Eryri Local Development Plan Review

Background Paper 21

Zones of Influence

Updated July 2016
Introduction

1.1. The Authority has identified eight ‘Zones of influence' which are within and straddle the National Park. These areas have similar characteristics and have strong community links. The work on the Zones of Influence draws on a wide range of surveys and related national, regional and local plans and strategies discussed in the Spatial Development Strategy Background Paper. The paper identifies key centres within each zone of influence and recognises the influences of key centres outside the Park to inform the Spatial Development Strategy. The paper identifies key transport routes, key employment areas, and further education and key services for each zone. The paper discusses the main issues for each zone individually, the implications for the Local Development Plan and how the issues are addressed in the Plan.
Zones of Influence

Scale 1:450000

KEY:
- Key Service Centres
- Local Service Centres
- Service Settlements
- Primary Routes
- SHP Boundary
- Constitution
- Bangor
- Llanbedrog
- Dyffryn Conwy
- Trwyn Du
- Dyffryn Clwyd
- Dolgellau
- Aberdyfi
- Bala
- Machynlleth & Aberdyfi

1.2. **BALA ZONE OF INFLUENCE**

**Bala Zone Links**

![Map of Bala Zone Links](image)

**KEY:**
- Local Service Centre
- Community Link
- Regional Link
- SNP Boundary
- Sub Regional Link
- Primary Roads
- Link to Main Service Centre
What's it like now?

1.3. This zone covers Penllyn rural hinterland covering the community councils of Llanuwchllyn, Llandderfel, Llangywer, Llanycil and Bala and has a population of 4,292. The landscape is rural in character with scattered farmsteads and small villages. The zone includes Llyn Tegid (the largest natural lake in Wales), Llyn Celyn, Arenig Fawr and parts of the Aran Fawddwy. The main service centre for the area is the market town of Bala. Penllyn has strong traditions based on the Welsh language and culture.

Economy

1.4. The area is rural in nature with the agricultural industry being a key employment sector. Bala is the key local centre for the area which has a large employment site with some empty units and room for future development, subject to the completion of a satisfactory flood risk assessment, to provide the opportunity for business development and new start ups. While there are some small local industries, the employment base of Bala is very small and most people in the area travel considerable distances for employment (an average of 24km). The settlement is within the Dolgellau and Barmouth travel to work area. Tourism is important in Bala with large number of visitors attracted annually to participate in various water sports within the area. However, the seasonal nature of tourism, and its narrow base of appeal are often cited as drawbacks, although there are few alternative employment opportunities. There is some scope however to improve and add to tourist related facilities which will add value to the local economy.

Housing

1.5. There are around 2,050 household spaces in the area with 88% households with residence, 6.5% vacant and 5.5% second residence. Llangywer Community Council has a very high proportion (21.2%) of second residence / holiday accommodation. 64.3% of the housing stock in the area is owner occupied, while 19.1% is social rented. This zone has a median household income of £23,441. By applying the definition of affordability of owner occupation using 3.5 times income multiple it gives an affordable property price of £82,044, this is considerably lower than property prices in the area. There are 90 applicants on the Gwynedd Council Housing waiting list for this zone. Housing Need surveys undertaken for Bala, Llanuwchllyn and Llandderfel Community Councils indicate that 81 are in need of affordable housing. Gwynedd Council housing authority has also identified the need for affordable Extra Care Housing in Bala.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.6. Community services provided for this zone are mostly within Bala. These services include a leisure centre, secondary school, primary school and two water sports centres. There are primary schools in most of the other settlements within this zone. Due to the zones rural location it has strong links with settlements outside of the zone including, Dolgellau, Corwen, Llangollen, Wrexham and Shrewsbury. Retail within this zone is mainly centred on Bala which provides the zone with a supermarket and a number of good convenience stores and comparison goods and a number of services related commercial uses. Residents from this zone travel as far as Wrexham and Chester for large retail centres and a wider choice of retail goods.
Tourism

1.7. Bala is a tourist hub in this zone especially for water sports. There are two centres based around Bala one which takes advantage of Llyn Tegid while the other concentrates on white water rafting on Afon Tryweryn.

Transport

1.8. The A494 links this zone with the A5 and Wrexham and the rest of north east Wales and Dolgellau to the south west. The A4212 links the zone with Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog to the west.
Settlement Strategy

Local Service Centre – Y Bala

1.9. Bala is a planned town established in 1310. It has been identified as a cross boundary settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan between North West and North East Wales. Today it contains all of the key local facilities expected in a town of its size,¹ primary and secondary schools, doctor’s surgery, post office and a supermarket and food shop. Within the settlement there are a number of community facilities including a leisure centre and library and good access to employment opportunities. Land for employment is provided within the settlement allowing current businesses to develop and providing space for new business ventures. There are good road links to both North East and Mid Wales from Bala, the A494 links directly to the A5 which means good connectivity to Wrexham and Shrewsbury. Public transport provides access to Bala from surrounding smaller settlement as well as links from Bala to surrounding settlements. Tourism is important in Bala; large numbers of visitors are attracted annually to participate in various water sports within the area.

Secondary Settlements

Frongoch

1.10. Considering the size of the settlement there are a number of community services which include a primary school, shop and small café that is well used by the surrounding community. Public transport serving the settlement is poor with an infrequent bus service. The majority of the settlement is constrained by flood risk.

Parc

1.11. There are very few facilities and services within this settlement with the exception of the primary school and chapel. The settlement relies on its proximity to Y Bala for many of the needs of the residents such as shops and post office. Public transport access to and from this settlement is very poor. The settlement is dissected by a river and flooding is a constraint for much of the settlement. There are some potential development sites within the settlement.

Llanuwchllyn

1.12. There is a strong link between this settlement and Bala for retail opportunities however there is a shop, post office and primary school within the settlement along with a pub and a village hall. Public transport is good within the settlement with links to Bala and Dolgellau; buses come once every two hours at least during the day. This settlement is constrained by flood risk however there are a number of windfalls within the settlement and there is potential land to be allocated for housing.

¹ An estimated population of around 1,950
Settlements

Rhyd Uchaf

1.13. There are no services within the settlement with the exception of a chapel; residents have to travel to Bala to access primary education and retail opportunities. Public transport within this settlement is very poor. The settlement is constrained by its size and any large development within the settlement would have a negative impact on its pattern.

Llangywer

1.14. There are no services within the settlement however buses are fairly regular with services linking the settlement with Bala for retail and education opportunities. The small size of this settlement does not provide many opportunities for development.

Rhoscgwallau

1.15. There are no services within the settlement with residents travelling to Bala to access retail and education services. Public transport is infrequent within this settlement. The settlement is constrained by the narrow valley that it is in. The river and flood risk also constrains much further development.
Implication for the Plan

1.16. Bala's status as an important service centre should be maintained and enhanced. It has a small population base however and is remote from larger population centres outside the Park. The nearest large town is Wrexham, some 36 miles to the east and Rhyl on the North Wales coast is 40 miles to the north.

1.17. There will however some opportunities to concentrate housing and employment opportunities where there is no flood risk issues, on a scale commensurate with local need and the size of the town. There should also be some encouragement for further sustainable tourism related projects to take advantage of water based recreation.

1.18. The area has a strong Welsh identity and tradition. One of the national centres for the Urdd is located at Glan Llyn on the banks of Llyn Tegid. There are no strong links with other zones in the Plan. Dolgellau is the closest town but there is a limited commercial or social linkage.

1.19. As with most of the rural communities in the Plan area it is important to offer opportunities for affordable rural housing even in the smaller settlements to help sustain smaller rural communities but to avoid over development which may impact on the environment or the social equilibrium of smaller communities.
How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

Housing

1.20. A site has been allocated within the Local Development Plan for extra care affordable homes within Bala; a further site has been allocated for a mix of open market and affordable housing within the settlement. In order to meet the local need for affordable housing land has also been allocated within Llanuwchllyn. Polices within the Local Development Plan also encourage small scale affordable housing developments in other settlements to meet the needs of the local communities.

Economy

1.21. In order to support a sustainable economic growth polices of the Local Development Plan support new employment development within Bala within or adjacent to the main built up area of the settlement. Policies within the Local Development Plan will support local businesses to enable communities to be more sustainable and encourage enterprise and innovation and raise the skills of local people towards higher wage economy. Businesses that take advantage, but sustain, high quality environment will also be encouraged. The use of ICT for business purposes and support working from home will also be encouraged. Polices within the local development plan will also aid agricultural diversification and other measures to foster a sustainable, viable rural economy.

Community facilities and Culture

1.22. In order to protect and enhance the sustainability of communities within the National Park community facilities that are well used and benefit the local community will be protected from inappropriate re-development. Links with the community facilities provided by Bala will be maintained. In order to protect the vibrancy of the Welsh language communities will be protected from developments that are likely to have a negative impact on the welsh language.

Tourism

1.23. Tourism is a very important industry within this zone and especially within Bala with a number tourism opportunities based around the lake and also Afon Tryweryn. Policies have been drafted within the Local Development Plan to protect and enhance existing tourist facilities through adopting the principles of sustainable tourism in order to maximise local economic benefits within the area. Further tourism developments will be supported in suitable locations. As cycling is becoming a more popular tourist activity, the creation of further sustainable cycle routes will be supported.

Transport

1.24. In order to promote sustainable transport new development will be encouraged which will reduce the need to travel by private car to access community facilities and services and sustainable modes of transport. Polices drafted with the Local Development Plan will encourage the development of more cycle routes.
Retail

1.25. In order to reduce the need to travel by private car, polices have been drafted to protect the vitality and viability of retail centres across the National Park. Policies aim to retain retail viability within Bala. The development of supermarkets will be permitted within this settlement to serve a wider catchment area. The change of use of ground floor retail premises will be resisted.

Most relevant polices to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Development Policy 12: Residential Care Homes and Extra Care Housing
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Development Policy 18: The Welsh language and the Social and Cultural fabric of Communities
- Strategic Policy I: A Sustainable Rural Economy
- Development Policy 19: New employment and training development
- Development Policy 20: Agricultural diversification
- Strategic Policy L: Tourism and Recreation
- Development Policy 21: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites
- Development Policy 22 Touring and Camping Sites
- Development Policy 23: Retail
- Strategic Policy LI: Accessibility and Transport
1.26. **BANGOR ZONE OF INFLUENCE**

![Bangor Zone Links Diagram]

**Bangor Zone Links**

**Scale 1:150000**

**KEY:**
- Sub Regional Centre
- Local Service Centre
- Wales Spatial Plan Hub
- Sub Regional Link
- Regional Link
- Community Link
- Primary Routes
- SNP Boundary

[Map showing Bangor zone of influence with various links and important locations marked.]
What's it like now?

1.27. This zone lies to the North of the National Park. Most of the zone lies outside the National Park with only Abergwyngregyn and parts of Llanllechid within the Park boundary. Outside Bangor and Bethesda and the more developed coastal area centred on the two bridges connecting to Angelsey, the area is largely rural and characterised by a network of small villages and hamlets. Part of the Carneddau mountain range lies to the east of the zone while the Menai Strait lies to the North West. This zone has a population of around 35,000. Compared with other areas this zone has a younger age profile due to the number of student living in the Bangor area.

Economy

1.28. Residents have traditionally relied for their work on a number of major, predominantly public sector employers i.e. Bangor University, Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils and Ysbyty Gwynedd. While Bangor is the economic hub for this zone there are also a number of other important employment sites across this zone including Park Menai, Llandygai industrial estate and smaller industrial estates in Bethesda. The zone falls within the Menai Principal Hub in the Wales Spatial Plan which is recognised as an area that has potential to drive forward the regions growth. It is considered that Bangor University has a key role to play in supporting the development of an outward looking and confident knowledge based economy.

