

ANGLESEY AND GWYNEDD JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2011 – 2026)

PUBLIC EXAMINATION:

Hearing Session 10 – Allocations and Alternative Sites – North Gwynedd



Action Point 1 (S10/PG1) – Bethel Housing Allocations (T58 (Deposit), T70 & T71 (Focussed Changes))

Matters Arising Change in order to:

Prepare a paper that presents information on:

- The basis of the identification of site T58 as a wildlife site;
- Conclusions of site visits by the Biodiversity Unit of the Council - T58;
- Views of the Biodiversity Unit about the Eco-Scope report submitted with the statement of Mr John Williams on site T58;
- Views of the Biodiversity Unit on the Eco-Scope report submitted with the statement of Mr John Williams on site T71 and site T70 and conclusions about the value of the sites as a wildlife sites;
- Decisions on appeal re.site T71.

Councils' Response

1. Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the rationale and considerations relating to the housing allocation in Bethel, Gwynedd as advocated within the Focussed Changes version of the Joint Local Development Plan. The Deposit Draft version (published February 2015) of the Plan allocated land at Saron Bethel (T58) for 40 houses. During the public consultation period for the Deposit Draft Joint Local Development Plan objections were received relating to this allocation and specifically it's designation as a Wildlife Site which resulted in Focus Changes NF127, NF128 and NF129 . These Focussed Changes deleted housing allocation T58 and bought forward two separate allocations, - land opposite Cremlyn Estate (T70) for 28 houses and Land Opposite Rhoslan Estate (T71) for 12 houses.
- 1.2 During the Hearing Session relating to the allocations the Inspector requested further information with regard to the biodiversity value of the deleted allocation (T58) along with the proposed new allocations (T70 and T71).

2.0 Land at Saron (T58) – Wildlife Site designation process

- 2.1 A Wildlife Site is an area of land that is considered to be of significance for its wildlife value. Wildlife Sites are a non-statutory designation. Wildlife Sites are seen as complementary to the existing statutory sites and planning authorities have policies for the protection of areas of local as well as national biodiversity value. This ensures

that land use decisions complement and improve the ecological coherence of sites of European importance.

2.2 Planning Policy Wales recognises the importance of Wildlife Sites in the planning system and recommends their incorporation in Local Development Plans and in development control and state they should be given adequate protection within the relevant LDP (see Anglesey & Gwynedd JLDP Policy AMG5: Protecting Sites of Regional or Local Significance). In planning decisions, the nature conservation interests of a Wildlife Site are of material consideration. It advises that Wildlife Sites should be based on a formal scientific assessment of the nature conservation value of the site and that they should also reflect community values and that criteria used for their selection is based on biological grounds.

2.3 Here is a brief timeline outlining the process in designating land at Saron, Bethel (T58) as a Wildlife Site:-

Date	Brief description of process
March 1999	North Wales Wildlife Trust undertake a study of suitable Wildlife Sites for Gwynedd. The land now referred to as T58 is identified as part of the Rhos-Chwilog (South) Candidate WS) due to its lowland meadow biodiversity value.
14 th September, 2012	Heather Scott Ecology undertake a survey for Gwynedd Council and qualifies Rhos Chwilog (South) as a confirmed WS (please see Appendix 2)

3.0 Lowland Meadow – UK Priority Habitat

3.1 Land near Saron, Bethel (T58) was recognised as part of the wider Rhos-Chwilog (South) Candidate Wildlife Site due to its lowland meadow biodiversity value. Lowland meadows are a UK Biodiversity Priority Habitat and are listed under section 7 of the Environment Act 2016 by the Welsh Government as a habitat of principal importance to the biodiversity of Wales. All government bodies, including Local Authorities have a duty to conserve biodiversity through all their functions. This is why Lowland Meadows were included as a Habitat Action Plan in Gwynedd’s Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Natur Gwynedd, 2005) in response to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It has been estimated that there has been a 97% decline in Lowland Meadows & Pasture over the last 50 years. The ‘*Priority Habitats of Wales – a technical guide 2003*’ (produced by Welsh Government, Countryside Council for Wales - now known as Natural Resource Wales - and Biodiversity Wales) says that ‘*larger remnants (generally over 0.5 ha)...forming integral components of semi-natural habitat mosaics...should be afforded particular priority*’.

