

**Adroddiad i Gyngorhau  
Gwynedd ac Ynys Môn**

**Report to the Isle of  
Anglesey County Council  
and Gwynedd Council**

**gan:**

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**Arolygyddion a benodir gan Weinidogion  
Cymru**

**Dyddiad: 30 Mehefin 2017**

**by:**

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**Inspectors appointed by the Welsh Ministers**

**Date: 30 June 2017**

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PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004 (AS AMENDED)

SECTION 64

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE  
ANGLESEY AND GWYNEDD  
JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 - 2026**

Plan submitted for examination on 18 March 2016

Examination Hearings held between 6 September and 1 November 2016  
and on 26 and 27 April 2017

Cyf ffeil/File ref: LDP 515462

AHVS	Affordable Housing Viability Study
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DAM	Development Advice Maps
DCO	Development Consent Order
DCWW	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
EIP	Energy Island Programme
ELR	Employment Land Review Study
EZ	Enterprise Zone
FCA	Flood Consequence Assessment
GTANA	Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
JLDP	Joint Local Development Plan
LCA	Landscape Character Areas
LHMA	Local Housing Market Assessment
LIR	Local Impact Report
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MAC	Matters Arising Change
NPS	National Policy Statements
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environment Assessment
SLA	Special Landscape Areas
TAN	Technical Advice Note
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Act 1990
WBGF	Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
WLIA	Welsh Language Impact Assessment
WSP	Wales Spatial Plan

## **Non-Technical Summary**

This report concludes that, subject to the recommended Matters Arising Changes (MACs) set out in Appendix A and B, the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (LDP) provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Counties up to 2026. The Councils have sufficient evidence to support the strategy and have shown that it has a realistic prospect of being delivered.

A number of changes are needed to meet legal and statutory requirements and to ensure that the Plan is sound. These do not alter the thrust of the Councils’ overall strategy and do not undermine the Sustainability Appraisal carried out by the Councils. The main changes are summarised as:

- Include a new policy on the role of development boundaries;
- Amend the distribution of new housing between the tiers of the settlement hierarchy;
- Revise the detailed components of housing supply;
- Reduce the number of Clusters and amend the limitations on their growth;
- Delete the policy on the phasing of housing developments;
- Introduce a trajectory for the supply of housing;
- Revise the affordable housing target figure to 1,572 and amend the indicative levels of developer contributions;
- Amend the approach to exception sites to align with national policy;
- Refine the restrictive provisions in relation to houses in multiple occupation;
- Clarify the approach to campus style accommodation for construction workers;
- Allocate a site at Penhesgyn, Penmynydd as a Traveller site, and broaden the scope of the policy on new Gypsy and Traveller sites;
- Amend the employment land supply figures;
- Introduce a bespoke policy for the site at Adwy’r Hafan, Pwllheli and remove it from the list of safeguarded employment sites;
- Reduce the area of land at Griffin Industrial Estate, Penrhyndeudraeth which is a safeguarded employment site;
- Introduce an amended policy framework for development connected to the Wylfa Newydd project;
- Amend the town centre boundaries in Bangor and Beaumaris;
- Revise the renewable energy policies, including a new policy on solar pv arrays, and the associated identification of opportunity areas for county scale solar pv developments;
- Changes to policy wording to reflect national planning policy more closely and ensure their effectiveness; and
- Changes to improve the effectiveness of the monitoring framework.

All of the recommended changes have been put forward by the Councils in response to matters discussed during the examination. With the recommended changes the Plan satisfies the requirements of section 64(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the tests of soundness set out in national policy.

## **Contents**

1	Introduction	3
2	Procedural Tests	5
3	The Plan Strategy	7
4	Housing Provision and Distribution	15
5	Affordable, Local Market and other Specific Housing Provision	22
6	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	27
7	Economy and Employment, including Retail and Tourism	30
8	Minerals and Waste	43
9	Climate Change and Renewable Energy	45
10	Natural and Built Environment	48
11	Infrastructure	51
12	Plan Monitoring, Implementation and Review	56
13	Overall Conclusions	57

Appendix A: The Councils’ Matters Arising Changes

Appendix B: The Inspectors’ Matters Arising Change

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1. Under the terms of Section 64(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the purpose of the independent examination of a Local Development Plan is to determine:
  - a) whether it satisfies the requirements of sections 62 and 63 of the Act and of regulations under section 77, and
  - b) whether it is sound.
- 1.2. This report contains the assessment of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (from here referred to as “the JLDP” or “the Plan”) in terms of the above matters, along with recommendations and the reasons for them, as required by section 64(7) of the Act. The submitted JLDP has been prepared pursuant to the Act and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005. The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 came into force in August 2015. These amend the 2005 regulations and, as the changes relate primarily to plan revision procedures and the alternative sites stage, they have not had a bearing on this examination.
- 1.3. Chapter 2 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 9, November 2016) has been updated in light of the new regulations and a new LDP Manual<sup>1</sup> has been published. These documents include the new tests of soundness which are: whether the Plan fits; whether the Plan is appropriate; and whether the Plan will deliver. We have assessed the Plan against these new tests. The JLDP has been prepared on the basis of the previous tests, but as the principles remain unchanged, and adequate opportunity has been afforded through the examination for representations to be made within the framework set by the new tests, we are satisfied that those participating in the process have not been prejudiced by this change.
- 1.4. After the initial hearing sessions were held the latest edition of PPW and a revised Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4: Retail and Commercial Development have been published. The Councils have commented<sup>2</sup> on the implications of these changes to the Plan. We have assessed the JLDP against the latest published national planning policy.
- 1.5. Since the purpose of the examination is to determine whether the Plan is sound we recommend changes in this report only where there is a clear need to amend the Plan in the light of the legal requirements and/or the tests of soundness. These binding changes are numbered in **bold** type and are included in Appendix A and B of this report. We are satisfied that these changes are in line with the substance of the overall Plan and its policies, and do not undermine the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and participatory processes that have been undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Development Plan Manual – Edition 2 (2015)

<sup>2</sup> Examination Document: DA036a

- 1.6. All duly made representations, including those made in response to the Focussed Changes and the Matters Arising Changes, and the matters raised at the examination Hearings have been considered. Given the focus of the examination on soundness, our report does not refer specifically to the individual representations made in each case. Matters raised by individual representations are referred to only where it is considered that they raise substantive issues concerning the Plan’s soundness. Plan changes sought by any representor are the subject of a recommended change only where we have found, on the basis of the evidence, that such a change is required to make the Plan sound.
- 1.7. A number of representors have proposed alternative sites to those allocated within the Plan, most notably for housing development. What is required of a Local Planning Authority (LPA) in preparing an LDP is that it produces a strategy, policies and allocations that are sound. There are likely to be a number of ways that an Authority could meet the needs of its community, each of which may be sound in their own right. Some may consider that the allocations in the Plan do not present the best solution, but we may only recommend changes where they are necessary to make the Plan sound. Indeed, it is the Councils’ Plan and it is not our role to improve what is an otherwise sound plan. For this reason, we have only made specific reference to sites within this Report where it has been necessary to conclude on the overall soundness of the Plan.

#### *Post-Deposit Changes*

- 1.8. Prior to submission of the JLDP for examination the Councils considered the representations received and decided to make a number of Focussed Changes to the deposit Plan. These changes were duly advertised and the responses taken into account. At the Pre-Hearing Meeting the Councils confirmed that the Plan they wished to be examined is the deposit JLDP as modified by the Focussed Changes and Minor Editing Changes<sup>3</sup>. Since the Focussed Changes have been consulted on and the SA has been revisited where necessary, they are accepted as part of the submitted JLDP. The deposit Plan as modified by the Focussed Changes and Minor Editing Changes has therefore formed the starting point for the examination of the Plan’s soundness.
- 1.9. Since the purpose of the examination is to determine whether the Plan is sound we recommend changes in this report only where there is a clear need to amend the Plan in the light of the legal requirements and/or the tests of soundness. Throughout the examination the Councils maintained a schedule of Action Points (AP) which included changes the Councils suggested in response to matters raised during the examination. Many of these have become matters arising changes to the Plan (MACs). They do not alter the thrust and strategy of the JLDP. These MACs were subject to a formal 6 week public consultation between 26 January and 9 March 2017 and the SA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) were also reassessed as part of this process<sup>4</sup>. We have taken the MAC consultation responses into account in writing our report. This

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<sup>3</sup> Submitted Documents CDLL.023 & CDLL.027

<sup>4</sup> Examination Documents DA041 & DA042

version of the MACs has formed the basis of the MACs set out in the Appendix A to this report. The MACs in Appendix A include minor changes which have been presented by the Councils in order to refine the original version, mainly in response to comments received during public consultation. The Councils have confirmed that the minor changes it has presented do not undermine the participatory processes that have been undertaken nor do they raise issues in relation to the SA or HRA. The MACs which are highlighted in bold in Appendix A and B form the basis of our recommendations and are therefore binding changes which are necessary to ensure the soundness of the Plan. We are satisfied that no parties will be prejudiced by the MACs and that they will have no material impact on the findings of the Plan’s SA, Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and HRA or the overall strategy or policy thrust within the Plan.