Housing

1.29. The area is characterised by a network of coastal, rural and former quarrying settlements. Some of the settlements particularly the former quarrying villages are characterised by older terraced properties. In Bangor a high proportion live in communal establishment which is a reflection of the significant number of students living in the area. Land has been allocated for a mix of general market housing and affordable housing in Bangor, Bethesda, Rachub, Rhiwlas, Tregarth and Felinheli (outside the National Park). These settlements are included in the Gwynedd Unitary Plan (UDP) 2009 and within the catchment area known as Bangor within the UDP. In order to maintain and strengthen the smaller settlements that lie within the National Park it will be important to give priority to affordable housing for local needs.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.30. There are a number of community services available for residents of the zone including a number of secondary schools, leisure centres, village halls and community centres. The main medical, education and retail provision for the zone are located outside the National Park within Bangor and Bethesda which provide these services for settlements within and outside the National Park boundary. The retail centre for this zone is Bangor which provides a range of large supermarkets and comparison good stores which service the zone and the region beyond. Bethesda offers a number of small shops providing convenience goods, and a few cafes however within the remaining settlements in this zone little is offered in terms of retail opportunities. Bangor University serves both this zone and the wider area in terms of further education; Coleg Menai which has a number of campuses across this zone serves the zone in terms of tertiary education while also providing a number of more vocational courses to the surrounding area.
Transport

1.31. Transport in and through this zone is very good. Rail and bus links connect the zone with Llandudno, north east Wales leading on to Chester and the North West of England along the A55 coastal road and the main line coastal railway. The zone is also connected to Holyhead and Ireland by the A55. Transport links to other zones are good including links along the A5 and also the A487.
Settlement Strategy

Regional Centre – Bangor (outside the National Park)

Bangor

1.32. This settlement contains two of the areas largest employers; the University and Ysbyty Gwynedd both provide a large number of jobs within the surrounding area. The settlement has excellent connections with the surrounding area including the A55 trunk road and the A5 and also access to the North Wales coast mainline railway. This settlement has a strong commercial centre which provides services to the wider area including Anglesey and the Llyn. Services offered include Ysbyty Gwynedd, Secondary Schools, Tertiary College, Leisure Centres, Public Libraries, Major Supermarket outlets and major comparison goods outlets. The settlement is also served by a number of dental and doctor’s surgeries and has good public transport links with both a large bus station and a mainline railway station.

Service Centre

Bethesda (outside the National Park)

1.33. The Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan aims to promote this settlement as a local centre to provide jobs and employment opportunities and services for the surrounding area. The settlement meets the day to day needs of the local community by providing a number of top up goods shops and a variety of other local shops, but less facilities than the larger centres in the zone, such as Bangor. The settlement also has a secondary school and a leisure centre which serve both the settlement and the wider community. The settlement also provides job opportunities to the wider rural area both within the shops and facilities within the settlement and also within the employment site allocated within the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan. The settlement has good bus links with Bangor as the sub regional centre within the zone.

Hierarchy of settlements within the National Park

Secondary Settlements:

Abergwyngregyn

1.34. While there is no school within the settlement there is a community centre and café that is well used by the community and people who visit from a wider area. The area has very good transport links due to its close location on the A55 linking it with both Bangor and the west and Llandudno and the east. Development within Abergwyngregyn is environmentally constrained by flood risk, scheduled ancient monuments and a conservation area and as a result it isn’t possible to allocate a site for housing. Some limited development however will support sustainability and the maintenance of existing services and facilities.

Smaller Settlements

Llanllechid
1.35. With the exception of a church there are no other services within the settlement. Public transport links within the settlement are good. The settlement falls within a conservation area so any development within the settlement needs to be sensitive to this. Most of Llanllechid is inside Gwynedd Local Planning Authority, therefore there is more opportunity for infill development in Gwynedd Local Planning Authority.
Implications for the Plan

1.36. Bangor is a sub-regional shopping and commercial centre and therefore has a dominating influence on this zone and beyond into the National Park. The city provides employment varied housing opportunities and other facilities associated with a medium sized town. Some of the housing demand from the National Park is diverted into this area which has more capacity and less environmental constraints. In the future Bangor is likely to consolidate its status as new employment sites are developed. However there are physical constraints and traffic issues limiting any further large scale expansion of the town centre.

1.37. Where there is reasonable access and proximity it is preferable to consolidate settlements outside the Park rather than allow undesirable housing or employment growth. The Gwynedd UDP recognises the potential for economic growth is high, mainly due to transport links, the size of the population and links with public administration, health and educational institutions. Generally the housing and commercial market in the Bangor/Menai hub is good but deteriorates progressively to the west and south.

1.38. The settlements of Abergwyngregyn and Llanllechid are smaller settlements with limited capacity for growth therefore local needs affordable housing should be prioritised in order to strengthen local communities.
How the issues are addressed in the Gwynedd UDP

Housing

1.39. Both affordable and open market housing has been allocated in the Gwynedd UDP within settlements within this zone to meet identified need of the plan period. Land has been allocated within Bangor, Bethesda, Rachub, Rhiwlas, Tregarth and Felinheli.

Economy

1.40. The Gwynedd UDP aims to promote development that will lead to investment, employment and activity that maintains or strengthen the status of Bangor as a sub-regional Centre and Bethesda as a Local Centres. Due to Bangor’s status as a sub-regional centre further employment land has been allocated at Parc Menai. Large employers for the region are located within this settlement including the University, Ysbyty Gwynedd and a number of employers that are located on the Parc Menai businesses park the importance of these employers to the zone are recognised. The UDP aims to develop employment opportunities on a scale that is suitable for the area.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.41. The UDP aims to ensure that a wide range of facilities and services are available to meet local demand and within easy reach of residents in the local communities. Existing community facilities will be protected where they are well used by the community.

Tourism

1.42. The UDP aims to develop the tourism and leisure sector in order to help strengthen and vary the economy of Gwynedd and helping the rural economy to diversify. It recognises strong tradition of tourism based on the quality of the coastal and rural environment of the area. The plan also places and emphasis on renewing and upgrading existing facilities to extend the benefit throughout the whole county and establish an exciting variety of local attractions.

Transport

1.43. The Gwynedd UDP recognises the importance of reducing the reliance on private car and encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking as a means of getting around. The aim of the plan is to locate development that will reduce the need to travel large distances to access employment opportunities and community facilities and services.

Retail

1.44. The UDP recognises the importance of providing a wide range of retail facilities, offering a variety of services will increase the vitality and prosperity of the plan area. The plan also recognises the importance of shops in rural locations, not only for providing top-up services, but also a source of employment for the local area and as an important meeting place. The plan aims to maintain these shops and other commercial facilities wherever practicable.
How the issues are addressed in the Eryri Local Development Plan?

1.45. In order to maintain and strengthen the smaller settlements that lie within the National Park it will be important to give priority to affordable housing for local needs in Abergwyngregyn and Llanllechid.

1.46. The importance of community facilities within Abergwyngregyn and Llanllechid is recognised and therefore the change of use from a community facility or service will not be permitted unless it can be proved the potential for continued use is un-viable or unsuitable.

**Most relevant LDP policies to achieve these aims**

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
1.47. **BLAENAU FFESTINIOG AND PORTHMADOG ZONE OF INFLUENCE**
What's it like now?

1.48. This zone lies to the west of the National Park and extends from Blaenau Ffestiniog in the east, Porthmadog to the west and Harlech to the south. The area is mainly rural in nature, with land-use mainly comprising of agriculture. However evidence of the area's industrial legacy remains, particularly around Blaenau Ffestiniog, with the slate tips of the former quarries dominating the landscape. A substantial part of the area lies within the Snowdonia National Park, which must be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate development. This applies to activities affecting the Park, whether the activities lie within or outside the Park’s boundary. The area also boasts internationally and nationally designated spaces because of their visual or historic value or their contribution to biodiversity. The area also has a strong built heritage, including Harlech castle a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The zone has a resident population of around 19,000. Most of the resident population lives in the main settlements of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Porthmadog, Penrhynedraeth, Criccieth and Harlech. Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog, the two main service centres within this area lie outside the National Park Boundary. A high proportion of the population are Welsh speakers.

Economy

1.49. This zone covers the Porthmadog – Pwllheli – Penrhynedraeth Secondary hub, recognised as a key growth area within the Wales Spatial Plan. The Wales Spatial Plan recognises the area as a focus to provide services and employment, building on established strengths to support and spread prosperity to the wider rural hinterland. The emphasis will include increasing the role of Porthmadog/ Penrhynedraeth area as a gateway to the National Park and Llyn AONB, enhancing the provision of local leisure facilities and providing a focus for a relocation of public sector (e.g. local authority jobs) away from the Menai hub. As is the case with the Bangor zone of influence, the public administration, education and health sectors are an important source of employment in the area (employing 24.8% of the economically active population). The retention of a community hospital in a new building in Tremadog (Ysbyty Althwen) will help to maintain this sector’s importance within the local economy. Employment allocations or safeguarded employment land has been identified by Gwynedd local planning authority in the following settlements; Penrhynedraeth, Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog and although outside the National Park these allocations serve the zone well. A high quality employment site is located in Penrhynedraeth (Parc Eryri), which is safeguarded for employment/business enterprises that can be described as offices, light industry, research and development, high tech or laboratories. One of the National Park’s largest employers also lies within this zone, the Nuclear Power station at Trawsfynydd which is currently being decommissioned which will lead to considerable job losses in the area.

Housing

1.50. Older terraced properties are more common than other types of dwellings in parts of this area, and this is particularly the case in the former quarrying centre of Blaenau Ffestiniog. The prevalence of older housing (pre-1919) may partly account for the fact that a high proportion of households have no central heating. The area also has the highest number of vacant dwellings this may be linked to the poor condition of properties or low demand for certain property
types. As is the case in neighbouring zones there is a strong market for second homes in parts of the area with the worst affected areas being Talsarnau, Harlech, Maentwrog, Porthmadog, Llanfrothen and Beddgelert community councils. Individuals and families tend to find it difficult to compete in the housing markets in locations that are attractive to purchasers of properties that are used as second or holiday homes. Physical constraints (e.g. flood risk, topography) have limited the availability of land that is suitable for housing development in Porthmadog. However there are proposed housing allocation sites in Penrhynedd local planning authority area which should meet the need for general market housing within this zone. In order to maintain and strengthen the smaller settlements that lie within the National Park it will be important to give priority to affordable housing for local needs. Within the National Park area Harlech is highly constrained mainly due to environmental considerations. There are flood risk issues in some parts of Harlech and land which was suitable for development has already been developed to capacity. There is also the consideration of the impact of any development within this settlement on the conservation area within the settlement and also the impact on the World heritage site, its setting and also views to and from it. Further more the spread of housing between Harlech and Llanfair has gradually affected the integrity and identity of the settlements and as a result it is important to prevent further coalescence of the two. In Trawsfynydd there are a number of outstanding planning permissions some of which have started being developed and others which are yet to have started.

Community services and facilities

1.51. Both the area’s main service centres, namely Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog, provide a secondary schools, leisure centres and public libraries. Railway and bus stations are also located in these centres. Community hospitals are provided in Blaenau Ffestiniog and Tremadog. Porthmadog still boasts a cinema. While supermarkets are evident in both centres, there is more retail choice in Porthmadog compared with Blaenau Ffestiniog. There are numerous dentist and doctor surgeries across the area. Penrhynedd, Criccieth, Harlech and Trawsfynydd are secondary centres that provide a reasonable range of services and facilities that would satisfy residents’ daily needs. The majority of residents within this zone shop in Porthmadog or even as far away as Llandudno, Wrexham and Chester beyond. Harlech has a leisure centre and a number of convenience stores for ‘top-up’ goods while some of the secondary settlement may have one or two shops offering convenience goods or gifts. Opportunities for further education within this zone include Coleg Harlech and Coleg Meirion Dwyfor.

Tourism

1.52. Work that is related to the tourism sector is the main employer within the area, with 28.9% of the economically active population working in the distribution, hotels and catering industry. Numerous popular tourist locations, such as Beddgelert, Criccieth, Morfa Bychan, Porthmadog, and Portmeirion, are located within the area. Porthmadog and the surrounding area is especially popular for camping and caravanning. Harlech is a tourist hub with a high number of tourists each year visiting Harlech castle which is part of the UNESCO world heritage site. Many visitors also flock to Porthmadog and Beddgelert which are other important tourism hubs within the zone. The Welsh Highland Railway line has recently been extended in stages reaching
Beddgelert in April 2009. Beddgelert railway station is just a short walk from the centre of the village, which provides cafes, shops and riverside walks. Antur Stiniog is also developing and promoting outdoor activities in the area. The population increases significantly during the summer months with the influx of tourists.

