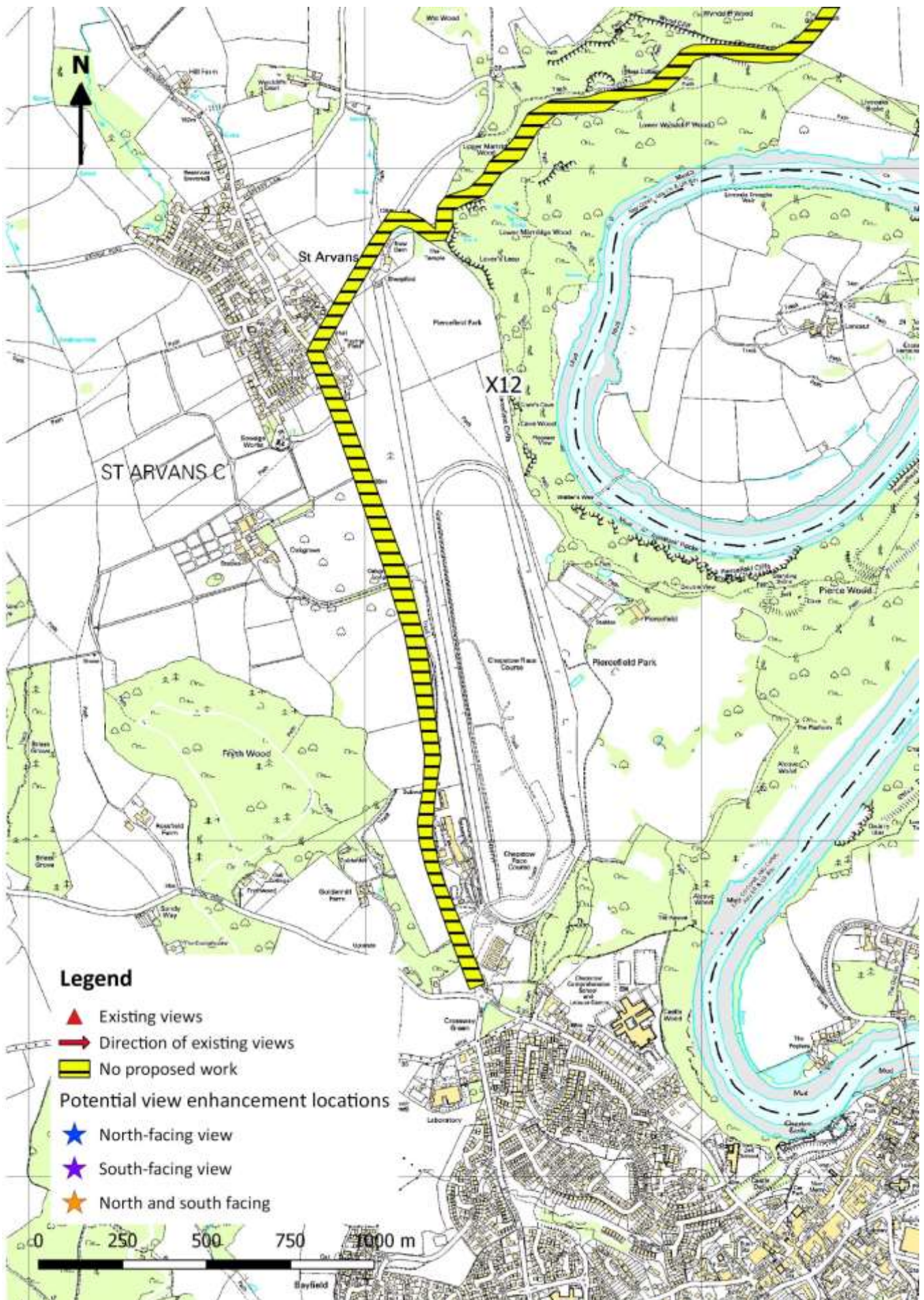
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Appendix 3: Maps