- 1.10. The MACs that are not highlighted are not required to make the Plan sound but are included because they improve clarity and precision. These MACs are only referred to in the report where they aid understanding of the matters being discussed. MACs relating to minor editing and typographical errors are not referred to in this report. The Councils may make consequential amendments arising from the MACs.
- 1.11. Appendix B sets out the binding Inspectors’ proposed Matters Arising Change. This is not proposed by the Council, but we have imposed it to ensure that the Plan is sound. The change does not undermine the SA, SEA and HRA processes undertaken and neither does it compromise the Plan’s strategy.

## **2 Procedural Tests**

- 2.1. The JLDP has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement (as revised by agreement with the Welsh Government)<sup>5</sup> and the Community Involvement Scheme as demonstrated in the Consultation Report. The Councils engaged with a wide range of organisations and the general public on the generation of alternative strategies and options and identifying key issues. It held a series of workshops, seminars and meetings to engage stakeholders and liaised directly with a number of groups, including ones that represented young persons, a disability group and the elderly<sup>6</sup>. We consider the requirements of the Community Involvement Scheme have been met.
- 2.2. The Plan and all the substantive proposed changes made to the deposit Plan have been subject to consultation and advertisement. The Plan thus complies with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended) in this respect.
- 2.3. The Plan has been subject to SA including SEA<sup>7</sup>. The SA provides a summary of the strategic alternatives considered and a brief summary of reasons why they were not selected. Further changes put forward by the Councils as part of the

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<sup>5</sup> Submitted Document: CDLL.022

<sup>6</sup> Submitted Document: CDLL.020

<sup>7</sup> Submitted Document: CDLL.007

examination process have likewise been tested where necessary for any impacts they have upon the SA and SEA<sup>8</sup>. We are satisfied that the SA/SEA process undertaken is robust and satisfies procedural and legal requirements.

- 2.4. In accordance with the Habitats Directive<sup>9</sup> a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan has been undertaken<sup>10</sup>, and reviewed as necessary in the light of changes put forward during the examination<sup>11</sup>. We are satisfied that the results of the HRA Screening demonstrate that an Appropriate Assessment is not required. It can therefore be concluded that no significant effects upon the integrity of the European sites within the plan area or in adjacent areas are likely to occur (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) as a result of implementing the Plan.
- 2.5. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Councils to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different communities. The Councils have undertaken and publicised an Equality Impact Assessment<sup>12</sup> of the JLDP to ensure that equality issues have been taken into account throughout the Plan preparation process. This has been an iterative process to ensure that the JLDP promotes equality and diversity and does not adversely affect or discriminate against any people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.6. The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a series of legislative changes to deliver reform of the planning system in Wales to ensure that it is fair, resilient and enables development. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WBFG Act) sets out a duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle. As the Plan was submitted prior to April 2016, it does not have to directly correlate with the well-being goals identified in the WBFG Act. However, we have had regard to the updated legislative framework and considered the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act. The Councils have also demonstrated<sup>13</sup> that the Plan aligns with the identified well-being goals. Indeed the Plan, as modified, will contribute towards improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and, in this respect, we are satisfied that it complies with the overarching principle of achieving sustainable development.
- 2.7. Edition 9 of PPW, which was issued at an advanced stage of the examination, states at paragraph 2.1.5 that LDPs should have at least 10 years of the plan period remaining upon adoption. In this case, the Plan would run until 2026. It has taken several years to get the Plan to submission, with further delays necessary through the examination process. As such, and bearing in mind the urgent need for an up to date development plan to facilitate and guide growth within the area, it makes no sense, in our view, to find the Plan unsound on the basis that the remaining period falls short of that requirement.

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<sup>8</sup> Examination Documents: DA021 and DA041

<sup>9</sup> European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

<sup>10</sup> Submitted Document: CDLL.008

<sup>11</sup> Examination Documents: DA019 & DA042

<sup>12</sup> Submitted Documents: CDLL.009 and CDLL.009A

<sup>13</sup> Hearing Sessions Document: SG016, Action Point S16/PG41



### *Conclusion*

- 2.8. The relevant procedural and legal requirements have been complied with.

## **3 The Plan Strategy**

- 3.1. The Plan is the first Local Development Plan to be produced jointly by two local planning authorities. It has been led by a Unit of officers from both Authorities reporting to Members of both Councils. The plan covers the north western extremity of the country, extending over the island of Anglesey and that part of Gwynedd that lies outside the Snowdonia National Park. The two counties are separated by the Menai Straits and connected by two bridges.
- 3.2. The Plan area is mainly rural in character, much of which is of high landscape quality, including 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and locally designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). The area also adjoins the Snowdonia National Park. Many parts of the Plan area, including extensive coastal areas, are popular tourist destinations and the tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the economy of Anglesey and Gwynedd. The Plan area also contains a number of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, a RAMSAR site as well as numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are areas of importance for nature conservation. The whole of Anglesey is also designated by UNESCO as a Global Geopark (GeoMon Global Geopark) in recognition of the outstanding geology to be found on the Island. The historic environment includes 2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, numerous conservation areas, historic landscapes, parks and gardens. The Welsh language and associated cultural influences is a strong feature of the Plan area, but there is evidence of a significant decline in the percentage of Welsh speakers across the Plan area.
- 3.3. The Plan identifies numerous key issues to be tackled across a range of topics and which include the low productivity of the local economy and an ageing population as a consequence of in-migration into areas popular as retirement destinations combined with losing young, economically active residents.
- 3.4. The Councils have suggested changes to the introductory sections of the Plan which seek to omit unnecessary passages of text, ensure that it is updated in anticipation of the Plan’s adoption, and to ensure that it reflects the latest evidence and is consistent with the remainder of the Plan. Taken together these changes (**NMC1-NMC54**) ensure the clarity and coherence of the Plan and are recommended. Changes have also been proposed to several of the appendices that support the Plan. Some of these (**NMC339, NMC340, and NMC343-NMC357**) are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the Plan and to ensure that the Plan reflects the latest evidence and is internally consistent, and thus are recommended.

### *The Vision, Objectives and Principles of the Strategy*

- 3.5. Most of the Plan area lies within the North West Wales (Eryri a Môn) Spatial Plan Area as identified in the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) with the southernmost part lying within the Central Wales Area. The JLDP Vision reflects the WSP priorities for the areas. The Vision seeks to ensure that by the end of the Plan period the two Counties will be recognised for their vibrant and lively communities that celebrate their unique culture, heritage and environment and for being places where people choose to live, work and visit. The Plan sets out a bespoke vision for each of the largest settlements, as well as a vision for the whole of the rural areas and the smaller settlements. The JLDP seeks to realise its vision through 19 strategic objectives that are grouped into 5 broad themes which deal with communities, sustainable living, the economy, housing, and the natural and built environment. The strategic and detailed policies of the Plan are related to one or more of the objectives and provide a comprehensive framework to cover the identified issues.
- 3.6. In preparing the Plan, the Councils have worked with their neighbouring authorities on an individual basis and through regional frameworks to consider cross-boundary and wider contextual issues. A number of workshops were held to discuss the cross-boundary implications of the emerging issues in the preparation of the JLDP<sup>14</sup>. The Plan preparation has included consideration of reasonable alternatives in terms of growth and spatial options<sup>15</sup> which informed the Preferred Strategy. The options have been subject of public consultation and have been refined during the plan preparation process in the light of topic paper and other assessments. Topic Paper 4: *Describing the Housing and Spatial Growth* analysed 5 housing spatial options and records the merits of the chosen option which is identified in the Plan’s Strategy.
- 3.7. The Strategy aims to disperse development proportionately throughout the Plan area, focussing on locations that best provide opportunities for sustainable development. The extent to which growth, particularly housing, is distributed to rural areas reflects the extent of existing development in rural areas. The Plan identifies functional and social linkages between settlements and, whilst recognising that growth in the largest settlements best promotes sustainable transportation patterns, this is balanced against sustaining rural communities by allowing some growth in these areas.

#### *Level of Growth*

- 3.8. PPW (2.1.1) describes the aim of the planning system to make planned provision for an adequate and continuous supply of land to meet society’s needs in a way that is consistent with sustainability principles.
- 3.9. At the heart of the Plan’s strategy is anticipated transformational economic change arising from the major infrastructure projects on Anglesey, in particular the Island’s Enterprise Zone status and the development of a nuclear power

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<sup>14</sup> Submitted Document: CDLL.020

<sup>15</sup> Submitted Document: CDLL.001

station at Wylfa Newydd<sup>16</sup>. In response the Plan seeks to accommodate an aspirational, employment-led growth which is based on an anticipated upturn in economic activity that would effectively reverse the trend of young people leaving the area in search of work opportunities and increase the prosperity of the area.