3.2 Lowland meadows in Wales are described as lowland grasslands that are managed as pastures as well as hay meadows (*Priority Habitats of Wales*). These unimproved neutral grasslands are species rich and are characterised by grasses such as crested dogs tail and red fescue; agricultural grasses such as perennial rye-grass have a low cover. Other characteristic flowers include knapweed and birds-foot trefoil. Most unimproved grasslands in Wales fall into the MG5 (NVC community) vegetation type.

3.2 The indicator species of lowland meadow (MG5 NVC community) are: birds-foot trefoil, red clover, sweet vernal-grass, yellow-rattle, cats-ear and knapweed. Grasses

indicators are: sweet vernal grass, crested dog's tail, common bent, quaking grass. NRW's SSSI designation criteria for lowland hay meadow is an area of 0.5ha.

- 3.3 Indicator species for Lowland Meadow habitats are noted in Table 1 of the Council's Ecological Assessment and in Appendix 2 as part of Heather Scott's Ecological survey, which qualified the Wildlife status of the site.

4.0 Ecological Assessment – Gwynedd Council

- 4.1 An Ecological Assessment on T58 in Bethel was undertaken by Emily Meilleur, Senior Biodiversity Officer GC on 13th of June 2016 in response to a request by the Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU) to enable it to address objections submitted during the public consultation about the Focus Changes. Nerys Davies, Biodiversity Manager (Gwynedd Council), Heledd Jones JPPU & Linda Lee JPPU also attended. The aim of the assessment was to confirm that the 3 fields, i.e. T58, still qualified as a Lowland Meadow by assessing the general vegetation, identifying & recording the general abundance of indicator species and noting the general features of the fields.
- 4.2 The T58 site had already undergone a detailed Habitat Assessment on 14/09/12 as part of a suite of surveys by Heather Scott Ecology. The survey confirmed that the Rhos-chwilog (South) site qualified as a WS and the 3 fields within T58 were specifically classed as Lowland Meadows (see hatched areas on Map 1, Appendix 2).
- 4.3 A walk-over survey was also carried out on housing allocations T70 and T71.
- 4.4 The following timeline outlines the Ecological Assessments which have been carried out on site:-

Date	Assessment
01/04/2016	Initial Botanical Survey carried out by Eco Scope on behalf of the landowner (Mr John Williams)
13/06/2016	Ecological Assessment carried out by Emily Meilleur on behalf of Gwynedd Council
01/07/2016	Follow-up visit by Emily Meilleur to the site which indicates that the site has recently been cut
??/07/2016	Follow-up visit by Eco Scope which results in the revised version of the Botanical Survey.
31/08/2016	Emily Meilleur re-visits the site (accompanied by Heledd Jones, JPPU) to evaluate the findings of the Eco Scope Study.

Results of the Ecological Assessment undertaken on behalf of Gwynedd Council – Land near Saron, Bethel (T58)

- 4.4 Site T58 comprises of three fields on the eastern edge of Bethel, the total area of the fields is 1.4ha. These fields are part of the Wildlife Site Rhos-chwilog (South) 874 – see Appendix 2. The 3 fields have been selected as a Wildlife Site because they contain habitats of high biodiversity value namely lowland meadow.
- 4.5 Throughout all the fields there is a consistent abundance of red clover, knapweed, sweet vernal-grass, crested dog's-tail grass and cats-ear. Birds-foot trefoil and yellow-rattle occurs in all fields except the field nearest the main road (field 1). These are all indicator species for the Lowland Meadows (see Table 1 below for a species

list of T58). If these fields were developed for housing this would be a significant local loss of lowland meadow habitat.

Table 1. Species Recorded in 3 Fields at T58 on 13th June 2016

		Field 1 (by road)	Field 2 (middle)	Field 3 (by ditch)	Lowland meadow indicator
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	F	F	F	Y
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear	F	F	A	Y
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil		R	O	Y
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle	VR	R	O	Y
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal-grass	O	A	A	Y
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	F	F	A	Y
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup	A	A	A	Y
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	F	A	A	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	A	A	A	
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	A	F	F	
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	F	F	F	
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	A	A	A	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	F	O	O	
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort				
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	O	F	O	
<i>Carex ovalis</i>	Oval Sedge		R		
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	R	O	O	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	R	R	R	
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Mouse-ear	O	F	O	
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	OLA	OLA	OLA	
<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	Autumnal Hawkbit	O	O	O	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved dock	O	O	OLF	

D=dominant, A=abundant, F=frequent, O=occasional, R=rare, L=locally, Y=yes

4.6 Other biodiversity features in these fields are the hedges and a ditch; these have not been assessed. The hedges have been drastically cut and Himalayan balsam occurs along the hedgerow where some digging has occurred.