Transport

1.53. Transport links within this settlement are reasonably good with links to the A487 leading on to the A470 south and also links through to the north Wales coast and the A55 through Blaenau Ffestiniog. The Conwy valley line also links to North Wales coast as well as the Cambrian Coast line which services to Pwllheli and Aberystwyth. The A487 through Porthmadog however can become very congested, especially during the summer. The Welsh Assembly Government have given the go-ahead for a bypass to the town and nearby villages (‘The A487 Porthmadog, Minffordd and Tremadog bypass’). The area is reasonably well served by public transport. There are relatively frequent bus services to Blaenau Ffestiniog and/or Porthmadog from the smaller settlements within the area. There are relatively frequent bus services from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Llandudno and from Porthmadog to Caernarfon and Bangor. A National Express coach service runs daily from Porthmadog to London and Newcastle. Porthmadog is due to be linked to Caernarfon via a heritage steam railway service, whilst the Ffestiniog Railway, another heritage steam railway service, also links it with Blaenau Ffestiniog. Both these railways provide seasonal, mainly tourist orientated services. This zone has links with the Lleyn Peninsula, Bangor and Llandudno and also further afield to Wrexham and Chester.
**Settlement Strategy**

**Main Service Centres** – Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog (outside the National Park)

**Porthmadog**

1.54. Employment sites have been allocated on the outskirts of the settlement which provides a number of jobs in the area and has recently expanded with the building of Travelodge on the site. The settlement has a secondary school which serves the needs of the settlement and the immediate surrounding area and has two primary schools which serve the settlement. There are a number of small shops that serve the settlement along with three supermarkets for comparison goods. The settlement is also reasonably well served by both dentist and doctors.

**Blaenau Ffestiniog**

1.55. This settlement has a number of facilities and services that serve the wider rural community of the National Park, including primary and secondary school. There is a supermarket which serves the settlement and the surrounding community along with several small retail outlets. The settlement is reasonably well served by doctors. There are a few employment opportunities within the settlement which provide jobs to the settlement and surrounding communities. An industrial site has been allocated within the Gwynedd UDP which should increase job opportunities within the area.

**Hierarchy of settlements within the National Park**

**Service Settlements** – Harlech, Trawsfynydd

**Harlech**

1.56. Harlech town has two distinct parts, the older upper part of the town perched on the hillside contrasts sharply with the more recent properties forming the lower part of the town. The upper part of the town contains Harlech Castle which is part of the UNESCO world heritage site; ‘Castles and Town Walls of Edward the First in North Wales’ and dominates the town and the surroundings. The majority of the upper part of the town forms a conservation area and contains a number of shops and services many of which are principally related to the tourist trade. While there are a relatively high number of convenience goods stores within the settlement there is no supermarket and therefore, residents have to travel to Porthmadog for this service. The majority of the rest of the commercial uses of the settlement are service related such as restaurants and cafes. There are a few large employers within this settlement such as Coleg Harlech and there is a small industrial site. There is both a primary and secondary school within the settlement, with the latter serving a wide catchment area. There are very few opportunities for development within this settlement apart from a few windfall sites. The world heritage site is a large constraint to development. Not only does consideration have to be given to the defined essential setting of the world heritage site but also consideration of development on the significant view and arc of view of the world heritage site. More recent development has taken place along the coastal strip. It will be important to avoid the further spread of ribbon development along transport corridors.
**Trawsfynydd**

1.57. The main part of the settlement is characterised by a mixture of traditional stone terraces and substantial detached houses. The village is well served with a range of services including a bank, shops and a primary school. While the settlement is served by a handful of shops there is no supermarket and residents have to travel to Porthmadog for further convenience and comparison shopping. There is very little in terms of employment opportunities and while there are still people from Trawsfynydd and the surrounding area employed within the nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd this number has decreased since the plant was de-commissioned. Lying to the west of the A470 and separated from the main part of the settlement, properties exist around the site of the disused railway sidings and station. There are a number of valid planning permissions where construction has started; there is also a number of valid planning permission where development has not commenced. A number of possible windfall sites exist within the settlement boundary. While there are no real constraints to development within this settlement there are a number of valid planning permissions within the settlement that are at various stages of development which would indicate a lack of market demand.

**Secondary Settlements –**

**Beddgelert**

1.58. A number of community facilities exist within this settlement including a primary school, community centre, post office and a number of gift shops. There are also a number of pubs and cafes within the settlement which serve both the settlement and a wider area. Development constraints within this settlement mean that there is very little opportunity to increase the number of dwellings within the settlement; in addition to flood risk issues to the west of the settlement both a SSSI and SAC are present. Beddgelert is an important tourism hub with the Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog zone of influence. The railway station opened in April 2009 which provides an opportunity to bring further tourism benefits to the settlement. A conservation area exists around the majority of the settlement and steep valley sides prevent further development in a number of locations.

**Garndolbenmaen**

1.59. Only part of this settlement is within the National Park and the boundary of the National Park runs down the main road through the centre of the settlement. Any housing need within this settlement will be met outside the national Park and within Gwynedd local planning authority area. Constraints to development within the National Park include a scheduled ancient monument and protected open spaces. Public transport is very good with buses hourly through the day.

**Garreg Llanfrothen**

1.60. There are a number of community services and facilities within this settlement including a primary school, general stores, post office and a public house. Public transport links to this settlement are good with buses every 1 to 2 hours during the day linking the settlement with larger settlements in the surrounding area. There are some opportunities for development however most of the
settlement within the National Park is constrained by the topography of the land.

Maentwrog

1.61. The only community facility within the settlement is the public house. Residents have to travel some distance to get to the nearest shop. Public transport link are good with buses passing every 30 minutes linking the settlement with Penrhyndeudraeth and Porthmadog. Development within this settlement is highly constrained by a number of environmental factors including flood risk and a SSSI which should be protected from development and negative impacts on it. A further constraint to development is the topography of the land surrounding the settlement. There is also a conservation area surrounding the settlement; any development should not have an impact on the setting of the settlement.

Gellilydan

1.62. There are a number of community facilities and services including a primary school, village hall, pub and shop. Public transport links with other settlements are good with buses at least once every two hours through the settlement. While there are few constraints, development on the fringes of the settlement should be avoided in order to prevent damaging ribbon development.

Llan Ffestiniog

1.63. There are a number of community facilities and services including a primary school, shop, post office, village hall and pub. Public transport within this settlement is very good with buses passing every hour linking it with larger settlements in the area. The settlement is constrained by topographical features. It is dissected by the railway and development to the east of the line would result in damaging ribbon development. In addition to the constraints to development there are large numbers of outstanding permissions within this settlement some of which are in the process of being developed while others have not yet started.

Talsarnau

1.64. The lower part of this settlement is severely constrained by flood risk while parts of the upper part are constrained by steep slopes. A few small windfall sites and potential sites that would not have a negative effect on the settlement pattern have been identified. There are few facilities and services for residents of the settlement with the exception of a primary school, shop and post office and a pub. For other services the settlement has close links with Harlech and Porthmadog. Public transport is fairly good with buses at least once every one to two hours, linking this settlement with Harlech, Penrhyndeudraeth and Porthmadog.

Smaller Settlements

Nant Gwynant
1.65. There is a small café within the settlement but for other services residents have to travel to Beddgelert and further afield. Public transport is moderate within the settlement. Development is constrained by both flood risk and a SSSI designation.

Nantmor

1.66. The settlement has no services with residents having to travel to reach both retail and educational services. Public transport is good linking the settlement with larger settlements in the area. Nantmor is within a conservation area and any new development should not have a negative impact on its character and setting.

Croesor

1.67. There are no community facilities and services within Croesor with the exception of a community run café and a small primary school. Public transport to and from the settlement is poor. Development is constrained by flood risk and the compact settlement pattern. There are a few development opportunities in conversion of underused dwellings.

Prenteg

1.68. There are no facilities and services within the settlement. Residents have to travel to Tremadog or Porthmadog to access services. Public transport is moderate within this settlement with buses at least once every two hours. Development has occurred in between two steep slopes and these constrain any further development. Flood risk also constrains development.

Penmorfa

1.69. There are no services within this settlement with residents having to travel to Tremadog and Porthmadog for retail and education services. Public transport is very good within the settlement due to its location on the A487. Only part of the settlement is within the National Park and it has been developed to its full capacity within this area. Further development would result in damaging ribbon development.

Rhyd

1.70. There are no facilities or services within this settlement with residents having to travel some distance to access primary education and retail. Public transport is very poor within this area. Rhyd is a small settlement of largely detached or semi detached houses, spread out across the settlement. Any further development within this settlement should not result in ribbon development.

Llandecwyn

1.71. There are no community services within the settlement. Public transport to the settlement is good. This settlement is constrained by the topography of the land surrounding it and the road which has created a further boundary to the development of the settlement.

Ynys
1.72. There are no services within this settlement. Residents travel to nearby Harlech and Porthmadog for education and retail services. Public transport is good linking the settlement with Harlech. Much of this settlement is within flood risk and is bordered by a SSSI. There are buildings within the settlement that may be suitable for conversion.
Implications for the Plan

1.73. There are a number of employment sites in this zone within easy travelling distance from the National Park. Many of these sites have been available for a number of years therefore there is considerable potential for further development if demand returns. The availability of these sites will assist in providing new employment opportunities for residents of the National Park.

1.74. With regard to housing, constraints in Harlech will result in the necessity to look to secondary settlements to provide affordable housing.

1.75. It is likely that the tourism centres of Beddgelert and Harlech will continue to attract large numbers of visitors and the future emphasis in these hotspots will be management and containment. Managing car parking demand is especially a problem in Beddgelert. No further caravan development should be allowed in Harlech and the surrounding coastal area as it will be important to protect the undeveloped coast from further encroachment.

1.76. Porthmadog will remain an important urban centre for National Park residents and the coastal caravan parks at Morfa Bychan will continue to attract large numbers of visitors during the peak holiday season.
How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

Housing

1.77. The Local Development Plan will give priority to affordable housing to meet the needs of the local communities. Due to the environmental constraint in Harlech and the number of valid planning permissions of open market housing in Trawsfynydd that are at various stages of development, sites for local needs affordable housing have been allocated in Gellilydan, Llanfrothen and Talsarnau. Through policies drafted within the Local Development Plan the Authority will also encourage small scale affordable housing developments in the other settlements to meet identified housing need.

Economy

1.78. Policies within the Local Development Plan will aim to support new employment development in suitable locations and promote the re-use of underused or redundant land or buildings to benefit the local community and provide job opportunities to the local communities. The small employment sites adjacent to the National Park are recognised as important to the residents of the National Park for providing job opportunities and also opportunities for business development. Small scale employment and training development will be supported in the service settlements and secondary settlements. In order to encourage and support the development of a sustainable rural economy the Local Development Plan will also support the agricultural sector and opportunities for rural diversification.

Community faculties

1.79. The Local Development Plan aims to protect and promote the provision of new health, sport, education and other community facilities to reduce the amount of travelling that has to be undertaken by residents of the zone to access alternative facilities and services. Change of use from a community facility will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the potential for continued use of the facility is un-viable or unsuitable. Policies within the Local Development Plan have been drafted to prevent the loss of important community facilities.

Tourism

1.80. The polices drafted within the Local Development Plan focus on protecting and enhancing existing tourism facilities through adopting the principles of sustainable tourism to maximise the local economic benefits while minimising the environmental impacts. New tourism development in suitable locations where specific criteria are met to encourage and promote understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and encourage economic benefits will be supported.

Transport

1.81. Within the Local Development Plan policies have been drafted in order to improve access to local facilities and services and reduce the need to travel by private car. The Local Development Plan also aims to support initiatives
which are aimed at encouraging sustainable modes of travel and as a result access to public transport, walking and cycling will be encouraged.

Retail

1.82. The vitality of the retail centres outside of the National Park which serve the settlements within the park should be supported by the National Park Authority. The change of use of ground floor retail premise within Harlech will not be permitted in order to prevent the loss of retail premises which are important to the residents of the settlements and the wider rural hinterland. The Local Development Plan policies aim to protect and enhance vitality and viability of the retail area within Harlech in order to ensure these services remain for the community.