- 3.10. Within Gwynedd those areas close to the Menai Straits, including Caernarfon and Bangor, are expected to benefit from the employment opportunities on the Island. The influence on Gwynedd of economic activity on the Island will inevitably reduce with distance from the Island. The southern part of Gwynedd is expected to benefit from the Trawsfynydd Enterprise Zone (EZ) (which is within the National Park administrative area). Whilst this initiative is expected to contribute to employment opportunities it is not expected to provide the transformational change of the Energy Island initiative.
- 3.11. The JLDP’s economic strategy seeks to direct larger scale employment uses, services and economic activity to the main population centres of the Plan area, particularly the Sub-Regional Centre of Bangor and the Urban Service Centres, and to existing strategic employment sites. However, it seeks to balance this approach by providing smaller scale, more localised employment/economic opportunities for rural communities throughout the Plan area. The distribution of opportunities also takes into account the opportunities provided by the designated Enterprise Zones in Trawsfynydd and Anglesey and the other initiatives on the Island. The approach accords with the thrust of national policies and guidance, and the Wales Spatial Plan which identifies the importance of the area to the economic growth of North West Wales. Taking all of these factors into account, we find the Plan’s strategy sound in terms of providing opportunities for employment and economic growth appropriate to area’s circumstances.
- 3.12. The Plan’s housing growth has been informed by Welsh Government household and population projections. The Plan’s approach also takes into account, but does not seek to maintain, past trends which continue to be influenced by the economic recession. The identified housing growth is aspirational and is based on the transformational economic prospects that are envisaged over the Plan period. In line with PPW<sup>17</sup>, the Plan seeks to support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental considerations within the context of sustainable development. There is broad alignment between jobs and housing, although the spatial distribution is adjusted to accommodate some housing growth in rural communities.

#### *The Development Strategy*

- 3.13. The Plan identifies a settlement hierarchy which includes 6 categories of settlements<sup>18</sup> according to a number of factors including their size, the services and facilities provided and their relationships with surrounding settlements.

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<sup>16</sup> Wylfa is identified in the UK Government’s National Policy Statement as a potentially suitable site for the construction of a new nuclear power station

<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 7.1.3 of PPW, Edition 9

<sup>18</sup> Sub-Regional Centre; Urban Service Centres; Local Service Centres; Service Villages; Villages (Local, Coastal and Rural); and Clusters

The categorisation of settlements has been informed by detailed evidence set out in Topic Papers<sup>19</sup>.

- 3.14. Strategic Policy PS 15 sets out the hierarchy of settlement categories and groups them into 3 tiers: Main Centres are the largest, followed by Local Service Centres, and then Villages and Clusters. The policy identifies the proportion<sup>20</sup> of housing growth that is envisaged within each of these groups of settlement categories. To realise this broad distribution opportunities for growth have been identified within individual settlements. In some instances the distribution of growth is not consistent with the settlement hierarchy, but where this is the case the Councils have provided detailed explanations for this, which is mainly the particular physical constraints, such as flooding and topography, that affect the suitability of some of the larger settlements to accommodate growth. The evidence shows that the growth distribution has been applied consistently with the strategy, except where detailed considerations have justified adjusting the approach.
- 3.15. Much of the Plan area is characterised by dispersed communities which historically has been influenced by the importance of farming and mining industries, especially slate quarrying. A notable aspect of the overall strategy is the emphasis placed on sustaining rural communities by providing opportunities for housing and employment developments within a framework that identifies groups of settlements that inter-relate to provide social cohesion and basic facilities to support its population. The scale of development within these rural areas broadly reduces in line with the hierarchy. At the bottom are clusters - these are small groups of buildings that are identified as having access to basic services and serve a role of supporting a nearby settlement. Modest growth is permitted in these clusters on the basis that it has the potential to support local communities, including the role of the Welsh language, and assist in the retention of local services and facilities.
- 3.16. Most new development is envisaged to be contained within defined settlement boundaries identified on the Proposals Map. The boundaries have been drawn to include the built up areas of settlement and in some instances have been extended to encompass land with potential to provide development opportunities in line with the Plan’s strategy. The Councils have suggested minor changes to development boundaries which do not affect the soundness of the Plan (NMC MAP363-364). To ensure clarity in relation to the role of development boundaries we recommend the inclusion of **NMC83-86** which introduce a new policy<sup>21</sup> and explanatory text that confirms that new development would normally be expected to be confined to settlements unless it conforms to specific policies in the Plan or national policies, or that there is an essential requirement to locate in the countryside.

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<sup>19</sup> Submitted Documents: PT.011 and PT.012

<sup>20</sup> The precise proportions are the subject of a proposed change (NMC258) which is considered in the housing section of this report

<sup>21</sup> This policy is not numbered but is identified in NMC83. To avoid potential confusion for future users of the Plan it is assumed that this policy and another unnumbered policy dealing with AONBs will be numbered in the adopted version of the Plan.

### *The Effect on the Welsh Language*

- 3.17. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 update the legislative position in relation to the Welsh language. The former sets the goal of achieving a Wales with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language whilst the Planning (Wales) Act makes it mandatory for all LPAs to consider the effect of their LDP on the Welsh language and also ensures that the Welsh language is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.18. Whilst the transitional and saving provisions associated with such legislation mean that the requirements are not entirely applicable to this Plan, the general thrust of the legislation is reflected in national policy. PPW acknowledges this statutory framework and places requirements on LPAs in terms of their approach to the Welsh language in development plans<sup>22</sup>. More detailed advice is set out in TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language.
- 3.19. The importance of the Welsh language as a component of the social and cultural character of the Plan area is clear. In the national context the proportion of Welsh speakers within both counties (Gwynedd at 65.4% and Anglesey at 57.2% according to the 2011 Census) are the highest in Wales. However, the Plan recognises that these figures show a reduction in Welsh speakers from the 2001 Census when the figures were 69% and 60% respectively. This reduction has a particular significance in that it further reduces the percentage of Welsh speakers below the 70% figure which Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Strategy<sup>23</sup> recognises as a level of speakers required in order for Welsh to be an everyday language of the community<sup>24</sup>. The Strategy identifies the Plan area as forming part of the traditional heartlands of those able to speak Welsh. There are significant variations in the proportion of Welsh speakers throughout the Plan area with 87.8% recorded in one ward and 18.6% in another. The decline has affected areas with higher and lower concentrations of Welsh speakers.
- 3.20. There is a broad consensus that the decline is, to a significant extent, attributable to two major demographic influences. Firstly the propensity for many young people to leave the area to pursue higher education and job opportunities and their inability to secure suitable job opportunities to allow them to return. Secondly, there has been a trend of in-migration over many years, particularly of people moving to the area on retirement to enjoy the attractive environment and to benefit from relatively low cost housing. Given the linguistic profile of the host community of the Plan area, it is inevitable that in-migration will generally dilute the concentration of Welsh speakers. Initiatives to encourage incomers to learn Welsh will mitigate this effect to some degree, but there is evidence that even among the children of incomers who are taught Welsh throughout their school education, some will not choose to use the language after leaving education.

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<sup>22</sup> PPW, paragraphs 4.13.2 - 4.13.5

<sup>23</sup> A Living Language: a Language for Living, Welsh Language Strategy 2012-17

<sup>24</sup> A key output of Strategic Objective 1 of the Plan refers to the Plan’s contribution to creating more communities with over 70% of Welsh speakers

- 3.21. The evidence base<sup>25</sup> that has been presented by the Councils has included several versions of a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA), which has informed the SA. This evidence has provided a context and an analysis of the potential effects of the Plan strategy and policies on the language. This work has effectively been supplemented by an analysis and an assessment undertaken on behalf of a coalition of interested parties<sup>26</sup>. In all likelihood the available evidence presents the most comprehensive assessment of linguistic matters in the context of a development plan in Wales, which includes information on various influences on the health of the language.
- 3.22. The Plan’s strategy is based on the realisation of transformational change that will have far-reaching consequences. In this context of change, it is inevitable that any assessment of the implications on the Welsh language involves assumptions and predictions. An understanding of the effects of past trends will inform such assessments but future circumstances are likely to be significantly different. There are threats and opportunities to the health of the language. New, well-paid employment opportunities will attract workers from outside the Plan area but also to enable young people to remain or return to the area by providing more opportunities for rewarding careers locally. Similarly providing more housing may attract more in-migration but also provides opportunities for local people to remain or return. The issue is a complex one and is likely to be influenced by a wide range of factors, many of which will be largely outside the scope of the Plan.
- 3.23. Some objectors are critical of the Councils’ evidence and the extent to which it contains uncorroborated assertions, and they question the expertise which has informed the work. The Hanfod study has gathered detailed evidence of the present position and offers reasoned explanations for the demise of the Welsh language throughout the Plan area. However, and for understandable reasons already explained, much of its findings on the likely effect of the Plan on the language are themselves based on assertions. Nonetheless, we do not doubt the earnestness of the submissions, the detailed understanding of the representors of their communities, and their experience and knowledge in linguistic matters. Even so the material they produce does not demonstrate that the evidence produced by the Councils, and the deductions they have drawn, are unsound. Moreover, it is not clear to us that the additional evidence sought by some objectors would significantly improve the evidence base and, in the circumstances, any shortcomings certainly do not justify delaying the Plan’s adoption.
- 3.24. The Plan identifies the need to promote healthy local economies as probably the most important factor in sustaining local communities and strengthening the language. The Councils recognise that such growth is not without its potential threats to the linguistic balance of the area, but have reached a view that there are potential benefits, including to the future health of the language by seeking