4.7 Pictures indicating the presence of these indicator species during the site visit can be found in Appendix 1.

Results of the Ecological Assessment – Land opposite Cremlyn, Bethel (T70)

4.7 This field is about 1 hectare. The grassland in this field is of low biodiversity value. It is improved pasture, with a dominance of perennial rye grass, docks, creeping buttercup. The field has hedges and trees around it and these should be retained as part of any development. The Biodiversity Unit does not object to this site being developed for housing.

Results of the Ecological Assessment – Land opposite Rhoslan Estate, Bethel (T71)

- 4.8 There is currently no formal biodiversity protection afforded to the site, i.e. it isn't a Wildlife Site nor a Candidate Wildlife Site. Part of this field (about 0.5 hectare) has been proposed (a strip of about 35meters wide along the road) for housing (i.e. T71). Along the road is a traditional clawdd, stoned faced with a hedge on top. The clawdd and hedge is a good quality habitat. The habitat in this field is purple moor-grass and rush pasture; a habitat listed under section 7 of the Environment Act 2016. The field contains characteristic species of purple moor grass and rush pasture: sneezewort, marsh bedstraw, lesser spearwort, greater bird's-foot trefoil, common birds-foot trefoil. The northern part of the field supports a very good quality of rush and contains: northern marsh-orchid, tawny sedge, lousewort, meadowsweet and fen bedstraw.
- 4.9 This field could qualify as a Wildlife Site as it supports habitats of high quality, the field in total 1.7 hectares and the northern boundary of the field is a river (a tributary of the Afon Cadnant).
- 4.10 The proposed area for houses within the field would qualify as rush pasture but is of a poorer quality than the northern part of the field. The proposed area is about a quarter of the field, and is the area nearest the road.

5.0 Response to the Eco-Scope Ecological Assessment

- 5.1 The ecological report by Eco-Scope commissioned by Mr John Williams, contains a botanical survey undertaken on the 1st of April 2016. In our opinion this survey was undertaken too early in the year as many flowers and plants are still dormant at this time and can be difficult to find. The Eco-scope survey report (April 2016) also acknowledges this in noting under **3.6 Limitations – Undertaking the botanical survey in early April may limit the detectability of some herbaceous perennial species** and goes on to recommend **Further botanical surveys in June would be beneficial to provide further confirmation of the importance of the habitat.** Which is then reiterated in section **6 Conclusion – We recommend further botanical survey work is undertaken in June to fully confirm the findings of the April survey.**
- 5.2 This may explain why the April survey did not record several species which were found during Emily Meilleur's visit on the 13th June 2016 namely birds-foot trefoil and yellow-rattle. Additionally the abundance of species such as red clover, knapweed and cats-ear was recorded as low in April, but these species in June were abundant and prominent in the vegetation. The report also failed to note the increasing amount of Himalayan balsam growing along the hedgerow. Many of these plants are annuals and probably wouldn't be growing on the 1st of April. Also the survey carried out by Eco-scope was not a full botanical survey – a 'full' survey includes detailed mapping of vegetation, quadrats, and separate species lists for each field.
- 5.3 Emily Meilleur visited the site on the 1st of July 2016 as a follow-up to the assessment in June. Unfortunately the fields had just been cut a few days prior therefore making it very difficult to identify many plant species. In an updated version of Eco-scope's report (August 2016) section it mentions a visit made in early July stating **3.6 Limitations - An update inspection was undertaken in early July and found the initial survey results to be concurrent.** However there are no further details of this

visit and the report fails to mention that these fields had very recently been cut which would severely limit the identification of many indicator species.

- 5.4 The Eco-scope report incorrectly states that the WS in question namely Rhos-chwilog (South) is designated as a wildlife site due to its “marshy grassland” habitat (section 3.4.5). The habitats in Rhos-chwilog (South) WS has been classified as Rush Pasture, Lowland meadow & Lowland Acid Grassland following a survey on the 14/09/12. These 3 different habitats are clearly identified on Map 1 in Appendix 2 along with a species list for each habitat. This survey was undertaken by Heather Scott Ecology in 2012. Heather Scott is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM). The report claims that the WS survey on the 14th of September 2012 was a sub-optimal time for a botanical survey however surveys can be carried out until the end of October. The Eco-scope report also refer to a survey carried out by the Council in December 2015 – this date refers to a site visit not a survey.
- 5.5 The report also offers possible mitigation for the loss of these 3 fields. However the other fields in possession of the owner are not all lowland meadows and therefore these proposals would not be mitigating for the loss of these lowland meadow fields. Lowland meadows have suffered huge declines over the last 50 years and are becoming very rare in Wales. The **Priority Habitats of Wales** publication states under Lowland Meadows that ‘Attempts at habitat expansion should be focused on consolidating existing sites and linking fragmented stands’.