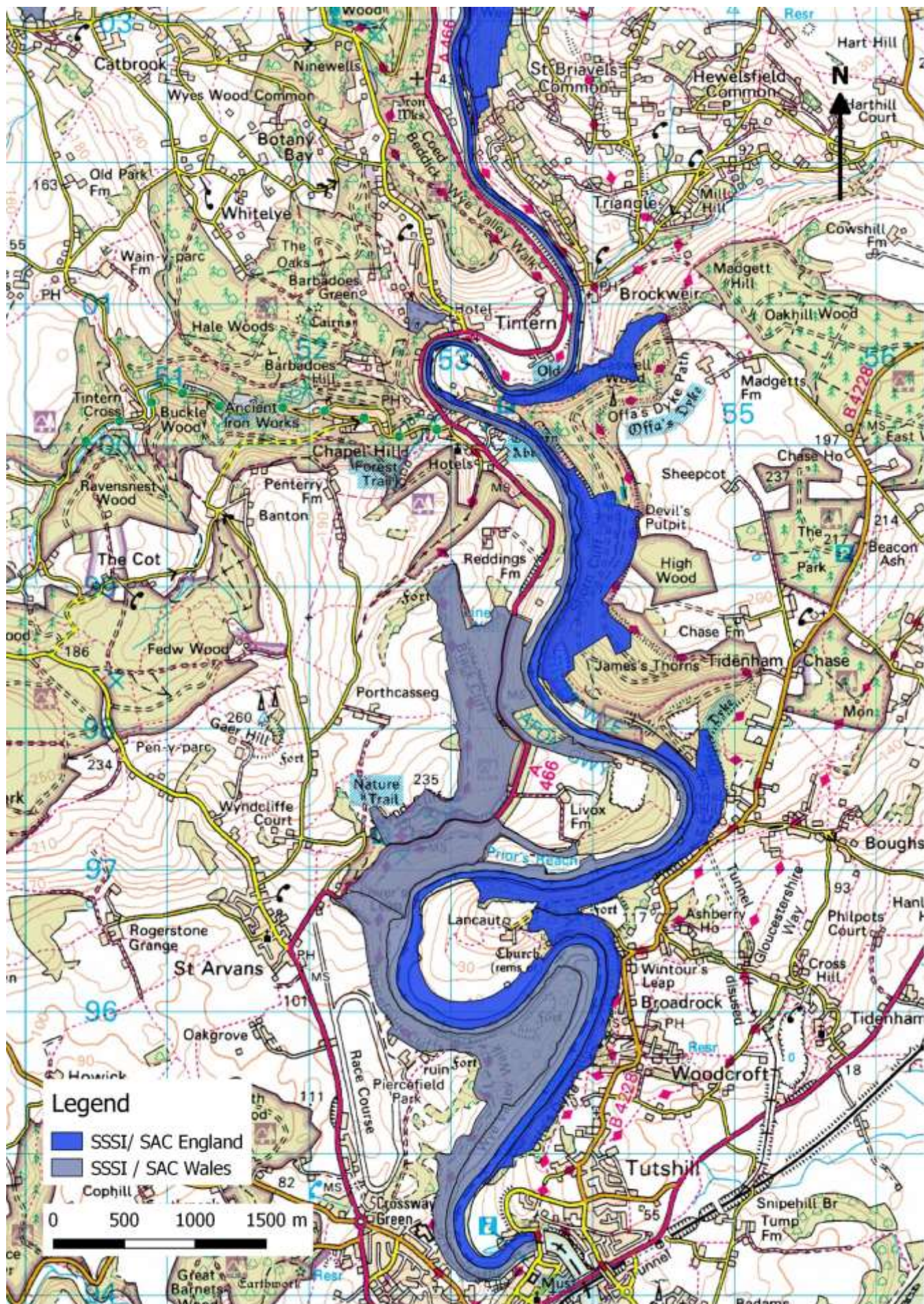






Appendix 4: Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation





Appendix 5: Operations Requiring Consent (ORCs) (formerly ‘Potentially Damaging Operations’)

SSSI regulations state that the specific ORCs that may prevent work taking place include ‘Destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, waterweed dead or decaying wood, fungus, moss lichen or turf, other than mowing or permanent grass and traditional hedge management’ and ‘Tree and/or woodland management, including afforestation and planting, clear and selective felling, thinning, pollarding and coppicing, modification of the stand or underwood and changes in species composition’.

Addendum

Between the feasibility report being written and published, there have been some actions which require additional explanation.

Section 3, pages 31 – 35

This section refers to potential views between the Florence and Bigsweir Bridge. In January and February 2018, independently of this report, a significant amount of roadside vegetation clearance has taken place in this area opening up considerable views of the river and valley in both directions. This work was completed without reference to this report. Photos of the work are shown below.



View north from Bigsweir bridge February 2018 (see photo on page 35)



Looking north in the direction of The Florence February 2018 (see photo on page 31 for view from similar location)



Looking south towards Bigsweir bridge February 2018 (see bottom photo on page 34 for comparative view from slightly further south)

Section 6, page 56

This section refers to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Grant as a potential funder. In December 2017 it was announced by Heritage Lottery that Landscape Partnerships were no longer accepting applications and that anyone considering applying be directed to Heritage Grants as an alternative. At the time of writing we are awaiting Heritage Lottery's new funding framework.