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<sup>25</sup> Three Welsh Language Impact Assessment reports – 2013, 2015 and 2016 update, Topic Paper 10 Welsh Language and Culture (2013), Topic Paper 10A Language profile - Gwynedd (2015), Topic Paper 10B Language profile - Anglesey (2015)

<sup>26</sup> Summary and Conclusions of the Assessment of Linguistic Impact of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan – Hanfod Consultancy, June 2016

to reverse the trend of young people moving away from these communities and being unable to return because of a shortage of well paid jobs. The evidence supports this approach as a legitimate response to local circumstances.

- 3.25. There are objectors who would seek to curtail housing growth in a bid to protect the language. Such an approach would run counter to the importance attached in national policy to providing adequate new housing in all parts of the country. It would also fail to recognise the need to provide adequate housing for existing residents, many of whom are presently unable to gain access to the housing market or to move to larger accommodation, and would fail to respond to the growth in demand generated by increased employment opportunities. Moreover, there is no compelling evidence to suggest that restraining the local housing market would significantly reduce in-migration as some objectors contend. Indeed there is reason to believe that unduly limiting housing growth would have the effect of pushing up prices outside the reach of a higher proportion of local residents as they fail to compete with those moving from areas where house prices would remain higher. Such a situation would be most likely to occur in areas most attractive to in-migration where house prices will be higher. However, in those settlements that are subject to the greatest pressure because of their particular attractiveness and where house prices are already well beyond the reach of most local people, the Plan has sought to limit growth in such areas. The balance which the Plan strikes in this respect is a reasonable one.
- 3.26. The Plan seeks to provide opportunities for housing growth in the more rural areas. Taking into account the aim of encouraging sustainable modes of transport these opportunities are modest and in many cases are limited to affordable housing. Where demand for property in popular holiday destinations has inflated property prices beyond local reach new housing is limited to a local market in order to provide more opportunity for local people to remain in their community to the benefit of those communities’ social fabric and linguistic character.
- 3.27. The development of new market housing provides an opportunity to achieve affordable housing for local people enabling them to remain in their communities. Whilst some objectors consider that providing such opportunity in this way is too high a price to pay because of the extent of market housing that would be required to deliver it, the Councils position is consistent with national policy in this respect. Indeed, as the Councils point out, it is generally the case that the areas where the lower percentage of affordable housing will be sought are those areas where the housing market is not buoyant and thus is less likely to be attractive to in-migration.
- 3.28. Policy PS 1: Welsh Language and Culture seeks to promote and support the use of the language. It has been subject to a MAC (**NMC 56**) which includes refining a requirement for a bilingual signage scheme to ensure that it relates to signage in the public domain. The changes also seek to address a lack of clarity arising from the relationship of criteria 3 and 4 as originally drafted. Concern has been expressed by many objectors to the Councils’ suggested change, but we consider that the revised wording proposed makes it clear that the assessment of the effect of a proposed development should take into account mitigating measures. This is an approach which is consistent with other policies in the Plan. The Welsh version of the proposed change has been refined to

more closely follow the English reference to ‘significant’ rather than ‘substantial’. This policy is complemented by policy PS 5 which identifies protecting, supporting and promoting the language as one of the criteria of sustainable development.

- 3.29. The scale and distribution of new housing has been informed by an assessment of the likely implications on the language. The WLIA and SA establish that the scale of the allocations and envisaged windfall opportunities are proportionate to host communities. Accordingly there is no justification for policy TAIX<sup>27</sup> which would seek to phase developments, and would therefore represent an unjustified barrier to the delivery of housing to meet the identified need. Moreover, in practical terms past build rates indicate that there is an inherent phasing that house builders adopt in developing larger sites for practical and marketability reasons. Policy PS 1 contains specific provisions that would enable matters such as phasing to be considered as mitigation measures to be considered as part of a WLIA in response to any large windfall opportunity that may unexpectedly arise. The changes proposed to PS 1 and supporting text (**NMC55-58**) improves the clarity and effectiveness of the Plan.
- 3.30. The Plan’s aim of protecting and promoting the Welsh language will be supported by SPGs on ‘Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities’ (which provides details on the information required on language assessments to accompany an application and potential mitigation and promotion measures) and ‘Type and Mix of Housing’.
- 3.31. The available evidence demonstrates that the Councils have prepared the Plan on the basis of a reasonable understanding of the potential implications for the Welsh language. The Plan’s strategy and its detailed policies and allocations are a legitimate response to the evidence base. Accordingly, we are satisfied that the effect on the Welsh language has been properly considered, and that the Plan, subject to the recommended changes, provides a framework to safeguard and promote the language.

### *Conclusion*

- 3.32. The Plan’s aspiration of securing economic growth aligned with housing growth is supported by robust evidence. This shows that the approach is realistic, deliverable and soundly based. It will provide an opportunity to maximise the benefits that are anticipated to arise from increased economic activity, which will reverse the economic decline experienced in recent years provide social benefits by enabling youngsters to remain in their communities rather than leaving in search of homes and work. Given the extent of the envisaged economic change there is inevitably a degree of uncertainty regarding the extent to which it will be delivered and its timing. As a consequence the role of the Plan’s Monitoring Framework assumes particular importance in ensuring that the delivery of the Plan’s objectives can be recorded and appropriate responses instigated if necessary. Subject to the proposed changes set out above, the Plan’s strategy including the general distribution of development

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<sup>27</sup> For reasons explained in paragraph 4.20 of this report we recommend the deletion of this policy



growth put forward in the Plan is soundly based and is consistent with national planning policy and the WSP.

## **4 Housing Provision and Distribution**

### *The Level of Housing Growth*

- 4.1. Paragraph 9.2.2 of PPW emphasises the need for LPAs to have a clear understanding of the factors influencing housing requirements over the Plan period. The latest Welsh Government local authority level household projections and the local market housing assessment will form part of the evidence base together with a range of other key considerations. It also provides that the level of housing provision must be considered in the context of viability and deliverability.
- 4.2. The Councils explain that the starting point for establishing the housing requirement was the Welsh Government’s demographic trend based projections but have borne in mind that the projections are based on past trend which has been influenced by economic conditions linked to global economic factors. Thus, in line with the Minister for Housing and Regeneration’s letter in April 2014, they have also taken into account the implications of their economic and regeneration aspirations for housing growth. They are also mindful that in relation to Gwynedd’s projections that the level of past growth may have been unduly influenced by what appears to be a very significant increase in the student population, which is mainly explained by the fact that the 2001 Census was taken during a holiday period for the University at Bangor whereas that for 2011 was during term time when more students were resident in the city.
- 4.3. The Councils have provided detailed evidence to support their requirement figure. Various scenarios were advanced and analysed at the Preferred Strategy stage and have subsequently been revised and updated during Plan preparation<sup>28</sup>. The scenarios include ones that are trend based and which use several different migration assumptions as well as housing-led and employment-led scenarios and Welsh Government projections. These have sought to factor in the potential effect of the anticipated employment growth, including the Wylfa Newydd project.
- 4.4. The outcomes of the 11 scenarios that were identified in the latest paper<sup>29</sup> from the Councils on the subject provide a housing requirement figure ranging from some 3,510 to 18,600 units. The evidence explains how most of these scenarios were discounted and describes the factors that led to the identified figure which was deemed to be a ‘realistic but ambitious’ housing requirement.
- 4.5. The process of calculating the size and demographic profile of the resident population and their household requirements and thereafter predicting a

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<sup>28</sup> Submitted Documents: PT.08–PT.010, DC.016–DC.018

<sup>29</sup> Submitted Document: PT.10

housing requirement over the Plan period is complex. Following the hearing session on housing requirement the Councils provided additional explanation<sup>30</sup>.