6.0 Land opposite Rhoslan Estate (T71)

- 6.1 During the examination hearing session the Inspector requested a copy of the appeal decisions which relates to previous planning applications submitted for housing purposes on land opposite Rhoslan Estate (T71). The site has been subject to various planning applications over recent years, the details of the applications are as follows:-

Application reference	Decision date	Proposal	Officers Recommend	Committee Decision	Appeal Decision
3/18/348B	Sep '85	Agricultural dwelling	Refuse	Refuse	-
3/18/348C	May '88	8 dwelling houses	Refuse	Refuse	Refused (See Appendix 3)
3/18/348D	Feb '94	Single Dwelling	Refuse	Refuse	-
C08A/0058/18/AM	March '08	8 affordable dwellings for local need	Approve	Refuse	Refuse (see Appendix 4)
C11/0306/18/AM	Sep '11	8 affordable dwellings for local need	Refuse	Refuse	-

- 6.2 Although the site opposite Rhoslan Estate (T71) has been refused planning permission on numerous occasions the historical applications were refused on policy grounds and the fact that development of the site would result in unacceptable development within open countryside.
- 6.3 In accordance with the spatial strategy of the Plan there is a need for 40 additional houses in Bethel during the Plan period. Bethel is a popular commuter village with good accessibility routes to both Bangor and Caernarfon. Potential housing

development sites within Bethel are limited due to the ecological value of land surrounding the village and the Wildlife Sites status afforded to these sites.

- 6.4 Due to the linear development of housing on the same side of the road as T71 and the housing estate opposite, it is considered that development of the site would constitute a logical extension to the village. Furthermore it is considered to have potentially a limited impact upon the amenity of local residents. During the public consultation period to the Deposit Draft version of the Plan which included housing allocation T58, numerous objections were received from nearby residents relating to the impact upon their amenity.
- 6.5 The Statement on behalf of the landowner of T58 states that site (T71) is of archaeological as well as ecological value. There are no recognised heritage assets within the field which includes allocation T71. A well, referred to in the Statement on behalf of the landowner is not located within the proposed allocation (T71)

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 It is the Council's opinion that following the undertaking of the Ecological assessment on allocation T58 the site does qualify as a Lowland Meadow Wildlife site. Therefore due to their rapid decline, rarity and UK Priority Habitat, Wildlife Site and Natur Gwynedd status, this site should not be developed for housing purposes especially as there are other alternative housing sites within the village.
- 7.2 Although it is acknowledged that the field which includes T71 (land opposite Rhoslan Estate) would qualify as a Candidate Wildlife Site, the part of the field which is allocated for housing purposes is of poorer quality. Furthermore, the site would qualify as rush pasture, which is widespread across the local area in comparison to lowland meadow (habitat found in T58) which is a rare habitat and declining in the local area. Therefore, on balance it is considered that need for housing outweighs the relative value in biodiversity terms of that part of the field set aside for housing (T71). The design of the proposed residential development on T71 could retain the 'clawdd.
- 7.3 Following the ecological assessment of T70 (land opposite Cremlyn), it was confirmed that the site is of low biodiversity value.

Appendix 1 - Photographs taken on 13th June 2016



T58 Field 1 (by road)



T58 Field 1 by road



Field 3 (by ditch)



T58 Field 3 by ditch

T58 Field 3 (by ditch)



T58 Field 3



T58 Field 2



T58 field 2 Yellowrattle



T58 Field 2 (middle)



T58 Field 2 (middle field)