Most relevant policies to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy G: Historic Environment
- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Development Policy 11: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Development 18: The welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities
- Strategic Policy I: A Sustainable Rural Economy
- Development Policy 19: New employment and training development
- Development Policy 20: Agricultural Diversification
- Strategic Policy L: Tourism and Recreation
- Development Policy 21 Chalet and Static Caravan Sites
- Development Policy 22: Touring and Camping Sites
- Development Policy 23: Retail
- Strategic Policy Ll: Accessibility and Transport
1.83. **CAERNARFON ZONE OF INFLUENCE**
What's it like now?

1.84. This area lies to the North West of the National Park. The Menai Strait lies to the north west of the zone and Dyffryn Nantlle to the south. Most of the zone lies outside the National Park with only Betws Garmon, Nant Peris, Rhyd Ddu and a small terrace of houses in Llanberis within the National Park boundary. The population of this area is around 26,300. A high proportion of the population lives in the town of Caernarfon which is the main service centre for this zone. The area has quite a young age profile compared to other zones. 81.1% of the population (aged 3 or over) is able to speak Welsh.

Economy

1.85. This zone falls within the Menai Principal Hub in the Wales Spatial Plan which includes Bangor and parts of Anglesey. It is recognised as an area that has potential to drive forward the regions growth. A significant amount of public investment has already been directed towards improving the townscape in Caernarfon and this is continuing with the announcement in May 2009 by the Welsh Assembly Government of a major regeneration scheme for North West Wales. This includes town centre renewal projects in Caernarfon with the aim of creating “a more attractive climate for investment in the region while bringing about sustainable improvements to the built environment”. Gwynedd Council is the largest employer within this zone with people travelling to work in Caernarfon from a wide area. Ysbyty Gwynedd and Bangor University, located within the adjoining Bangor zone of influence are also within a reasonable travel-to-work distance for the area’s residents. There are established industrial estates in Caernarfon, Penygroes and Llanberis. Tourism is also a large employer within this zone with Caernarfon castle being a major tourist attraction.

Housing

1.86. There are around 11,860 household spaces within the zone. The area is not characterised by one particular type of housing. Modern detached and semi detached housing are more evident in the dormitory settlements around Caernarfon, whilst the former quarrying villages are characterised by terraced housing. 21.1% of households live in public rented accommodation, which is higher than the adjoining zones. The conversion of several long-term vacant shop units or under-utilised spaces above shops/commercial units in Caernarfon’s town centre may provide opportunities to create homes. Housing within this zone will mostly be provided within Gwynedd local planning authority area. Land for housing has been allocated within Caernarfon, Penygroes, Bethel, Bontnewydd, Caeathro, Deiniolen, Dinas, Llanberis, Llandwrog, Llanrug, Penisarwaun, Pontlyfni, Rhosgadfan, Talysarn and Waunfawr. Within this zone there are only three settlements within the National Park i.e. Betws Garmon, Nant Peris and Rhyd Ddu with a small terrace of houses in Llanberis within the National Park. Within Betws Garmon Community Council 19.78% of households are second residences or holiday homes. Within these settlements it will be important to provide affordable housing for local needs to enhance their sustainability.

Community Facilities and Culture
1.87. Caernarfon, the area’s main service centre, has a secondary school, a leisure centre (which includes a specialist tennis centre), a community hospital and major supermarket outlets (including Tesco and Morrison’s). Caernarfon has a large number of gift shops associated with the tourism trade. A smaller leisure centre and a secondary school are also located in Penygroes. There is also a secondary school in Llanrug. Public libraries and doctor and dentists surgeries are evident across the area. Llanberis also serves the area in relation to convenience goods and community services. Whilst Caernarfon serves many of the daily needs of the area’s residents, it lacks certain facilities and services such as major comparison goods outlets and a cinema. Residents need to travel to Llandudno Junction for a cinema and to Bangor and Llandudno for national comparison goods outlets. Further education opportunities within this zone are based around Coleg Meirion Dwyfor and also a campus of Coleg Menai which is situated in Caernarfon. Residents within this zone also travel into the Bangor zone for further education purposes.

Tourism

1.88. Both Llanberis and Caernarfon are significant hubs for tourism within this zone. Caernarfon Castle is part of the UNESCO world heritage site; within Llanberis the Snowdon Mountain railway as well as a number of other busy tourist businesses attract visitors to the area. Nant Peris is also an important small tourism focussed settlement which acts as a gateway to Snowdon. This zone is also an important zone for walkers who use a number of the settlements within this zone as bases for walking up and in the foothills of Snowdon.

Transport

1.89. The area is linked with the A55 express road via the A487. Improvements to the A487 west from Griffiths Crossing towards Dinas are being considered. The A4085 and the A4086 roads serve some of the more rural communities within the area. This improving road network is beneficial in terms of promoting economic growth in the area, as encouraged by the Wales Spatial Plan. Frequent services operate between Caernarfon and Bangor. There are good bus links within this zone connecting the main settlements of the zone with surrounding settlements. Given that there isn’t a mainline train service within the area, bus services to Bangor train station are vital in order to fully serve the population’s transportation needs. The A487 which links to the A470 and south Wales also runs through this zone. This zone has strong links with both the Bangor zone and the Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog zone.
**Settlement Strategy**

**Main Service Centre** – Caernarfon (outside the National Park)

**Caernarfon**

1.90. This settlement has one of the areas largest employers - Gwynedd Council which provides jobs for the wider catchment area. Caernarfon is a very popular tourist stop in north Wales due to Caernarfon Castle being part of the UNESCO world heritage site Castles and Town Walls of Edward the First in North Wales'. The area has good connections to Bangor its links with the A55 and the North Wales coastal mainline and also links with the Llyn Peninsula. While there are a number of shops in the settlement including two supermarkets for comparison goods shopping the majority of people would travel to Bangor. A secondary school is located within the settlement which serves both the settlement and the immediate surroundings. There are also a number of primary schools which serve the needs of the settlement. The settlement is well served by dentist and doctors with a new medical centre recently opened on the newly developed Victoria Dock.

**Hierarchy of settlements within the National Park**

**Service Settlements**

**Llanberis** (small part in the National Park)

1.91. A small terrace of traditional housing is the only part of Llanberis that is within the National Park. They are traditional quarry workers houses. Llanberis has a number of tourist attractions including the Snowdon mountain railway. There are a number of hotels, guest houses and bed a breakfasts catering for the tourists which come to the area to climb mount Snowdon. The settlement has a primary school a number of local shops and local facilities and services however residents have to travel some distance to a supermarket. As discussed above there is only a very small part of Llanberis that lies within the National Park. The land within the National Park is in flood risk and is therefore not suitable for development. There is sufficient land allocated for development within Gwynedd local planning authority area therefore there is no need to allocate land within the National Park to accommodate the need of this settlement.

**Secondary Settlements** –

**Nantlle** (partly within the National Park)

1.92. There is a primary school within Nantlle but it relies on Penygroses a few miles to the west for local services and small retail opportunities. There is also a centre that is used by various groups as a meeting centre for the wider community. The area is well served by public transport with a bus linking the settlement to Penygroses and beyond. There are two potential windfall plots within Snowdonia National Park and potential exception sites in Gwynedd Local Planning Authority to meet future community housing need. Elsewhere within the settlement there are other constraints such as mature woodland and steep slopes.

**Smaller Settlements**
Betws Garmon

1.93. The settlement has no community facilities and services therefore residents have to travel to Waunfawr and Caernarfon. Public transport services are poor with buses to the settlement only once daily. Within the settlement there are flood risk issues and also there is a SSSI both of which constrain development.

Nant Peris

1.94. There are little in the way of services within Nant Peris with residents travelling to Llanberis for most of their needs with public transport linking the two settlements. The majority of this settlement is within a conservation area. There are also environmental designations present in the form of a SAC and a SSSI. There are some infill plots that might be suitable for development and conversions of other buildings.

Rhyd Ddu

1.95. With the exception of a village pub there are no other services within the settlement with residents travelling to Penygroes for convenience and to Beddgelert for primary education. Public transport within this area is infrequent. Constraints to development within this settlement include flood risk and a SSSI which prevents the settlement from developing in a linear pattern; there are some opportunities for conversion of some derelict buildings within the settlement.
Implications for the Plan

1.96. Most of this zone is located outside the National Park boundary and the actual population within the Park is very small. This zone together with the adjacent Bangor zone serves the park in terms of employment sites, larger retail opportunities and to a lesser extent housing.

1.97. As with most areas within the Park tourism is important and Snowdon itself lies within the zone. One of the problems associated with the attraction of the mountain is to manage car parking around its base access points and to prevent footpath erosion. The National Park Authority is proposing to prepare a Recreational Strategy to investigate in more detail how to manage tourism pressures within the zone. The outcome is likely to influence future land use policies and proposals.
How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

Economy

1.98. While the main economic hubs of this zone are outside of the National Park boundary they do have an impact on the settlements within the National Park. The small employment sites adjacent to the National Park are recognised as important to the residents of the National Park for providing job opportunities and for business development. Local Development Plan policies have been drafted to support a sustainable rural economy. These polices promote the re-use of underused or redundant buildings for economic or employment purposes, support the agricultural sector and for rural diversification.

Housing

1.99. The Local Development Plan will give priority to affordable housing to meet the needs of the local communities within this zone by encouraging small scale affordable housing developments to meet their identified housing need. Providing affordable housing for local needs is important within this zone to promote the sustainability of settlements due to a high percentage of second and holiday home ownership.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.100. Change of use from a community service or facility will be refused unless it can be shown that the potential for continued use of the facility is un-viable or unsuitable, the provision of new community facilities will be supported by the Authority in suitable locations. In order to protect the vibrancy of the Welsh language communities will be protected from developments that are insensitive to the impact on the welsh language.

Tourism

1.101. Tourism will be supported within the Local Development Plan by protecting and enhancing the provision of existing tourist facilities through adopting the principles of sustainable tourism. In order to continue to provide a choice of quality serviced accommodation within the National Park. The change of use from serviced accommodation to the non serviced sector will be resisted.

Transport

1.102. This zone is very popular with walkers and therefore the issues of transport and public transport are important within the zone. The Authority is committed to improving access to local facilities and reducing the need to travel especially by private car. Additionally walking and cycling and improved access to public transport and provision of facilities will be encouraged where possible and where appropriate.

Retail

1.103. Retail opportunities within this zone are centred on Caernarfon with settlements within the National Park relying on it as a retail hub. There are no retail opportunities within the National Park in this zone however policies within the Local Development Plan would support any new small retail proposals which benefit the local communities.
Most relevant policies to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Development Policy 11: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Development Policy 18: The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities
- Strategic Policy I: A Sustainable Rural Economy
- Development Policy 20: Agricultural Diversification
- Strategic Policy L: Tourism and Recreation
- Development Policy 23: Retail
- Strategic Policy Li: Accessibility and Transport
1.104. **DOLGELLAU AND ARDUDWY ZONE OF INFLUENCE**

![Map of Dolgellau and Ardudwy Zone Links]

**Dolgellau & Ardudwy Zone Links**

- **Scale 1:170000**

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**KEY:**
- Local Service Centre
- Service Settlement
- Wales Spatial Plan Hub
- Link to Main Service Centre
- Sub Regional Link
- Community Link
- Primary Routes

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*Background Paper 21: Zones of Influence – July 2016*
What's it like now?

1.105. This zone covers the Dolgellau rural hinterland, the Arudwy Coast, Morfa Dyffryn, Coed y Brenin and Mawddach Estuary. The main service centre for the area is the market town of Dolgellau. This zone has a resident population of around 9,200. The median age of 47.4 is relatively high.

Employment

1.106. Dolgellau has been designated as a primary settlement serving the surrounding communities in the Wales Spatial Plan. Dolgellau is the largest centre for employment within this zone with a number of large employers. There is also an industrial estate within the settlement that is fully occupied. A number of brownfield sites have been identified in Dolgellau which may be suitable for future small scale development for employment purposes. This zone has rural and coastal areas. The zone is characterised by an agricultural economy and because of its high quality environment is highly dependable on the tourism industry.