- 4.6. Measured against the trend based projections of Welsh Government the identified requirement is high. However, this is mainly the result of the anticipated development of the Wylfa project and other employment developments which justifies departing from past trends on Anglesey to the extent proposed. Levels of growth in Gwynedd would be more modest reflecting the reduced effect of the envisaged employment growth. Taking into account past house building rates, the extent to which the predicted requirement will be developed is dependent on identified economic opportunities being realised. The monitoring framework will enable the alignment of the housing and employment growth to be measured and remedial action taken were it to prove necessary.
- 4.7. Population and household formation projections have been informed by robust evidence and logical assumptions and choices which are consistent with the Plan’s strategy. Therefore we find that the identified need for an additional 7,184 housing units over the plan period to be reasonable, taking into account that this is a figure which exceeds the trend based WG projections. For these reasons we find that the housing requirement is soundly based.
- 4.8. The Councils’ Response to Action Point S2/PG1 provides further clarification on the approach taken to vacancy rates in terms of determining the housing requirement and is the subject of NMC49. We consider that the Plan area vacancy rates (12.2% in Gwynedd and 10.5% in Anglesey), whilst high in relation to the national average are explained by local influences in particular the proportion of second and holiday homes, and are supported by Census data. The Councils explain that they have adopted these rates to the growth scenarios that they examined and in setting the housing requirement figure of 7,184<sup>31</sup>.
- 4.9. New household projections were issued by the Welsh Government in March 2017. However, given the advanced stage of the Examination and the urgent need for an up to date development plan within the area, we do not consider that it would be beneficial to reopen discussions surrounding such matters, not least because of the significant delays that would have on the timetable for adopting the Plan. Nevertheless, it is clear that such information should form an important part of the Councils’ evidence base moving forward, particularly in undertaking its annual monitoring and review processes.

### *Housing Supply*

#### *Distribution*

- 4.10. In line with national policy<sup>32</sup> the Plan sets out a settlement strategy, including a spatial pattern which seeks to balance social, economic and environmental

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<sup>30</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S2/PG2

<sup>31</sup> Submitted Document: DC.016

<sup>32</sup> PPW, para 9.2.5

needs. Topic Paper 5A: *Developing the Settlement Hierarchy*<sup>33</sup> sets out the approach adopted to distributing the level of growth allocated for each tier among the constituent settlements, which takes into account, among other factors: constraints that limit the capacity for growth in certain settlements; the role they play in relation to the surrounding communities in terms of facilities and services; and travel to work distances.

- 4.11. Proposed change **NMC254** ensures that the difference between the housing requirement and housing supply is accurately set out. The submitted Plan identifies a distribution between the 3 tiers of the hierarchy of settlement groups as 55% within the Sub-regional and Urban Centres, 20% in the Local Service Centres and 25% in the villages and clusters. In the two highest tiers the Councils have subsequently suggested that these percentages would be more accurately recorded as 53% and 22% respectively (**NMC51, NMC253, NMC255, NMC258** and **NMC325**). This is explained by the fact that some settlements did not have the physical capacity to accommodate their apportioned growth level which led to its redistribution to nearby settlements which were within a lower tier of the hierarchy. This change does not materially alter the strategy and the change is recommended to ensure the accuracy of the Plan. Changes to the identified growth levels are proposed in relation to Porthmadog by **NMC259** to correct inconsistencies between the information provided on the housing supply tables and the total housing supply<sup>34</sup>.
- 4.12. The approach to the apportionment of housing growth in more rural areas follows from the Plan’s vision to promote vibrant and lively communities and is a response to the public engagement at the Preferred Strategy stage. The Councils have taken into account not only the size of settlements but the role that they play, in terms of the services and facilities that are provided. This is seen as particularly relevant in rural areas, where certain relatively small settlements serve as a focus to a wider community including surrounding villages. The level of growth in the smaller settlements is generally proportionate to the size of the settlement. Topic Paper 5A explains the approach. Policies TAI 14 to TAI 18 of the Plan deal with new housing according to the tier of the settlement. TAI 14 deals with the sub-regional centre and urban service centres, TAI 15 with local service centres, TAI 16 with service villages, TAI 17 with local, rural and coastal villages and TAI 18 with clusters. Each policy identifies an indicative provision. The changes proposed by **NMC259-NMC268** are necessary for the internal consistency of the Plan and to ensure that the information reflects the latest evidence base.
- 4.13. The extent of the opportunities for housing growth within the lower tier settlements will result in more reliance on the car than would be the case if more growth was centred on the largest settlements. However the approach which has been adopted is consistent with the Plan’s strategy and seeks to strike a balance between reducing reliance on the car and promoting the sustainability of the social fabric of rural communities, within a predominantly rural area which has a dispersed population.

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<sup>33</sup> Submitted Document: PT.012

<sup>34</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S3/PG8

- 4.14. The reliance on windfall sites and the nature of the opportunities within the lower tier settlements, including clusters, means that close monitoring is required to ensure that the growth in these settlements is consistent with the percentage distribution between tiers.
- 4.15. To reflect the generally dispersed pattern of development through the Plan area, and to seek to sustain rural communities, the Plan introduces the concepts of clusters (Policy TAI 18). Clusters are small groups of buildings which will have facilities or services that qualify them for that status<sup>35</sup>. As drafted in the submitted Plan, the policy imposes a limit of 2 new houses per cluster over the lifespan of the Plan. In many of the clusters, especially on Anglesey, the level of growth has already been exceeded. Rather than impose a potentially inflexible approach of limiting the number of new dwellings per cluster, a proposed change (**NMC266**) identifies an overall indicative number of dwellings arising from clusters within 4 sub-areas which include existing commitments. As the policy permits only affordable housing, it offers opportunities similar to the exception sites in policy TAI 10. Although experience of similar policies in the existing development plan and Interim Planning Policies suggests that take-up rates in the Plan area will not be particularly high, it has the potential to make a locally valuable contribution to that supply.
- 4.16. Following discussion at a hearing session the Councils have re-considered the qualifying criteria that justify designating a cluster. The Councils have subsequently applied a higher qualifying standard in respect of the frequency of local bus services within clusters to a level where it is sufficient to provide a realistic alternative to the car for day to day journeys. Such an approach is consistent with the principles of sustainable transport and better reflects the Councils’ justification for designating clusters in terms of the identified important linkages between clusters and higher tier settlements. The consequence of this change in approach is to remove 24 of the original clusters outside that designation. It is noted that this change has the effect of removing from the cluster category some of the larger collection of houses, such as Pencaenewydd. However, the availability of sufficiently frequent bus service is an important component in justifying the cluster approach. Mindful of national policy we consider that this change is sufficiently significant to tip the balance in favour of retaining policy TAI 18. Thus **NMC266-NMC268, NMC MAP370-388** and **NMC MAP390-391** are recommended.
- 4.17. The Councils have proposed changes to the wording of Policy TAI 17, Housing in Local, Rural & Coastal Villages (**NMC262**) which we recommend to improve the clarity of the policy and its consistency with other policies of the Plan (in particular TAI 5) and national policy. The changes also include the deletion of certain settlements to reflect the fact that they are subject to Policy TAI 5.
- 4.18. The spatial distribution of the housing growth is closely aligned to the strategically significant employment growth areas of the Plan. In the event that such projects do not proceed as anticipated it will be necessary to review the

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<sup>35</sup> Submitted Document: PT.012

planned housing growth, particularly within those parts of the Plan area closest to these sites. The monitoring framework provides this opportunity.

### *Housing Delivery*

- 4.19. Policy PS 13: Housing Provision as drafted in the submitted version identifies housing requirements for 2 distinct periods within the overall Plan period. Whilst it is accepted that the demand for housing will increase later in the Plan period in line with anticipated employment growth there is no evidence to justify the step change in 2018 as was identified. Accordingly its deletion by **NMC176** is recommended.
- 4.20. Policy TAI 1 seeks to ensure that new housing meets the needs of the community, including in terms of housing types and tenures. The Councils introduced as a focussed change a new policy, TAI X, which would enable the imposition of a phased release of housing sites when granting planning permission. However, their assessments of the allocated sites and anticipated windfall potential, including the SA, have not identified a need to control the timing of the release of any sites. Thus, the Councils have subsequently suggested changes **NMC177-NMC181** that delete the policy and supporting text, and references to it. The changes are recommended as there is no evidence to justify controlling the phasing of allocated housing sites or the assessed windfall potential. Moreover, as some objectors point out, the policy would give rise to uncertainty and potential delays for potential developers which, given the presently subdued nature of the local housing market, could seriously inhibit the delivery of the planned housing growth. In the event that a particularly significant windfall site were to unexpectedly come forward which gave rise to a justification for phasing, other policies in the Plan would provide a basis to exercise necessary controls, for instance policy PS 1 in response to concerns over potential impacts on Welsh language and culture.
- 4.21. The rate of house building required to realise the identified level of growth is higher than past rates, but given that there are no significant constraints to the timely delivery of allocated sites and the choice of windfall sites that are available, the evidence indicates that this is deliverable.
- 4.22. The sites are generally free of obstacles to delivery – in terms of the physical state of sites there are no obvious constraints such as any legacy from previous development, ground stability or any particular topographical features. No significant infrastructure constraints have been identified. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has raised no significant concerns in this respect and through their future investment programme they will seek to respond to the Plan by prioritising schemes that will facilitate allocated sites<sup>36</sup>. There is also the option of developers contributing financially to achieve earlier improvements. The submitted evidence base and methodology provides a generally robust basis for the identification of suitable housing land for allocation and its timely delivery in line with the housing strategy.