Appendix 2

Wildlife Site Record – 2012

Site name	Rhos-chwilog (South)		
Grid ref	SH530657	Area 10.4 ha	ID No.: 0874
Map showing boundary attached	yes	Digital boundary correct No – some areas have been omitted and some added	date digitized :
Site surveyor	Heather Scott		Date: 14/09/2012
Qualifying feature	species and/or habitat Rush Pasture, Lowland Meadow and Lowland Acid Grassland		
Description	<p>The site is located on relatively level ground on the north-western edge of the village of Bethel. Habitats present include horse-grazed rush pasture and lowland meadows, neglected marshy grassland and a field of sheep grazed lowland acid grassland with patches of acid flush. The predominant habitat rush pasture has frequent to locally abundant sharp-flowered rush and sedges including glaucous, common, carnation and oval sedges. There is also locally frequent water mint, purple moor-grass, lesser spearwort and devil's-bit scabious. Common knapweed and common bird's-foot trefoil is frequent in the lowland meadow with occasional yellow-rattle and red clover. The lowland acid grassland is fairly damp and was grazed very short at the time of the survey. There are abundant bryophytes with frequent sheep's fescue, soft and heath rushes, mat-grass and tormentil with locally abundant sedges and bog mosses with locally frequent marsh pennywort and bog pimpernel in the patches of acid flush. The boundary has been changed to incorporate more fields of rush pasture and to omit 2 small areas that have either been built on or are gardens. The neglected marshy grassland fields have remained within the wildlife site because they still contain interesting species such as devil's-bit scabious and have a good potential to become species-rich rush pasture if managed in the future.</p>		

Primary factors	
Habitats present	Rush Pasture, Lowland Meadow and Lowland Acid Grassland Natur Gwynedd, UKBAP, S42
Species present	Natur Gwynedd, UKBAP, S42, Red Data Book, Notable, Local
Secondary factors	
Size	More than 2 ha of Lowland Acid Grassland, about 1.4 ha of Lowland Meadow and 5.2 ha of Rush Pasture
Diversity habitats & species	3 priority habitats
Rarity	
Local significance	
Connectivity in the landscape	There are several other local wildlife sites with similar habitats within 1 kilometre of this site.
Contributory species	
Tertiary factors	
Potential	

Social value	Public footpath traverses site
Ecological viability, Site condition, fragmentation, long term viability	
Conclusion & Justification	This site is recommended as a local wildlife site because:- There are 3 priority habitats above the threshold size; The diversity of the semi-natural habitats present; It provides connectivity in the landscape; and It has social value.
History & records	

Date assessed		Name of assessor Post held Organization	
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Date designated:

0874 - Rhos-chwilog (South) Species List – Heather Scott survey 14/09/12

Lowland Meadow

<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	F
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	F
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	F
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear	F
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	F
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	F
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	Lf
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	O
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	O
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	O
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle	O
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort	O
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	O
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	Lo

Unmanaged Marshy Grassland with Scattered Broadleaved Woodland

<i>Agrostis canina</i>	Velvet Bent	A
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Deschampsia cespitosa	A
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica	F
<i>Galium palustre</i>	Marsh-bedstraw	F
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft-rush	F
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	F
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor-grass	F
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble	F
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Devil's-bit Scabious	F
<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp-flowered Rush	O – Lf
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	Sneezewort	O
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	O
<i>Carex panicea</i>	Carnation Sedge	O
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	O
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	O
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	O
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	R
<i>Betula</i>	Betula	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	
<i>Quercus</i>	Quercus	
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow	

Lowland Acid Grassland with occasional Acid Flush patches

<i>Bryophyta</i>	Bryophyta	A
<i>Sphagnum</i>	Sphagnum	La
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	F
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent	F
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	Sheep's-fescue	F
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft-rush	F
<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>	Heath Rush	F
<i>Nardus stricta</i>	Mat-grass	F
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	F
<i>Anagallis tenella</i>	Bog Pimpernel	O – Lf
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	Marsh Pennywort	O – Lf
<i>Carex panicea</i>	Carnation Sedge	O
<i>Carex pilulifera</i>	Pill Sedge	O
<i>Carex viridula</i> subsp. <i>oedocarpa</i>	Common Yellow-sedge	O
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	O
<i>Ulex gallii</i>	Western Gorse	O