Housing

1.107. There are around 4,860 household spaces within the zone. 84.9% of the housing stock is with residence, 5.1% are vacant and 10% are second residence. Many of the Community Councils have a high proportion of second residence and holiday accommodation, e.g. Llanfair, Llanbedr, Llanelltyd, Barmouth, Ganllwyd and Brithdir and Llanfachreth Community Council areas (ranging from 14% to 21% being second residence or holiday accommodation). 67.9% of the housing stock are owner occupied, 15.8% are social rented, while 16.3% are rented by other means. There are 477 applicants on the Gwynedd Council Housing waiting list for this zone. Housing Need surveys undertaken for Dolgellau, Llanbedr and Dyffryn Arudwy Community Councils indicate that 78 are in need of affordable housing.

Community services and facilities

1.108. Community services within this zone are based in Barmouth and Dolgellau and slightly out of the zone in Harlech which serves the North western end of this zone. Secondary schools which serve the zone are located in Harlech and Dolgellau with primary schools within most of the other settlements. The retail centres of this zone are Dolgellau and Barmouth which both have small supermarkets.. There is little in the way of retail opportunities elsewhere.. For larger retail centres, people within this zone travel to Aberystwyth in the south, Porthmadog in the north and Wrexham to the east. Further education opportunities are available within Coleg Meirion Dwyfor in Dolgellau and Coleg Harlech.

Tourism

1.109. The tourism hubs are focused around Dolgellau and Cader Idris, Barmouth and also Coed y Brenin which is becoming increasingly popular with mountain bikers both nationally and internationally.
Transport

1.110. There are links between this zone and a number of other zones within the park including, to the south, Machynlleth and Aberdyfi, to the east Bala and to the north Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog. The A470 and the A494 are the important road links with further localised improvements planned. The Cambrian coastline provides public transport links along the coast to Porthmadog and part of the Llyn in the north and to Aberystwyth in the south.

Settlement Strategy

Main Service Centres: Dolgellau (within the National Park), Barmouth (outside the National Park)

Barmouth

1.111. This settlement is identified within the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan as a local centre, which provides facilities and services to meet the day to day needs of the local community. The settlement includes a supermarket and a number of other retail establishments which serve the community and the wider rural area. The employment opportunities within this settlement are mainly connected with the leisure and tourism sectors. There is no secondary school within Barmouth and therefore pupils travel to Ysgol Ardudwy in Harlech. Community facilities include a leisure centre which not only serves the settlement but also the wider community. The settlement is served by the main Cambrian coast railway line.

Hierarchy of settlements within the National Park

Local Service Centre – Dolgellau

1.112. Dolgellau is a small market town with an estimated population of around 2,400 which services many of the surrounding settlements. Dolgellau has been identified as being strategically placed as a primary settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan which provides a link between the Central Wales area and the North West Wales area. Although Dolgellau has been designated as a primary settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan, the plan does not imply that significant physical growth is necessarily expected to take place but rather develop the settlement without extending its footprint. Dolgellau has a significant number of open market housing planning commitments; therefore it will be important to give priority to affordable housing in the area in order to meet the affordable local need. All of the key local community services are available within the settlement, including primary and secondary schools and tertiary education college, doctor’s surgery, post office and a supermarket. There are also a number of community facilities including a community hospital, leisure centre, library and many sport clubs. The A470 trunk road which links North and South Wales runs through the town linking it with Machynlleth and Aberystwyth. The A494 links the town with Bala and later the A5 to Wrexham and Shrewsbury. Dolgellau has an important role as a hub for bus services, including government-supported TrawsCambria services. The town centre does have difficult problems with traffic related issues which need to be resolved. Dolgellau lies at the foot of Cader Idris which attracts a large number of tourists each year, tourism is important to the economy of Dolgellau which itself attracts a significant number of tourists. Dolgellau is important as a centre for the agriculture and...
forestry industries and for the Welsh language and culture. Dolgellau’s built heritage is of great importance, and it is important to regenerate the centre of the town in order to capitalise on that heritage to ensure its survival. Dolgellau has recently received Townscape Heritage Initiative grants to regenerate the town’s historic buildings, preserve the threatened character of the area as well as establishing a heritage skills workforce. There are many development constraints in Dolgellau including problems of flood risks and any major extension of the development boundary would have a major impact on the landscape.

Secondary Settlements

Llanbedr

1.113. Community services and facilities that are present in this settlement are a primary school, post office, shop, a number of pubs, a village hall and a dentist surgery. There is also a farming supplies warehouse within the settlement. Public transport to the area is good with buses at least every two hours linking the settlement with other larger settlements in the area such as Harlech and Porthmadog. There are a number of constraints to development within this settlement with flood risk being the main issue. A mature wooded area is located to the south of the settlement which should be protected from development and further development should be avoided that would encourage further ribbon development to the north and west of the settlement.

Llanfachreth

1.114. With the exception of a primary school and a church, the settlement has strong links with Dolgellau for other community services. Public transport is very poor to this settlement with buses going once a day. This settlement is constrained by the topography of the land with development having occurred on steeply sloping land. There is a large site with current planning permission which has not yet been developed.

Tal y Bont

1.115. There are very few facilities and services available to residents of this settlement. Residents have to travel to other nearby settlements for a primary school and local shop and post office. Public transport links with these settlements are good however with buses every one to two hours during the day. This settlement is highly constrained by a number of environmental issues including, flood risk to the south of the settlement, historic parks and garden designation to the east of the settlement and also a SSSI which constrains development to the south and the east. Development to the north should also be avoided due to the risk of coalescence of the settlement with Dyffryn Arudwy to the north.

Dyffryn Arudwy

1.116. Within this settlement there is a post office and a number of shops which serve the local community. The settlement contains a primary school which serves both the settlement and surrounding settlements. Public transport within the settlement is good with buses travelling through the settlement every 1-2 hours during the day. Travelling by train is also a possibility from this settlement. The settlement has a regular service with trains travelling through
the settlement at least every 1-2 hours. This line connects the settlement with Porthmadog and Pwllheli in the north and Barmouth and Machynlleth in the south. Development to the north and to the south should be avoided due to the risk of coalescence with Tal y Bont to the south and Coed Ystumgwern to the north. Flood risk is an issue to the west of Dyffryn Ardudwy while the topography constrains development within other parts of the settlement. There is also a scheduled ancient monument which prevents development in part of Dyffryn Ardudwy.

Coed Ystumgwern

1.117. This settlement relies on facilities and services provided by Dyffryn Ardudwy to the south including, shops and a primary school. Development to the south should be avoided to prevent its coalescence with Dyffryn Ardudwy. It also has an area of important open space in the centre of the settlement which is an important visual amenity for residents. Public transport within the settlement is good with buses travelling through the settlement every 1-2 hours during the day.

Llanfair

1.118. There are very few community facilities within this settlement. Llanfair has a strong link with Harlech to the north for community facilities. There is however a church and village hall. Public transport is good within this settlement with buses at least once every 2 hours linking the settlement with Harlech and other settlements in the area. This settlement is constrained by the main road to the west and it is important to prevent development to the north in order to avoid the settlement from coalescing with Harlech. The settlement has already developed in a linear fashion and further development should not exacerbate this.

Bontddu

1.119. Community services within this settlement are limited to a primary school, community centre and pub. Transport links to other settlements are good with regular bus services passing through the settlement. Development opportunities within this settlement area are constrained by both topography (steep slopes) and flood risk. Development opportunities are limited to the east and the west of the settlement that would result in damaging ribbon development and should therefore be avoided.

Llanelltyd

1.120. Development within this settlement is highly constrained by both flood risk and topography. The north of the settlement is very steeply sloping with a number of areas where there are mature trees growing. There are very few local facilities and services within the settlement with the exception of the primary school with residents relying on their proximity to Dolgellau for other services. Public transport links are very good here due to the proximity to Dolgellau.

Rhydymain

1.121. There are few community facilities and services within this settlement with residents travelling to Dolgellau for most things. There is a primary school within the settlement and a chapel. Public transport through the settlement is
fairly good linking the settlement with both Bala and Dolgellau with buses at least once every two hours. The north west of the settlement is steeply sloping and the road is a barrier to development to the south east. There is a large site which has current planning permission and is being developed slowly. There are no other suitable development opportunities.

Brithdir

1.122. There is a large primary school which is used by the wider community which is just outside of the settlement; there is also a nursery school which is well used by the surrounding area. Transport links to and from the settlement are infrequent. This settlement is constrained by its size and its linear pattern, further development within this settlement would result in damaging ribbon development. A scheduled ancient monument is a further constraint to development within this settlement.

Smaller Settlements

Llandanwg

1.123. There is a seasonal café within the settlement however apart from this residents have to travel to Harlech for other retail requirements and primary school. Public transport to the settlement is good. This settlement is constrained by flood risk and a SSSI. Ribbon development within this settlement is already present and any further development should not exacerbate this.

Taicynhaeaf

1.124. There are no facilities and services within the settlement with residents travelling to Dolgellau for retail opportunities and Bontddu or Llanelltyd for primary education. There are very good public transport links with these settlements. This settlement is constrained by flood risk and a number of mature wooded areas that constrain development.

Penmaenpool

1.125. With the exception of a pub there are no facilities and services within the settlement with residents reliant on services provided by Dolgellau near by. There is a choice of primary schools within the area including, Dolgellau, Bontddu and Llanelltyd. There are good public transport links with Dolgellau. The settlement is constrained in some areas by flood risk and a designated historic park and garden.
Implications for the Plan

1.126. Development opportunities within settlements across this zone are extremely limited due to both environmental constraints and settlement capacity. Many of the settlements are constrained by the topography of the land and in some cases flood risk. Some settlements cannot take any more development without it resulting in ribbon development. Along the Ardudwy Coast the spread of development has affected the identity of many of the settlements and as a result there is a need to protect the green areas against future development to prevent coalescence of settlements. A number of historic planning permissions for open market housing are still valid in settlements across this zone, and are being developed at a slow rate. The result of this is that the number of outstanding permissions for general market housing is particularly high. In the smaller settlements there is little room for development that would not have a negative impact on their size and character. As a result it will be important to give priority to affordable housing for local needs to maintain and strengthen the smaller settlements that lie within the National Park.

1.127. The economic hub of this zone is Dolgellau with many job opportunities centred on this settlement providing employment for the area in the Gwynedd Council office, in the shops, college and the large employment site within the settlement. A number of brownfield sites have been identified within the settlement that may be suitable for redevelopment for employment purposes. The remainder of the zone including the more rural and coastal zones rely on the agricultural economy and also the tourist economy especially during the busy summer months the majority of the tourism is located along the Ardudwy coast.

1.128. Outside of the National Park boundary at Barmouth there are a number of facilities serving the community including a leisure centre. It is important that these community facilities are protected due to their importance to the residents of the zone; This zone is a very popular tourist destination especially along the Ardudwy coast. The numerous caravan parks in this location are very busy during the summer season. There are more than sufficient caravan and camping parks within this zone to cater for the need. Dolgellau is also busy with people visiting the settlement and the surrounding area around Cader Idris. Coed y Brenin is also becoming increasingly popular with mountain bikers who come to the area to use the facility. Due to its importance to the economy of not only this zone but also the surrounding areas of the park it is important that the Authority continues to support the tourism economy within this area.
How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

1.129. The Plan aims to protect the landscape and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park and an appreciation of its ‘Special Qualities’ which are outlined in the Park Management Plan 2010. Dolgellau and Barmouth provide a wide range of services to this zone and the wider rural hinterland including education, retail and employment. Settlements within the National Park will continue their reliance in the future.

Housing

1.130. Due to the number of open market valid permissions being slowly developed within this zone it is important that land for affordable housing to meet local needs becomes available. This is especially true in Dolgellau where there are a significant number of open market housing planning commitments. Land has been allocated for affordable housing within Dyffryn Ardudwy in order to meet identified local need. Furthermore policies within the Local Development Plan will give priority to small scale affordable housing to meet the needs of the local communities.

Economy

1.131. In order to further promote a sustainable rural economy the re-use of underused or redundant land or buildings for economic or employment purposes will be promoted. This will be especially encouraged in Dolgellau where a number of brownfield sites that may be appropriate for employment development have been identified. The Local Development Plan aims to support local businesses to enable communities to be more sustainable by encouraging enterprise and innovation and raise the skills of local people towards higher wage economy. Businesses that are linking to a high quality environment will be encouraged. To assist in maintaining the viability of farm holdings support will be given to agricultural diversification proposals.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.132. In order to protect and enhance the sustainability of communities within the National Park community facilities that are well used and benefit the local community will be protected from inappropriate re-development. Links with the community facilities provided by Barmouth will be maintained. The importance of the provision of health and leisure facilities to the health and wellbeing of National Park residents is recognised. The provision of these facilities will be encouraged by the Authority to support community strategies and Local Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategies.