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<sup>36</sup> Statement of Common Ground between Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils, June 2016 – Appendix to Site Deliverability Report July 2016 (Examination Document: DA015)

- 4.23. The allocations are based on a sound assessment taking account of all relevant environmental and physical constraints. Discussion with the Councils during the Examination bears out that the allocated sites generally have the capacity to be deliverable and provide the numbers of anticipated dwellings. Although a number of representations have been made to the Examination setting out objections to the housing allocations, there is no convincing evidence that the development of the allocated sites would have a detrimental impact upon those settlements within which they are located or are otherwise at odds with the Plan’s strategy. The allocations are based on sound evidence.
- 4.24. In addition to identifying the numbers of dwellings expected to be delivered on each allocated site, the submitted Plan also identifies what is termed in the submitted Plan as an ‘indicative windfall provision’ for each settlement. In a series of proposed changes this description is to be changed by deleting the reference to ‘windfall’. These changes (**NMC259-261**) are recommended as it makes clear that the indicative provision comprises commitments as well as windfall provision.
- 4.25. Within the larger settlements, which include Local Service Centres, potential sources of future windfalls have been identified in the Councils’ Urban Capacity Study<sup>37</sup>. In the smaller settlements the windfall allowance is based on the rate of windfalls that have been realised in the past and comprise all the opportunities for new housing given that there are no allocations in lower tier settlements (Local/Coastal/Rural Villages). To provide adequate opportunities for small scale housing schemes in some settlements their development boundaries have been extended beyond the present built-up limits. The Councils have presented **NMC357** which clarifies the Plan’s definition of windfall in the Glossary of Terms. They have proposed the correction of Table 17 by **NMC255** and the inclusion of Table 18a and deletion of tables 18 and 19 that identify the various components of housing supply (**NMC256**). This records that of the 7,902 total housing supply, new allocations total 2,174 and windfall sites total 1,723 units with commitments and completions accounting for the remainder. **NMC340** proposes to replace the tables in Appendix 5 of the Plan with new tables that more accurately identify the components of housing supply for each settlement. These MACs are recommended in the interests of the internal consistency of the Plan and its accuracy in the light of the latest evidence.
- 4.26. Reference to the latest figures in Table 18a reveals that the level of completions and commitments in the open countryside is greater than the total provision. This is explained by the permissive policies presently in operation in Anglesey. Based on an analysis of past trends the Councils anticipate that a significant proportion of the permissions will not be developed and any renewal would be assessed against a new policy context. Monitoring will be necessary in order to ensure that the overall housing strategy is not compromised<sup>38</sup>.
- 4.27. The Councils have adopted a conservative approach to the likely rate of development on windfall sites. For most settlements this rate is 75% of the

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<sup>37</sup> Submitted Document: PT.013

<sup>38</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S2/PG3

potential but a higher ratio has been adopted in the settlements of Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog. These settlements present significant constraints to development (topography in the case of the first two, and flood risk in Porthmadog). Evidence between 2002 and 2015 shows that the take-up of windfall opportunities in these settlements was particularly high given the limited alternatives and developers’ desire to respond to local demand. As the identified windfall opportunities in these settlements lie outside the constrained areas, it is reasonable to assume that previous high take-up will continue to be realised. The Councils have provided additional evidence to demonstrate the various components of the windfall figure for individual settlements<sup>39</sup>. The evidence indicates that the extent to which windfall sites are expected to contribute to housing growth is soundly based.

- 4.28. During the course of the Examination the Councils have produced, and thereafter refined, a trajectory of housing supply over the plan period. **NMC344** sets out the finalised version of the trajectory in Appendix 10 of the Plan. There has been little response from individual house builders in this respect. In the absence of clear evidence to contradict the timeline provided, we are satisfied that the evidence demonstrates that the identified rate of new housing to meet the requirement is achievable. The trajectory also serves as a useful reference point against which to monitor the progress of house building against the rate identified to meet the requirement.
- 4.29. The Plan’s total housing supply of 7,902 includes a 10% slippage allowance. This degree of slippage is considered reasonable given the availability of allocated sites. Although windfall sites make up a significant proportion of the overall housing supply the degree of certainty in terms of their deliverability is greater as a result of the work that the Councils have undertaken in predicting the potential (which has included a capacity study in urban areas).
- 4.30. A number of representors propose alternative sites to those allocated in the Plan for housing development. Some may consider that the allocations in the Plan do not present the best solution but we can only recommend changes that are required to make the Plan sound. The Councils consider that they have produced a strategy, policies and allocations that are sound. The selection of sites has been informed by its candidate site assessment methodology<sup>40</sup>. The Plan makes satisfactory provision for the delivery of housing in a manner consistent with the development strategy. Subject to the recommended changes set out above, the Plan is sound in respect of its general housing provisions without the inclusion of further sites. In the event that some of the allocated sites do not come forward at the rate anticipated in the housing trajectory, the monitoring framework will trigger the Councils to consider whether action is required, which could involve replacing allocated sites with new sites through a Plan review.

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<sup>39</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S3/PG4

<sup>40</sup> Submitted Documents: PT.001, PT.002, PT.003

### *Five-Year Supply of Housing Land*

- 4.31. National policy<sup>41</sup> requires LPAs to ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5-year supply of land for housing. The Councils have confirmed their intention to prepare a single Joint Housing Land Availability Study for the Plan area, to align with the requirement that the Plan area demonstrates a five year housing land supply.
- 4.32. The most recent housing trajectory, in Topic Paper 20B, provides an estimate of housing delivery based on best available information together with an explanation of the assumptions that have been made. It indicates that a five year supply of housing land will be available throughout the plan period and provides a useful basis from which to monitor progress.

### *Conclusion*

- 4.33. The Plan provides sufficient housing land to meet the identified need for 7,184 homes over the plan period. The allocated sites and the identified windfall potential are realistic and appropriate, and the level of contingency is adequate to reflect the deliverability concerns. Whilst the rate of delivery is challenging the anticipated growth in the local economy indicates that it is achievable. The housing trajectory also indicates that a 5 year housing supply will be maintained over the plan period. Accordingly we are satisfied that, subject to the identified recommended changes, the Plan’s approach to housing provision is sound.

## **5 Affordable, Local Market and other Specific Housing Provision**

### *Affordable Housing Need*

- 5.1. The Councils have carried out assessments of their affordable housing needs. Anglesey has produced the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), 2016,<sup>42</sup> and Gwynedd has produced a Draft LHMA, 2013<sup>43</sup> which it has acknowledged requires revision and updating. Gwynedd Council has undertaken to carry out a LHMA in early 2017 which it accepts is necessary to provide sufficient detail on the type and tenure of housing needed to inform development management decisions. It has reduced the LHMA figure of 709 units per annum to 491 units over the five year period partly to take into account the effect of taking out the proportion of the population within the Snowdonia National Park<sup>44</sup>.
- 5.2. The available evidence shows a pressing need for affordable housing, which in terms of meeting a back log and emerging need is estimated at 8,174 over the Plan period, which is greater than the total housing requirement. This figure is proposed to be introduced into the Plan by **NMC210**, which is required in the interests of Plan clarity. The Plan makes it clear that this figure is not expected

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<sup>41</sup> PPW paragraph 9.2.3

<sup>42</sup> Examination Document: DA031

<sup>43</sup> Submitted Document: DC.026

<sup>44</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ response to Action Point (S4/PG1)



to be delivered solely through the planning system. It is noteworthy that Anglesey’s estimated need figure was significantly reduced from its 2013 LHMA<sup>45</sup> figure of 635 units per annum to 398 units in the 2016 version. We consider that the robustness of the Plan’s total need figure is affected by the shortcomings of the LHMA for Gwynedd. However, this does not affect the soundness of the Plan given the extent of the gap, as considered below, between the identified need and that which can be provided by the Plan; the evidence clearly demonstrates that the Plan should seek to maximise the contribution towards affordable housing provision.