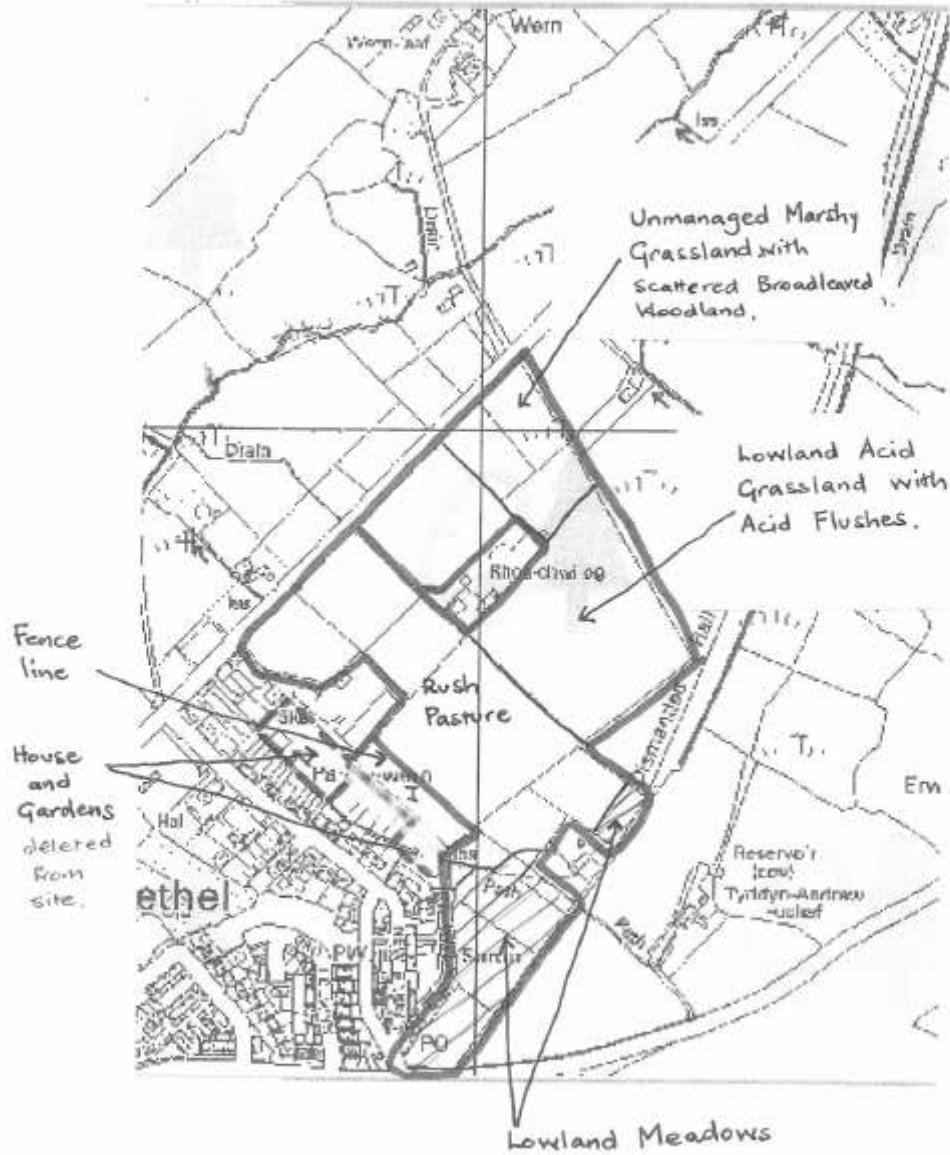
Rush Pasture

<i>Carex</i>	<i>Carex</i>	F – La
<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp-flowered Rush	F – La
<i>Agrostis canina</i>	Velvet Bent	F
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	F
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	F
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous Sedge	La
<i>Carex nigra</i>	Common Sedge	La
<i>Carex panicea</i>	Carnation Sedge	Lf
<i>Galium palustre</i>	Marsh-bedstraw	Lf
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	Lf
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	Lf
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	Lf
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	Lf
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	O – La
<i>Carex ovalis</i>	Oval Sedge	O – Lf
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor-grass	O – Lf
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	O – Lf
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	O – Lf
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort	O – Lf
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Devil's-bit Scabious	O – Lf
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	O – Lf
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	O
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	O
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft-rush	O
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	O

<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	Lo
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	Lo
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	Lo
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	Lo
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	Lo
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	Lo
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	Sneezewort	R
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Himalayan Balsam	R
<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Lousewort	R
<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	Marsh Cinquefoil	R

* Hatched area shows areas qualifying as lowland meadow - Heather Scott Survey 14/09/12

0874 - Rhos-chwilog (South) - SH530657



I - Improved Grassland - deleted from site

Y Swyddfa Gymreig
 Parc Cathays
 Caerdydd CF1 3NQ



Welsh Office
 Cathays Park
 Cardiff CF1 3NQ

Telex 498228
 Telephone (Switchboard) 0222 825111 GTN Code 1208
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Mr T A Williams
 Bryn Clogwyn
 Ffordd Clynnog
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Eich Cyf/Your ref

Ein Cyf/Our ref
 P42/497
 Dyddiad/Date

72 JAN 1989

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
 APPEAL BY MR S J BURGESS
 APPLICATION NO: 3/18/348C

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for Wales to determine the above appeal. This appeal is against the decision of the Arfon Borough Council to refuse planning permission for eight dwellings on land at Cefn Cynrig, Bethel. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council and also those Llanddeiniolen Community Council and other interested persons. I inspected the site on 6 December 1988.