Tourism

1.133. The Authority recognises the importance of tourism to the local economy and therefore polices have been drafted which support tourism and recreation activity which maximises local economic benefits. Existing tourism facilities are important within this zone and the Local Development Plan aims to protect and enhance these facilities through the principles of sustainable tourism. The development of new tourism development and the enhancement of current facilities will be supported where appropriate. The high number of caravan and
camping sites within the zone has resulted in there being a concentration of sites along the Arudwy coast. To protect the landscape of the National Park polices have been drafted to ensure that no more caravan parks are permitted within this zone. The Authority will support applications to redevelop existing sites where the density of caravans is reduced and the quality of the site is to be improved.

Transport

1.134. The Local Development Plan aims to promote the use of public transport and also reduce the number of people using private cars to access local facilities and services. The plan also aims to encourage cycling and walking as both modes of transport and recreation.

Retail

1.135. Dolgellau is an important retail centre for the community and the wider rural hinterland and therefore it is important to retain the retail vitality within the settlement. Polices within the Local Development Plan resist the conversion of ground floor retail units to other uses within the retail centre. New retail development that strengthens the retailing economy will be supported. New retail development within other settlements of the zone will be supported where the scale is appropriate for the setting and it is of benefit to the local community and reduces the need to travel by private car.

Most relevant policies to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Development Policy 11: Affordable Housing on Exception sites
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Development Policy 18: The welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities
- Strategic Policy I: A Sustainable Rural Economy
- Development Policy 20: Agricultural diversification
- Strategic Policy L: Tourism and Recreation
- Development Policy 21: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites
- Development Policy 22: Touring and Camping Sites
- Development Policy 23: Retail
- Strategic Policy Ll: Accessibility and Transport
1.1.36. **DYFFRYN CONWY ZONE OF INFLUENCE**

Dyffryn Conwy Zone Links

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**KEY:**
- Local Service Centre
- Service Settlement
- Wales Spatial Plan Hub
- Regional Link
- Sub Regional Link
- Link to Main Service Centre
- Community Link
- SNP Boundary
- Primary Routes

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What’s it like now?

1.137. The zone includes the Dyffryn Conwy Valley, the Mignaint moorland, the Gwydyr Forest and part of the Carneddau and the Glyderau. The Dyffryn Conwy rural hinterland is characterised by a sparse settlement pattern comprising of small villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads. The main service centre for the area is the market town of Llanrwst which lies just outside the National Park boundary. This zone has a resident population of 11,773.

Economy

1.138. Agriculture and Tourism play a significant part in shaping the area’s economy. Employment centres which serve this zone are mainly based outside of the National Park boundary in Llanrwst, and outside the zone in Llandudno, Colwyn Bay and Conwy. The Conwy, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay principal hub identified in the Wales Spatial Plan does not lie within the Dyffryn Conwy zone of influence but it has a substantial influence on this zone and comprises the main regional economic driver. There are employment allocations located outside the National Park in Llanrwst and Dolgarrog, Mochdre and Llandudno Junction. Betws y Coed provides many jobs within the zone more specifically in retail and service sectors.

Housing

1.139. Median household income for Dyffryn Conwy zone of influence is £25,505. By applying the definition of affordability of owner occupation using 3.5 times income multiple it gives us an affordable property price of £89,260. The median property price in Snowdonia of £180,000 is well beyond what many local residents can afford to buy housing on the open market. There is also a very limited stock of social rented properties. There is a high number of holiday accommodation and second residence in Dolwyddelan, Bro Machno, Caerhun, Capel Curig and Ysbyty Ifan.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.140. Services including a secondary school are available only within Llanrwst. Primary schools are present within most settlements with other community services such as doctors and dentist being more sparsely available. Communities tend to travel to Llanrwst to access sports and recreational facilities. Few retail and employment opportunities are available to residents within this zone. Due to this there are strong links with Llandudno in the north which provides regional shopping facilities.

Retail

1.141. There are few retail opportunities within this zone compared to others around it. Within Llanrwst there is a supermarket and a range of small convenience stores, with residents of the zone having to travel to Llandudno and Llandudno Junction for a range of larger supermarkets. Llandudno is the sub-regional shopping centre for the zone. Retail opportunities within settlements in the National Park are limited to small convenience stores within some of the settlements. In tourist centres there are a number of gift shops, cafes and restaurants to cater for the visitors specifically Betws y Coed which has a high number of outdoor wear shops and gift shops.
**Tourism**

1.142. Betws y Coed is the main tourist hub within this zone drawing a large number of tourists annually especially during the summer months. Trefriw and Capel Curig also attract a number of tourist each year, the latter mainly walkers.

**Transport**

1.143. The A470 links this zone with the north Wales coast and the A55 which links the zone with north east Wales and the North West. The Dyffryn Conwy rail line provides public transport to the zone and links to the north Wales coast. The zone also has good bus links with the north Wales coast.
Settlement Strategy

Main Service Centre

Llanrwst (outside the National Park)

1.144. Llanrwst provides important support to the rural hinterland in terms of facilities and services and has been classed as an urban area in the Conwy Deposit Local Development Plan. It has been proposed that both open market and affordable housing for local needs will be provided within this settlement along with employment land to contribute to demand. Llanrwst has a secondary school for which there is a wide catchment area which includes settlements within the National Park.

Hierarchy of settlements (within the National Park)

Service Settlements

Betws y Coed

1.145. Betws y Coed extends in a linear fashion alongside the historically important A5 route. The settlement is served by a primary school with residents having to travel outside the settlement to the nearest secondary school. The settlement is well provided with hotels, guest houses, cafes, and outdoor clothing, gift and souvenir shops due to the settlement being a popular tourist destination. However there is little in the way of convenience good stores with people having to travel out of the settlement to shop. While there are no large employers within the settlement many people are employed in the shops, cafes and restaurants within the settlement, both from the settlement and the surrounding area. A conservation area extends around the majority of the settlement and within the settlement there are areas of important open space that are protected from development. There are many environmental constraints within this settlement including flood risk, steep valley sides and hard rock outcrops. There are some old planning permissions within the settlement for a number of large open market houses that are being developed very slowly. Betws y Coed is served by both a regular bus service and a fairly regular train service. Buses connected the settlement to other settlements in the surrounding area, with buses at least every hour. Trains link the settlement with Bleaunau Ffestiniog in the south and Conwy and Llandudno in the north and arrive at the settlement at least every 2-3 hours.

Secondary Settlements

Rowen

1.146. There are a small number of facilities and services that serve the residents of the settlement including, a shop and post office, pub, primary school and village hall. For other services residents travel to Conwy, Llandudno and Llandudno Junction. Public transport to this settlement is fairly good with buses at least once every 2 hours linking the settlement with the larger settlements to the north. This is a linear settlement with a river running through it, which results in flood risk, constraining development. Any new development within this settlement could result in ribbon development so needs to be considered carefully. A small number of windfall sites have been
identified that could contribute to available land for development within the settlement.

Dolgarrog

1.147. There are a number of community facilities and services within this settlement including a primary school, shop post office and a community centre. Dolgarrog has recently seen the closure of the Aluminium works (which is situated outside the National Park area and within Conwy local planning authority area) which has lead to considerable job losses in the area. Public transport links to and from the settlement are good with buses every hour. The part of Dolgarrog that is within the National Park is very linear and further development that would exacerbate this should be avoided; a further constraint to development is a SSSI to the west of the settlement.

Trefriw

1.148. There are a number of community facilities and services within the settlement, including a shop and post office, primary school, church and chapel, village hall, woollen mill and pub. The settlement has good public transport links with buses at least every couple of hours linking the settlement with Llanrwst, Conwy and Betws y Coed. The topographical features of this settlement mean that future development is constrained within this settlement. A further constraint to development is flood risk which affect parts of the settlement. A number of windfall sites have been identified within this settlement some of which include brownfield land which should be developed first should the need arise.

Capel Garmon

1.149. The settlement has a primary school, church, shop and pub. Public transport links are poor with only two buses a day meaning that most people travel by private car. There are few opportunities for small scale development within this settlement.

Dolwyddelan

1.150. Within the settlement there are several community facilities and services including a primary school, shop, post office and hotel. Public transport to and from the settlement is moderate with buses every 1-2 hours. Both flood risk and topographical features constrain development within this settlement. However there are few opportunities for small scale development within this settlement. There is also a regular train service along the Conwy Valley line with trains stopping at Dolwyddelan at least every 2-3 hours during the day.

Penmachno

1.151. While there is a primary school within this settlement there are few other community services with the exception of a chapel and pub. Public transport is good to the settlement with buses once every one to two hours. This settlement is constrained by the river which runs through the settlement dissecting it and the flood risk that is associated with the river. There are a few opportunities for the redevelopment of run down buildings within the
settlement and a small number of windfall sites and a possible exception site have been identified.

Ysbyty Ifan.

1.152. There are very few facilities and services within this settlement with residents having to travel some distance to access shops and other community facilities. There is a primary school and a post office that is open once a week. There is also a village hall and church within the settlement. Public transport links are very poor between the settlement and others around it with one daily service, with most residents having to rely on private cars. This settlement is both constrained by flood risk and environmental designations - it is bisected by a river. There is a large area of open space in the centre of the village which provides a public amenity to the residents and should be protected from development. The majority of the land to the east of the settlement is owned by the National Trust. One small windfall site has been identified within the settlement as an opportunity for development.

Smaller Settlements

Llanbedr y Cennin

1.153. While there is a pub and a church within the settlement there are no other facilities or services available to the residents of the settlement. Public transport through the settlement is very poor. There are few opportunities within this settlement that would not have an impact on the settlement pattern.

Capel Curig

1.154. There are few facilities and services within the settlement with residents having to travel some distance to their nearest settlement with a shop and also primary school. Public transport is poor within this settlement with one bus daily connecting it to its nearest larger settlements. Any further development between clusters of dwellings within this settlement would result in further damaging ribbon development and the coalescence of clusters which should be avoided. Flood risk issues also prevent development within parts of this settlement.

Nebo

1.155. While there is a chapel within the settlement, there are no other facilities and public transport links are poor. The settlement is small containing a number of single dwellings distributed in a linear pattern along the road; any development within the settlement should not result in further ribbon development.

Cwm Penmachno

1.156. There are few community services and facilities but more in Penmachno which is located nearby. Public transport to the settlement is fairly good. Parts of this settlement are very linear, with development opportunities possible between the clusters of dwellings. There are flood risk constraints within parts of the settlement.
Implications for the Plan

1.157. There is limited capacity in the area to accommodate change without compromising landscape character. Betws y Coed as well as other secondary settlements is highly constrained due to flood risk and other environmental and topographical constraints.

1.158. Communities within Dyffryn Conwy zone of influence rely on Llanrwst and Llandudno for their services and facilities so they need good transport links with these centres. Public transport for Ysbyty Ifan, Capel Garmon and Nebo is very infrequent.

1.159. The area around Capel Curig and Betws y Coed is recognised for its outdoor recreation facilities, and this is a significant market driver for tourism in this area. The ‘Marin’ mountain bike trail in the Gwydir Forest as well as Plas y Brenin outdoor centre are some examples of outdoor recreation facilities. There are also numerous camping sites.
How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

1.160. The Plan aims to protect the landscape and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park. Llanrwst provides a wide range of services to this zone and the wider rural hinterland including education, retail and employment. Settlements within the National Park will continue to rely on Llanrwst to provide these services. Conwy Councils emerging Local Development Plan recognises its importance as a service centre and aims to retain its vitality.

Housing

1.161. Due to environmental constraints within Betws y Coed the Authority has to look to Dolwyddelan and Trefriw to allocate land for housing. The Local Development Plan aims to give priority to affordable housing to meet the needs of local communities and will also encourage small scale affordable housing development. To meet some of the housing need within this zone the deposit Conwy Local Development Plan has proposed housing allocations in Llanrwst, Llangernyw, Eglwysbach and Dolgarrog (which is partly within the National Park).