- 5.3. In accordance with national planning policy the Plan identifies an affordable housing target, in policy PS 14. For reasons described in the preceding paragraph, the Councils recognise that the Plan should seek to maximise potential delivery of affordable housing. During the examination further consideration was given to this potential and as a result the Councils have proposed **NMC213** which would increase the target figure in PS 14 from 1,400 to 1,572 in recognition of the potential for certain changes to the Plan, described below, to increase the supply of such housing. This target is considered to be the maximum provision that the planning system can deliver, bearing in mind the availability of finance and development viability considerations. The Plan identifies the anticipated sources of supply which include existing commitments, allocated sites and windfall opportunities, distributed throughout the settlement tiers. The available evidence indicates that the target figure is realistic.

#### *Viability*

- 5.4. During the course of Plan preparation and examination several iterations of an Affordable Housing Viability Study (AHVS) have been produced to inform the level of contribution sought from developers towards affordable housing. The latest version<sup>46</sup> was produced in response to matters raised at the relevant hearing session.
- 5.5. The Councils have suggested several changes to the Plan in response to additional work they have undertaken to identify means of maximising affordable housing delivery. To capture the differing capacity of the various sub markets to contribute to affordable housing, 3 levels of contribution have been suggested as a change to policy TAI 9 by **NMC214**, which range from 10% to 30%. The increase in the highest level of contribution from 20% to 30% will enable the potential of the most favourable market areas to be captured more fully. The reduction from 15% to 10% in the least favourable market areas is likely to avoid the discouraging effect that setting an unrealistic target may have on potential developers. Whilst some sub-market areas are shown to be unviable at 10% the Councils point out that some parts of these areas may be viable and thus justify inclusion in the lowest category of contribution. The settlements within each house price area are identified by contribution category in a revised table 16 (**NMC216**). **NMC215** makes it clear that pro-rata contributions will be sought where on-site provision of affordable housing

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<sup>45</sup> Submitted Document: DC.025

<sup>46</sup> Examination Document: Appendix 1 to Council’s Response to Action Point (S4/PG4)

cannot be achieved. These MACs are necessary to ensure that opportunities to maximise delivery of affordable housing and **NMC217** is recommended to ensure that the type of housing provided best meets the local need in accordance with national policy.

- 5.6. In recognition of the potential supply of small housing developments and the findings of the AHVS which showed that such schemes were no less viable than larger ones, the threshold at which contributions will be sought has been reduced to 2 dwellings or more (NMC214). Another change to TAI 9 reflects the requirements of policy TAI 19 that for conversion schemes in the open countryside that residential use provides 100% affordable housing unless it is part of a scheme where the residential use is subordinate to a business re-use.
- 5.7. As a consequence of these refinements to the Plan additional sources of affordable housing have been identified and a breakdown of the various sources is provided in a revised table in paragraph 7.4.65b (**NMC212**). This change is recommended to ensure that the Plan reflects the latest evidence on the anticipated delivery of affordable housing.
- 5.8. The Councils have confirmed that in allocating housing sites it has sought to avoid sites with abnormal development costs in order to facilitate site deliverability and, thereby, maximising the viability of schemes to contribute to affordable housing. The target figure is based upon a realistic assessment of the maximum contribution that can reasonably be expected to be delivered through the planning system. The delivery of the target will be assisted by the publication of its Affordable Housing SPG which is anticipated by quarter 3 of 2017-18. The monitoring framework contains appropriate devices to ensure that the effectiveness of the policies can be measured over the course of the plan period which will enable early intervention should it prove necessary to respond to changes in circumstances, such as an uplift in the local housing markets which could alter development viability.

#### *Exceptions Sites*

- 5.9. The version of the Policy TAI 10 presented for examination sought to adopt an innovative approach to maximising affordable housing opportunities by widening the scope of the exceptions sites policy to allow as many open market housing as is required to secure a scheme’s viability. This was discussed at the relevant hearing session and representatives of local registered social landlords explained the problems of financing exception site schemes. However, such an approach conflicts with national policy<sup>47</sup> and would undermine the principle of the exception sites approach which seeks to limit the influence that an identified development potential has on the value of land. Therefore, we consider that the Councils suggested change to the policy (**NMC221**) and the associated changes to the supporting text (**NMC222-NMC230**) are necessary.

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<sup>47</sup> Para 9.2.23 of PPW, and TAN 2: Planning and Affordable Housing

### *Conclusion*

- 5.10. Subject to the changes proposed, the level of affordable housing provision sought is supported by the evidence. The proposed changes to policy TAI 9 would ensure that the Plan will maximise the potential delivery of affordable housing but is sufficiently flexible to take into account viability considerations on specific schemes. We find the Plan’s approach to affordable housing, as refined by the proposed changes, sound.

### *Local Market Housing*

- 5.11. Policy TAI 5, as amended by NMC198, seeks to restrict new housing in specified settlements to local market housing and would operate alongside the affordable housing policies, TAI 9 and TAI 10. The policy is the Councils’ response to the particular housing pressures faced by the most popular tourist destinations, mainly coastal villages, where the effect of second and holiday home demand has had the greatest impact on local house prices. As a consequence a disproportionately high proportion of local residents cannot afford to compete in the open market and are forced to move out to find a suitable home, to the detriment of the social fabric of the community. The Councils have produced evidence to support the policy<sup>48</sup>.
- 5.12. The evidence includes consideration of examples of approaches undertaken elsewhere and a detailed assessment of a range of indicators of the local housing market and demographic characteristics, including empty school places. This work identified 3 Local Service Centres (Beaumaris, Rhosneigr and Abersoch) and 12 Villages where the pressures were greatest and thus they have been identified as falling within the scope of TAI 5. The evidence shows that in two Wards, Aberdaron and Abersoch the house price to income prices ratio was 12 to 1 compared to the Plan-wide figure of 6.1 to 1. Updated evidence<sup>49</sup> on the percentages of households priced out of the housing market shows figures of 59.7% and 63.3% for Gwynedd and Anglesey respectively, whereas these figure rises to 88.5% in Aberdaron and 96.1% in Abersoch. Whilst some objectors suggest that there may be a case for amending the list of identified settlements, we consider the Plan’s approach is soundly based in evidence.
- 5.13. The restriction on housing growth proposed by TAI 5 in these settlements is consistent with the Plan’s overall strategy, including in relation to the Welsh language and its approach to housing provision. The policy would provide opportunity for some local residents to find new housing in their communities, including existing home owners seeking larger homes for growing families, which in turn would assist in supporting services and facilities throughout the year and sustaining local communities. The policy would work alongside the affordable housing opportunities offered by the Plan for social rented and intermediate housing in the identified settlements. It would provide an opportunity for those local residents whose income means that they are not eligible for intermediate housing but who cannot compete within the locally

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<sup>48</sup> Submitted Documents: PT.028 & PT.029

<sup>49</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S2/PG8

inflated housing market. It may also present opportunities for new houses to meet local need without further open market housing that would otherwise be required to facilitate the provision of affordable housing.

- 5.14. In response to matters raised at the relevant hearing session the Councils have provided evidence<sup>50</sup> which shows that some lenders would be willing to offer a mortgage for this type of restricted housing, and identifies matters that need to be considered to facilitate this.
- 5.15. The policy would not restrict the market for the existing housing stock in these settlements, which is calculated to be 5,104 units. The Councils have also demonstrated that it would not affect the vast majority of the identified housing growth within these settlements over the plan period given the extent to which this growth is comprised of completed units and those with extant planning permission which together was estimated in April 2015 to represent 275 of the overall indicative growth level of 384<sup>51</sup>.
- 5.16. NMC351 proposes to elaborate on the definition of local market housing. However, it appears that in drafting the change existing text has been inadvertently deleted from the first sentence which the Councils may wish to address in the final version of the Plan.
- 5.17. We consider that the policy is supported by evidence that justifies its approach and thus broadly aligns with the advice in paragraph 9.2.4 of PPW. However, whereas PPW states that normally there would be no occupancy condition, the policy seeks to restrict occupancy to qualifying persons. The particular housing market pressures in the subject settlements means that there would be a significant financial incentive for qualifying persons to sell a new house on the open market. In this circumstance the effectiveness of the policy would be seriously undermined without a control over occupancy. The imposition of a restriction would, over time, secure a pool of local market housing that would be available to qualifying persons. Such a restriction would serve to provide a degree of insulation from the effects of house prices inflated by influences outside the area<sup>52</sup>. This, in combination with the intention to limit the floorspace of the new housing relative to the number of bedrooms, would mean that such housing would be more affordable to local residents than is currently the case.
- 5.18. We consider that the Councils have justified Policy TAI 5, subject to the changes proposed by **NMC198** to the policy and by **NMC199-NMC203** which are necessary to secure clarity and coherence. The Councils intend to provide SPG in support of this policy in Quarter 3 2017/18 (NMC343), which we consider important in ensuring an effective and consistent implementation of the policy, including matters relating to the control of future occupancy.