2. The appeal site forms a part of a larger area of flat grazing land, O.S.no.5771, with a road frontage of about 110m on the north-west side of a rural road and a depth of some 36m. It is crossed by a public footpath leading to a well and is located on the northern edge of the village of Bethel. The site boundaries are open to the north-west and north-east but on the opposite side of the road is residential development and to the south-west is a trackway leading to a farm beyond which is a house currently under construction and further recently completed residential.

3. From my inspection of the site and the surrounding area and from the representations made I consider that the main matter at issue is whether or not the site can be considered to be within the limits of the village and, if not, whether the need for additional housing in the area is sufficient to outweigh restrictions on new development in the countryside.

4. In my opinion the proposed development could not be regarded as being within or rounding-off the natural confines of the village. It would, in effect, extend built development into the open countryside in the form of a ribbon of houses along the road frontage entailing the removal of the roadside bank and with no natural boundaries to the north-east or north-west. The site is not allocated for development in the Menai Strait Local Plan and in this context your client's proposal would conflict with policy 11R of the approved Caernarfonshire Structure Plan which limits residential development in the countryside to housing necessary for workers in agriculture and forestry.

5. You maintain that all the housing plots allocated or permitted in Bethel have either been built on or are to be commenced shortly. There is therefore a need for further plots especially for 3 and 4 bed dwellings. Your client's proposal for 3 sets of semi-detached and 2 detached dwellings would help meet this need as shown by approaches to him by local people.

6. I cannot, however, accept your contention that there is an acute shortage of building plots in the locality. From the information that I have before me it would appear that in 1987 there was sufficient housing land available within the Borough to last 8 to 9 years. This is on the basis of figures agreed between the Council and the Land Authority for Wales of 1283 units potentially available in April 1987 of which 816 would be available within 5 years (including 506 on sites of 5 units or more) and at an average completion rate over the period 1978 to 1988 of 97 dwellings per year. The April 1988 survey shows an increase in the total figure to 1400 units potentially available.

7. Within the Caernarfon catchment area, which includes Bethel, the Council and the Land Authority have agreed that in April 1987 there was sufficient land on sites of 5 or more units to build 409 houses during the next 5 years. At a rate of development proposed in the Local Plan of 52 units per annum this would be sufficient for 7 to 8 years of building. Within the village of Bethel it would appear to me from my own observations and from the representations of local residents that there has been a considerable amount of house building taking place which is likely to continue into the future. Sites available for development include site E, as referenced on your plan, for 7 dwellings and site C, a large area of land within the village where there is planning permission for 41 units of 2, 3 and 4 bed dwellings. I observed that building has commenced on 5 bungalows and 1 pair of semi-detached houses on this site and that there would seem to be ample scope for further infilling within the confines of the village.

8. Bearing the above points in mind I consider that any need for additional housing land that may exist in the area is not such as to warrant overriding national and local policies that seek to control new development in the countryside. In this case the proposed development would extend the village into an open rural area and be likely to result in similar forms of development that, cumulatively, would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape. I have taken into account all the other points raised but do not find them to be of sufficient importance to outweigh these conclusions.

9. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me I hereby dismiss this appeal.

I am Sir
Your obedient Servant



D Sheers BA Dip TP MRTPI
Inspector



Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 10/10/08

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10/10/08

gan/by A D Poulter BA BArch RIBA

Arolygydd a benodwyd gan y Gweinidog
dros yr Amgylchedd, Gynaliadwyedd a
Thai, un o Weinidogion Cymru

an Inspector appointed by the Minister for
Environment, Sustainability and Housing,
one of the Welsh Ministers

Dyddiad/Date 26/11/08

Appeal Ref: APP/Q6810/A/08/2080666

Site address: Land opposite Rhoslan Estate, Bethel, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1YB.