Economy

1.162. Policies have been drafted which support local businesses to enable communities to be more sustainable and encourage enterprise and innovation and raise the skills levels of local people towards a higher wage economy. Within the Conwy deposit Local Development Plan land has been allocated for employment with Dolgarrog and Llanrwst which will provide job opportunities within the settlements and also opportunities to the wider rural hinterland. The re-use of underused or redundant buildings for economic or employment purposes will be supported by the Local Development plan. In order to promote sustainability live to work units will be supported along with home working. The agricultural sector will also be supported by providing opportunities for agricultural diversification which assist in maintaining the viability of farm holdings.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.163. Llanrwst provides many of the community facilities to settlements within this zone. It is recognised by the Authority that community facilities within settlement are important to help to retain a sustainable rural community therefore policies have been drafted to ensure that the change of use from a community service or facility is refused unless it can be demonstrated it is un-viable or unsuitable. New community facilities will be supported in appropriate locations where it will provide facilities to the local community.

Tourism

1.164. Tourism is an important employer within this area with Betws y Coed especially receiving high numbers of tourists throughout the year but more especially in high season. The Local Development Plan policies aim to retain a good range of quality services accommodation to provide a choice to the visitors. It is recognised that cycling will become a more popular activity within part of the National Park and the Local Development Plan supports the provision of cycle routes for recreational purposes and to encourage
sustainable tourism. Existing tourist development will be protected and enhanced through the principles of sustainable tourism and new tourist developments will be supported where they are considered appropriate within the National Park and support the National Park purposes.

Transport

1.165. The Local Development Plan will encourage the shift of road traffic to rail and public transport to encourage more sustainable methods of transport. Development will be encouraged in locations where the need to travel is reduced and improve links to public transport and walking and cycling as a method of transport over short distances to access local facilities and services. The provision of cycle paths will be allowed to further encourage people out of their cars to access local facilities and services and also for recreational purposes. The Local Development Plan will also support initiatives which strengthen sustainable transport links to reduce car-based visitors to the area around Snowdon, Glyderau and the Carneddau.

Retail

1.166. Betws y Coed is recognised as an important retail centre specifically for outdoor wear and equipment. It is important to retain this offer within the settlement and ensure that units are not lost to other uses. Policies within the Local Development Plan resist the change of use of ground floor retail premises with Betws y Coed to retain the vitality and viability of the retail centre. The provision of other local shops which serve the community will also be protected in order reduce the need to travel as frequently to larger centres.

Most relevant policies to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Development Policy 18: The Welsh Language and the social and cultural fabric of communities
- Strategic Policy I: A Sustainable Rural Economy
- Development Policy 20: Agricultural diversification
- Strategic Policy L: Tourism and Recreation
- Development Policy 23 Retail
- Strategic Policy Ll: Accessibility and Transport
1.167. **LLANDUDNO AND CONWY ZONE OF INFLUENCE**
What's it like now?

1.168. This zone is within the Llandudno and Conwy Principal hub of the Wales Spatial Plan which is recognised as being a strategic hub that connects north east Wales with North West Wales and is recognised as a key economic driver. The zone has a resident population of 40,445. Conwy and Llandudno are regional tourism centres and also provide important retail, administrative and service functions for a large rural hinterland. This zone has a residential population of around 40,450.

Housing

1.169. There are around 19,580 household spaces within the zone. Many of the settlements in the area are primarily of 19th century in origin with a substantial stock of Victorian and Edwardian housing. In Penmaenmawr and some parts of Llandudno many of the larger Victorian and Edwardian dwellings are now in multiple-occupation or have been converted to flats. Since 1945 significant public and private sector development has taken place in all areas, including the building of sizeable public sector housing estates in Llandudno, Conwy, Dwygyfylchi and Llandudno Junction. There are proposed housing allocation sites in the Conwy Local Development Plan in Conwy, Llandudno, Llandudno Junction, Bae Penrhyn, Conwy, Llanfairfechan, Glan Conwy and in Dwygyfylchi within Conwy local planning authority area which should meet the need for general market housing within this zone. Within this zone there are only two settlements within the National Park i.e. Dwygyfylchi (partly within the National Park) and Capelulo. In order to maintain and strengthen these settlements it will be important to give priority to affordable housing for local needs.

Economy

1.170. Whilst there are few employment opportunities within the National Park in this zone there are many opportunities within close proximity but outside of the National Park including in Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Llandudno Junction, Conwy and Mochdre. These settlements not only provide jobs to this zone but also to zones adjacent to it. Conwy County Borough Council is also a large employer for the surrounding areas. The current development of the Welsh Assembly Government’s North Wales headquarters at the Point site in Llandudno Junction will also bring significant public sector employment to the area. Tourism is also vital to the economy of the area but is seasonal in nature. There has been a steep decline in traditional industrial employment in Llandudno Junction (Hotpoint and railways) and Penmaenmawr (quarrying). The Tre Marl Industrial Estate in Llandudno Junction and neighbouring areas has seen considerable service industry development with the vehicle main dealerships being conspicuous. There is also a small but thriving employment estate on the western outskirts of Conwy, where more land is available for development. The main employment site which is available for development in the area is the Point site at Llandudno Junction (former Hotpoint site).

Retail

1.171. There are a number of large retail centres, including Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Colwyn Bay which provide excellent retail services for this zone.
Llandudno provides the focus for retail provision for a wide sub-regional catchment area, with many major high street chains being represented.

Community services and facilities

1.172. Community services are available within Llandudno, Colwyn Bay and Conwy including a cinema, leisure centres and other services available for the public to use. Serving as a regional hub with a wide sphere of influence, the town of Llandudno is well provided with a wide range of services and facilities. There is a secondary school and public and private hospitals. The Venue Cymru theatre and conference centre is situated in the town. The only sports hall is a ‘dual-use facility’ but public open space, beaches and ‘common’ land are easily accessible and there are two golf courses in the town and a swimming pool. There is a leisure centre and a multi-screen cinema in Llandudno Junction. Conwy also has a secondary school, together with a marina, a golf course, a beach and accessible open upland. A second marina was recently opened across the Conwy estuary at Deganwy. There are some issues about lack of public open space in the Deganwy/Llandudno Junction area. Dental and medical surgeries are generally well provided throughout the area, though there is no acute hospital service and residents would usually have to travel to Bangor if such facilities were needed. Telecommunications access and connectivity speeds are good.

Tourism

1.173. Conwy Castle which is part of the UNESCO world heritage site draws significant numbers of tourists to the area each year as does Llandudno. The character and appearance of the towns of Llandudno and Conwy in particular are important to the area’s success as a tourist destination. Llanfairfechan is a gateway for tourists visiting Snowdonia and provides a starting point for many walkers to the Carneddau mountain range.

Transport

1.174. There are excellent transport links within this zone including the north Wales coast rail line, Dyffryn Conwy line and good bus links. The A55 connects the zone with North West Wales including Anglesey and to North east Wales and the north west of England including Chester and Liverpool. The railway station at Llandudno Junction serves both the main London-Holyhead line and the branch lines to Llandudno and the Conwy Valley. Bus services to the west along the coast and into Llandudno are regular and frequent, and there are regular (though less frequent) services from Llandudno Junction along both sides of the Conwy valley. National Express coach services run to Liverpool, London and Manchester on a daily basis.
Settlement Strategy

**Main Service Centres** – Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Conwy (outside the National Park)

**Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Conwy**

1.175. These three settlements are closely linked to one another with Conwy offering a number of convenience stores for ‘top-up’ shopping. Llandudno and Llandudno Junction offer a wider choice of retail experience including large convenience stores. There are a number of employment estates within these settlements that provide sufficient employment opportunities with further opportunities in many of the sites for further development.

**Hierarchy of settlements within the National Park**

**Secondary Settlements**

**Dwygyfylchi**

1.176. The settlement has a number of facilities and services including a primary school, shops, post office and hotel. It has good links with the A55 and moderately good public transport. Only a very small part of this settlement is within the National Park, the parts that are constrained by flood risk, SSSI and also the topography of the land.

**Smaller Settlements**

**Capelulo**

1.177. With the exception of a public house there are no other public facilities and services within the settlement with residents having to travel to Dwygyfylchi for most services. Public transport availability is moderate with buses three times daily, linking the settlement with Dwygyfylchi and Conwy. This settlement is constrained in places by flood risk and also by the topography of the land. The settlement has developed in a linear pattern towards Dwygyfylchi and further ribbon development in this fashion should be avoided.
Implications for the Plan

1.178. Much of this zone is within Conwy planning authority it is important to look at the issues identified within the emerging Conwy Local Development Plan for the area. Llandudno, Llandudno Junction and Conwy provide important facilities and services to the rest of the zone and beyond.

1.179. Within the Conwy Local Development Plan land has been allocated for housing in Dwygyfylchi (within Conwy Local Planning Authority area) which will address any need within this area which means that land for housing will not need to be allocated within the National Park within this zone. The main emphasis is to maintain the position of Llandudno and Llandudno Junction and this can be supported provided it does not have a negative impact in the National Park in terms of increased housing demand.

How the issues are addressed in the Conwy Local Development Plan?

1.180. Settlements within this area will still link to Conwy, Llandudno Junction and Llandudno.

Economy

1.181. Employment land has been allocated within the settlements listed above and will provide employment opportunities for the zone. Conwy LDP aims to encourage the strengthening and diversification of the rural economy that is compatible with the local economy, community and environment. They also aim to protect and enhance coastal and rural based tourism attractions and accommodation.

Housing

1.182. Housing will be provided with parts of Dwygyfylchi which lie outside of the National Park.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.183. The council aims to protect and enhance where possible community facilities and services, this is important for settlements in the rural hinterland in order that they can access these facilities and services without having to travel too far.

Transport

1.184. The council aims to locate development to minimise the need to travel and encourage the use of public transport footways and cycle ways, improve accessibility and seek to change travel behaviour.

Retail

1.185. The Conwy Local Development Plan aims to protect and enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of retail centres within the plan area, this is important for the rural hinterland which rely heavily on the retail centres.
How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

1.186. Capelulo will be subject to the smaller settlement policy within the local development plan which will allow a limited number of new dwellings within the plan period for affordable local needs only.

1.187. Community facilities and services will be protected from inappropriate re-development within settlements across the National Park.

1.188. The landscape of the National Park will be protected from further development of caravan sites within the National Park.

Most relevant policies to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Development Policy 21: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites
- Development Policy 22: Touring and Camping Sites
1.189. **MACHYNLLETH AND ABERDYFI ZONE OF INFLUENCE**
What's it like now?

1.190. This zone has both rural and coastal characteristics. Machynlleth and Tywyn (the main service centres for this zone) lie outside the National Park boundary. The zone has a resident population of 12,733.

Housing

1.191. There are around 7,360 household spaces within the zone. 77% of the housing stock is with residence, 5.7% are vacant and around 18% are second residence. Many of the Community Councils have a high proportion of second residence and holiday accommodation, e.g. Arthog, Llanfihangel y Pennant, Aberdyfi, Pennal, Corris and Mawddwy Community Council areas (ranging from 19% to 48% being second residence or holiday accommodation). Within the settlements in the National Park environmental constraints such as flooding and settlement capacity limit development. There are a significant number of valid planning permissions within this zone which are being developed slowly. The result of this is that the number of outstanding permissions for general open market housing remains particularly high especially in Aberdyfi. In the smaller settlements there is little room for development that would not have a negative impact on their size and character. As a result it will be important to give priority to affordable housing for local needs to maintain and strengthen the smaller settlements that lie within the National Park.

Economy

1.192. Centres for employment within this zone are Machynlleth and Tywyn providing many jobs for residents; however as with the case across the National Park, many people travel out of the zone to work in some cases considerable distances. Agriculture is an important industry for the zone. Along the coast due to the high quality environment there is also high dependency on the tourism industry. The Dyfi valley has been designation a UNESCO biosphere site; this is an area where conservation and sustainable development go hand in hand. The importance of this designation to the areas economy is recognised as the quality of the environment is an important draw for tourists and visitors.

Transport

1.193. This zone has good transport links within it including the Cambrian coast rail line linking it with the Ardudwy coast and Porthmadog and Pwllheli in the north, Aberystwyth and beyond in the south and Shrewsbury to the east. The A470 also runs through the zone leading to Newtown and south Wales. The area is also linked by road to Aberystwyth and south west Wales by the A487.

Retail

1.194. Aberdyfi has a small retail core which contains mainly gifts shops, cafes and restaurants which are aimed at the tourism industry. For convenience goods and supermarkets residents have to travel out of the National Park to either Tywyn or Machynlleth. Larger retail centres which serve the residents of this zone are Aberystwyth, Newtown and Shrewsbury.
Community Facilities and Culture

1.195. Most Community Services for this zone are based in Tywyn and Machynlleth both outside of the National park boundary. Within these settlements there are secondary schools which serve the wider rural hinterland. There are primary schools within most of the settlements across the zone. A number of the settlements also have village halls that are well used by residents. Leisure centres within this zone are outside of the National Park within Tywyn and Machynlleth.

Tourism

1.196. Aberdyfi is the main tourism hub of the zone drawing large numbers of visitors mainly in the summer months. The Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth also has a number of visitors annually coming to learn about sustainable technologies. Another tourist attraction within the zone which draws a large number of visitors to the area is the Tal y Llyn railway which runs from Abergynolwyn to Tywyn.
Settlement Strategy

Main Service Centres – Machynlleth and Tywyn (outside the National Park)

Machynlleth

1.197. There are proposed housing allocation sites in Machynlleth for general market housing. There is an industrial estate within the settlement as well as a small co-op supermarket and other small convenience shops. There is one primary school and one secondary school which serve both the settlement and the surrounding area. While there are a range of shops and a small supermarket and other services on offer many people travel to Aberystwyth to shop. The settlement is served by a leisure centre which serves not only residents of the settlement but residents in the wider rural hinterland.

Tywyn

1.198. This settlement contains a few retail opportunities for the settlement and the surrounding community. It is served by a primary school and a secondary school which serves both the settlement and the wider rural hinterland. There is employment land within the settlement and further land has been allocated within the Gwynedd UDP for employment. The settlement is served by a main line rail service linking it to the Cambrian coastline. There are a number of community services on offer within the settlement including a leisure centre and a small hospital which provide services to both the settlement and the wider community area.

Hierarchy of settlements within the National Park

Service Settlements – Aberdyfi

1.199. Aberdyfi is characterised by a tight knit of terraced housing and commercial properties, the majority of which stretch along the sea front. Tourism is an important part of life in the town and this is reflected by the range of accommodation and tourist facilities and services available in Aberdyfi. Aberdyfi has a small retail core which consists of shops which sell gifts and services such as cafe’s and restaurants due to the settlements role as a tourist destination. Prime ground floor retail spaces have recently been converted into dwellings so it’s important to resist further loss of retailing premises in order to maintain the viability of the main shopping area. Due to the limited number of convenience goods stores and lack of supermarket residents have to travel to get to their nearest supermarket. One primary school serves the settlement with residents having to travel out of the town for secondary education.

1.200. More recent housing development exists in a scatter of larger housing developments up Balkan Hill and elsewhere to the west and north. The conservation area in Aberdyfi covers most of the main old town extending to include Balkan Hill in the north. Balkan hill is a significant parcel of land in Aberdyfi that has a valid planning permission and is being developed slowly with a few large dwellings being erected each year. It however remains as a valid planning permission for a large number of open market dwellings covering a considerable area on the edge of the settlement. There is no land remaining within this settlement that is suitable for development. It is constrained by steep sloping land to the north and the sea to the south.
Secondary Settlements

Friog

1.201. Constraints to development within this settlement include a SAC which is within close proximity to the settlement and additionally the sloping topography of the land prevents development. The majority of land between the developed parts of the settlement is dense woodland of mature trees. The settlement contains a primary school, shop and post office along with other community services. Public transport within the settlement is good with frequent buses.

Llwyngwril

1.202. This settlement cannot be developed further to the north due to damaging ribbon development that is already present. The main centre of the settlement is already well developed and suffers from flood risk to the south; there are a few windfall opportunities available. There are a number of community facilities and services within the settlement including a primary school, shop and post office, café and village hall; there is also a popular art gallery. This settlement has strong links with Tywyn further down the coast and Fairbourne to the north. Public transport is good with buses linking the settlement with others in the area at least once every two hours through the day.

Abergynolwyn

1.203. There are a number of community facilities and services within this settlement including a primary school, post office and shop. There is also a very well used community centre and café which has been refurbished in the last few years. Transport links to and from this settlement is good with bus services hourly for most of the day.

Llanegryn

1.204. There are few community services within this settlement with the exception of the primary school and the community centre. Public transport is good with buses every 1-2 hours linking the settlement with larger settlements such as Tywyn. Further linear development should not be permitted which would only exacerbate the poor settlement pattern.

Bryncrug

1.205. The settlement has a number of community services including a primary school, shops, a post office and a church. Public transport links through the settlement are good with buses every hour through the day. This settlement is extremely constrained by flood risk especially to the north of the settlement.

Pennal

1.206. There are a number of community facilities and services within this settlement including a primary school, shop and post office and also a chapel and church. The settlement has links with both Aberdyfi and Machynlleth as larger retail centres. Pennal is reasonably well connected to other settlements close to it by public transport, buses travel through the settlement at least once every two hours. This settlement is constrained by flood risk and sloping topography.
There are some outstanding planning permissions within this settlement. There is also land suitable for development to the east that would be appropriate.

Dinas Mawddwy

1.207. There are a number of community services within this settlement including a primary school, hotel, pub, post office, shop and community centre. Public transport to and from the settlement is poor with only a handful of buses passing through on a daily basis. Flood risk is the main constraint to development within this settlement along with steep valley sides. There are some plots in between buildings that may be suitable for development.

Smaller Settlements

Arthog

1.208. Residents have to travel to other settlements nearby for primary school, shops and post office. Public transport connecting the settlement with other settlement is good with buses at least once every two hours. Development is constrained by flood risk and SSSI’s which surround much of the settlement. Due to the sporadic distribution of dwellings, development opportunities are limited to prevent extension in to the open countryside.

Rhoslefain

1.209. There are no facilities and services here with residents travelling to either Llanegryn or Bryncrug for primary education and Tywyn for retail opportunities. Public transport is good within this settlement. It is constrained by its size there are some opportunities for small windfall development should proven need arise.

Cwrt

1.210. There are no community facilities or services within this settlement with residents travelling to Pennal to primary school and to shop and further to Machynlleth for a larger retail centre. The compact nature of this settlement constrains development to some extent, any potential development could harm this pattern, flood risk is also present within parts of the settlement.

Llanymawddwy

1.211. The settlement has little in the way of services except for the chapel with residents having to travel some distance to access other services. There is no public transport serving the settlement with residents having to rely on private transport. Constraints to development within the settlement include flood risk. Two SSSI are also in close proximity. Any future development would have to be sensitive to the setting of the settlement.

Mallwyd

1.212. There is a garage and village shop within the settlement and also a large pub. The settlement has links with Machynlleth as the nearest larger centre. Public transport is infrequent. Development is constrained within this settlement by
the current settlement pattern and there are few opportunities for development.

Aberangell

1.213. With the exception of a village hall and chapel there are no other services for the residents which have to travel some distance to their nearest retail centre. Public transport is very infrequent to the settlement with buses only 3 times a week. Flood risk and the topography of the land are the main constraints to development.
Implications for the Plan

1.214. Due to a high number of valid planning permissions within this zone which are being developed slowly over time there are a high number of outstanding permissions for general market housing. The smaller settlements of the zone have constraints to development including environmental constraints and their size and setting prevent any significant expansion. Priority should be given to affordable housing for local needs in order to protect and enhance settlements across the National Park.

1.215. The main economic areas of this hub are outside of the National Park boundary at Tywyn and Machynlleth which employ residents of the National Park. Within the National Park boundary Aberdyfi has a number of shops, cafes and other establishments which employ national park residents.

How the issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan?

1.216. The Plan aims to protect the landscape and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park. Machynlleth and Tywyn provide a wide range of services to this zone and the wider rural hinterland including education, retail and employment. Settlements within the National Park will continue to rely on these settlements to provide these services.

Economy

1.217. The employment land located within Machynlleth and Tywyn is also recognised as being important for serving the needs of the National Park. New employment development is supported within appropriate locations across the National Park, the re-use of underused or redundant land or buildings for economic purposes will also be encouraged and supported by the policies of the Local Development Plan. In order to encourage employment within rural areas, live work units and home working will be supported by Local Development Plan Policies. In order to ensure that farming communities remain viable agricultural diversification will be supported.

Housing

1.218. Due to the high number of existing open market planning permissions it is important that priority is given to affordable housing for local needs.

Community Facilities and Culture

1.219. The facilities within the national park have much to offer the local communities and are well used by local residents; they will be protected by refusing their change of use unless it can be proved that they are un-viable or unsuitable for purpose, new developments will be supported where the location of the development is suitable.
Tourism

1.220. In order to retain good quality serviced accommodation for visitors to the National Park policies have been drafted to prevent the change of use from serviced accommodation to non serviced. The Authority recognises the importance of tourism to the economy of the National Park and the Local Development Plan policies aim to protect and enhance tourism facilities through adopting the principles of sustainable tourism and new tourist development.

Transport

1.221. In order to promote sustainable transport the Local Development Plan promotes the reduction in the need to travel by private car to access local facilities and services by encouraging the improvement of access to public transport and provision of facilities where appropriate and possible. The provision of cycle paths and footpaths will also be supported to encourage people out of their cars to access facilities and services and for recreational purposes.

Retail

1.222. The links with Machynlleth as a retail centre will be maintained due to its importance as a centre to residents of the National Park within this zone. Retail opportunities within the National Park specifically within Aberdyfi will be retained and the change of use from a retail use to any other use will be resisted in order to ensure that the economic vitality and viability of the retail centre is maintained. Retail opportunities within other settlements across the National Park will be encouraged where they are of benefit to the local community in order to encourage sustainability and reduce the need to travel by private car.

Most relevant policies to achieve these aims

- Strategic Policy Ng: Housing
- Development Policy 11: Affordable Housing on Exception Sites
- Strategic Policy H: Community Services and Facilities
- Strategic Policy I: A Sustainable Rural Economy
- Development Policy 19: New Employment and training development
- Strategic Policy L: Tourism and Recreation
- Development Policy 21: Chalet and Static Caravan Sites
- Development Policy 22: Touring and Camping Sites
- Development Policy 23: Retail
- Strategic Policy Ll: Accessibility and Transport
Overall implications for the Plan

Overall Scale and Distribution of Development

1.223. The evidence contained in this background paper and others has influenced the scale and distribution of development, notably housing. The environmental capacity of settlements to absorb more growth has influenced scale and distribution and is a factor which should be given sufficient precedence in a National Park. Ideally the proportion of housing development in both the service centres and service settlement should be marginally higher than proposed. The figure is constrained due to environmental considerations notably flood risk, access considerations and setting in the landscape. More development has thereof had to be transferred to the secondary settlements. The Authority does not however consider that this imbalances the Plan or its strategy. In assessing the suitability of these service settlements a number of factors were considered to ensure that the scale and distribution of development followed a logical assessment and was compatible with the Plan strategy. These were:

- Proximity to service centres and service settlements
- Affordable housing need
- Availability and frequency of public transport,
- Access to service and employment opportunities either within or outside the Park boundaries.
- The need to create balanced and viable rural communities.

1.224. The Plan has therefore sought to bring these complicated strands together and plan for the wider benefit of protecting and safeguarding the landscape and fostering local communities within the context of planning challenges in a National Park.

Update February 2016

Implications for the revision of the Eryri Local Development Plan

As highlighted in this paper, the Authority identified eight ‘Zones of influence’ within and straddling the National Park boundary as part of the Eryri Local Development Plan preparation process. The zones of influence had similar characteristics and strong community links. Key centres within and outside the National Park were also identified within each zone of influence to inform the Spatial Development Strategy. Key transport routes, key employment areas, further education opportunities and key services for each zone were also identified. As part of the reviewing the Eryri LDP the Authority has revisited this background paper and believes that the zones of influence, key centre and community links remain relevant and do not foresee any significant changes that would influence the Eryri LDP strategy. This Background paper will need to be updated as part of the evidence base for the Eryri LDP revision to ensure all the data is up-to-date.