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing has transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Morogoro Cyfyngedig against Gwynedd Council.
- The application Ref C08A/0058/18/LL is dated 18 January 2008.
- The development proposed is to build eight affordable homes for local need.

Procedural Matter

1. The application was made in outline, with all matters of detail other than the siting of buildings reserved for later consideration. Proposed floor plans and elevations have been submitted but I consider them to be indicative at this stage.
2. The appellant has prepared a S106 agreement following the Council's standard form and is willing to complete the document.

Decision

3. I dismiss the appeal and refuse planning permission.

Main Issue

4. This is whether it has been demonstrated that there are circumstances in this case sufficient to justify an exception to the normal strict control over new development outside designated settlement boundaries.

Reasons

5. The appeal relates to an area of land just outside Bethel's designated settlement boundary. It is part of a field that is used for agricultural purposes and which is therefore predominantly rural in character. The plans submitted indicate that the proposed development would include four pairs of semi-detached two-storey houses, sited on both sides of a proposed new access road.

6. The appellant has carried out a survey to establish the demand for and nature of the need for affordable housing in the area. Council Officers have confirmed that the survey was conducted in accordance with guidance given by them and in their view it demonstrates the need for a scheme of at least the size proposed in Bethel. The scheme was recommended for approval by Officers accordingly. Although further and wider surveys are planned, on this basis I accept that a general local need for at least 8 affordable dwellings has been proven.
7. However, the appellant has acknowledged the possibility of a contribution of 1 affordable home from a site with planning permission and 4 affordable homes on a site allocated for 24 houses in the emerging Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Both sites would be within village boundaries. I have not been provided with evidence relating to viability or other constraints that might prevent the negotiation of a more substantial contribution to the identified need on the UDP site. Similarly, I do not have evidence to show that this site is unlikely to be developed in the near future. Furthermore, the evidence submitted for the appellant does not satisfactorily address the possibility of affordable housing being provided on infill or redevelopment sites elsewhere in Bethel. In these circumstances I do not consider that it has been demonstrated that the existing need could not be met within established settlement boundaries within an acceptable timescale.
8. There would be a close relationship between the appeal site and established residential areas. However, as the proposed development would introduce new houses onto land that is predominantly rural in character it would harmfully and permanently erode the rural character of the countryside.
9. Paragraph 9.2.22 of *Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006: Housing* (MIPPS 01/2006) makes it clear that the release of the appeal site for the proposed development must be fully justified. In the absence of clear evidence to demonstrate that the identified need could not be met within established settlement boundaries I do not consider that full justification has been provided. In view of the irreversible harm that would arise to the character of the countryside if the development were to proceed, I consider that the proposed development would be an unacceptable intrusion into the countryside and should not at this stage be considered favourably. Although Policy H8 of the adopted *Gwynedd Structure Plan* (SP) makes provision for the consideration of such schemes there are therefore material circumstances which indicate that the appeal proposal should not be allowed under that policy. The proposed scheme would also conflict with Criterion 3 of Policy CH6 of the emerging *Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan* (UDP), which resists unacceptable intrusions into the countryside.
10. I conclude for the above reasons that it has not been demonstrated that there are circumstances in this case sufficient to justify an exception to the normal strict control over new development outside designated settlement boundaries. This is sufficient reason alone to dismiss the appeal.
11. It is also clear from local and national planning policy that it would be necessary for satisfactory arrangements to be in place to restrict the occupation of the proposed houses on first occupation and in perpetuity before the granting of planning permission. Although the appellant is willing to complete the submitted

S106 agreement is not signed and dated and is therefore not binding. I conclude that the necessary arrangements are not in place. This conclusion is also a sufficient reason alone to dismiss the appeal.

12. My attention has been drawn to many problems experienced with the sewage system in Bethel. On the information available to me it is likely that they have been due to surcharges caused by excess surface water being discharged into the sewer system. However, the Council would be in a position to ensure that surface water from the appeal site would be discharged separately. Dŵr Cymru has confirmed that the system has sufficient capacity to accommodate the foul flows only from the site. In these circumstances it is unlikely that the proposed development would make the problems that have been experienced any worse. I therefore do not consider that the proposed development would have an unacceptable effect on the drainage system. However, this does not justify the proposal, which is not acceptable for the reasons given above.
13. I have taken into account all other matters raised, but find nothing to turn me from the conclusion that the appeal should be dismissed and planning permission should be refused.

A D Poulter

INSPECTOR