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<sup>50</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S2/PG8

<sup>51</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ Response to Action Point S2/PG8

<sup>52</sup> Examples of similar policies elsewhere suggest that house prices are some 20-30% below open market values (Submitted Document: PT.029)

### *Housing in Multiple Occupation*

- 5.19. At the relevant hearing session the Councils confirmed that policy TAI 2 was mainly aimed at addressing the pressures caused by houses in multiple occupation as a result of the demand from the student population in Bangor. Whilst the Councils acknowledge the positive effects that arise from the presence of students in the city, evidence is provided<sup>53</sup> of the potential negative effects of high concentrations of students within an area and the areas of highest density are identified. The Councils have proposed changes to the policy (**NMC182**) that would omit a criterion that sought to prevent HMOs within two storey terraced houses. They also introduce a specified upper limit density for HMOs within identified wards rather than referring to ‘an excessive concentration’. The proposed change to the policy and those proposed to supporting text (**NMC183-NMC187**) are recommended to reflect the evidence and ensure internal consistency with other policies.
- 5.20. Policy TAI 6 is generally supportive of new, purpose built student accommodation, and TAI 4 is supportive of the range of homes that provide care.
- 5.21. Proposed changes to policy, TAI 7: Replacement Dwellings and TAI 8: Residential Use of Caravans, Mobile Homes or Other Forms of Non-permanent Accommodation in **NMC204-NMC206** are recommended as they improve the clarity of the policies and the internal consistency of the Plan.

### *Construction Workers Accommodation*

- 5.22. The Councils propose changes to TAI 3: Campus Style Accommodation for Construction Workers. The changes clarify the scope of the policy and present a set of criteria that would ensure consistency with the Plan’s strategy, including in terms of the location of such developments and the mitigation measures that may be required. The policy would enable the Councils to respond to proposals for campus accommodation that is envisaged to serve construction workers on some of the large construction projects anticipated over the Plan period, other than in the case of Wylfa Newydd which is the subject of a specific policies, PS 9 and PS 9A. This suite of changes (**NMC188-NMC197**) is recommended to ensure clarity and internal consistency with other Plan policies.

## **6 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**

### *Level of Need*

- 6.1. Local authorities are required<sup>54</sup> to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller families, and to have policies for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in their development plans. Within the Plan area there is an established Gypsy and Traveller population which occupy some 11 pitches,

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<sup>53</sup> Submitted Document: PT.027

<sup>54</sup> Para 9.2.21, PPW

primarily located on 2 sites: an authorised site adjacent to the Llandygai Industrial Estate, Bangor, and a tolerated unauthorised roadside encampment on Pentraeth Road, near Pentraeth.

- 6.2. Since the preparation of the deposit Plan the Councils have produced the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA), 2016. This Study was formally submitted for Welsh Ministers’ approval in October 2016. In addition to collating data on the quantitative need through Census data and bi-annual counts, qualitative information was obtained by engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller communities and their representatives, including through structured interviews and providing support in completing survey questionnaires.
- 6.3. The GTANA identifies a level of need for a 5 year period and for the plan period. It identifies a level of unmet need of 10 Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the plan period. No need for sites for Travelling Showpeople has been identified.
- 6.4. The GTANA indicates that there is no demand in the Plan area for transit sites. It identifies a need for temporary stopping sites in response to demand that arises for Gypsies and Travellers to stay over-night or for a few days, for example as they pass through the area to and from Ireland, or are attracted to local gatherings as part of annual travelling patterns. The Councils considered identifying sites in 3 locations to meet this demand. However, following discussion at a hearing session, the Councils confirmed that they considered that the occasional, short-lived nature of the demand for stopping places did not warrant allocating sites in the Plan and explained how the demand for stopping places will be accommodated by continuing to apply the tolerated protocol and working with the travelling community. The Councils have suggested a change to the monitoring framework to ensure that the continued suitability of such arrangements is reviewed.

#### *Provision of Sites*

- 6.5. The Councils are aware of their duty under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to continue to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsy families and to meet any need that may be identified. NMC244 provides an undertaking to carry out a formal assessment of need every 5 years and NMC243 sets out a commitment to meet any future need that may arise.
- 6.6. TAI 11 seeks to safeguard the existing Gypsy site at Llandygai Industrial Estate, Bangor. **NMC238**, **NMC239** and **NMC251** are recommended to ensure terminology that is consistent with the remainder of the Plan and avoids ambiguity. Policy TAI 12 makes provision for new permanent pitches. The site at Bangor, which was allocated in a focussed change to the Deposit Plan, has been chosen to meet the identified need arising from the existing site which adjoins the allocated site on land that has historically been used for permanent pitches. A proposed change to the policy (**NMC240**) reduces the number of pitches from 11 to 10 pitches to align with the most up to date identified need, and this change is also made to the supporting text by **NMC233**. The site is well located to meet the identified need within an urban area which, despite its proximity to industrial units, can be designed to provide suitable living conditions and appears capable of meeting the present need without delay.

- 6.7. A suggested change to the Plan proposes to allocate land at Penhesgyn, Penmynydd for 4 pitches that would enable the relocation of New Age Travellers of the unauthorised encampment on Pentraeth Road, which the Councils advise provides sub-standard accommodation which cannot be improved to an acceptable standard. Despite the Councils efforts<sup>55</sup>, which has included considering several potential sites and the employment of an independent facilitator to engage with the site residents, it has proven difficult to identify a suitable site for this group.
- 6.8. Whilst the chosen location at Penhesgyn is not particularly well related to facilities and services in terms of pedestrian access, the site is within a reasonable proximity to two Local Service Centres. Circular 30/2007: *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* recognises that an over rigid application of policies that seek a reduction in car borne travel would not be appropriate. There are concerns regarding the site’s proximity to a former landfill site and an operational civic amenity site. Specialist consultants employed by the Councils advise that air quality and noise pollution would not unacceptably affect living conditions. These are matters that would be considered in detail at a planning application stage. Whilst noting that prospective residents have not confirmed a willingness to move to the site and that obtaining access to the site may require the use of compulsory purchase powers, there is a reasonable prospect that the site would be delivered. The site would offer the opportunity to secure the cessation of the sub-standard roadside site to meet an identified need. We consider that the allocation of the site and inclusion on the Proposals Map proposed by **NMC240** and **NMC MAP394** are soundly based.
- 6.9. Reflecting the provisions of Circular 30/2007, policy TAI 13 as amended by **NMC249** provides an effective framework for the assessment of proposals on non-allocated sites that would meet an identified need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The change also broadens the scope of the policy to include transit and temporary stopping sites. A change to criterion 2 ensures that it aligns with Circular 30/2007 in terms of proximity to services and the addition of criterion 10 reflects national policy on flood risk. Subject to this change and proposed changes to the reasoned justification, Policy TAI 13 would provide a sound basis for meeting future need for Gypsy and Traveller sites. **NMC250** is recommended because it confirms that policy TAI 13 extends to all transit and temporary stopping place pitches as well as permanent ones.
- 6.10. The Plan’s approach to meeting Gypsy and Travellers’ accommodation needs is based on credible evidence. Subject to the incorporation of the aforementioned changes it will include an effective suite of policies that will provide appropriate opportunities to meet future demand, consistent with national policy.

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<sup>55</sup> Submitted Documents: PT.030 & PT.031, and Examination Document: DA022

## **7 Economy and Employment, including Retail and Tourism**

### *Provision of Employment Land and Premises*

- 7.1. The Isle of Anglesey and the northern part of Gwynedd fall within the North West Wales area strategy set out within the WSP. The WSP identifies the North West area (Eryri a Môn) as being characterised by a high-quality natural and physical environment supporting a cultural and knowledge-based economy; the Menai hub as being made up of the region’s centres of population (Bangor and Caernarfon in Gwynedd and Llangefni in Anglesey), and the strategy highlights the importance of this area for driving forward the growth in North West Wales. Holyhead, Porthmadog and Pwllheli are identified as secondary hubs in the strategy that will underpin the spread of prosperity and sustainable growth from the principal hubs.
- 7.2. The Welsh Government has designated seven Enterprise Zones across Wales which are aimed at ‘supporting new and expanding businesses by providing a first class business infrastructure and compelling incentives’. One zone is located within the Plan area in Anglesey. The Councils acknowledge that the Enterprise Zone status in Anglesey complements the existing Energy Island Programme (EIP) which was set up to bring highly skilled jobs to the area, and establish the Island as a world renowned centre of excellence in low carbon energy generation. Whilst the recession and subsequent low growth has had an impact on the local economy of the Plan area, the Councils view the EIP as playing a major role in revitalising the area during the plan period. An example of this is the new Menai Science Park at Gaerwen which will focus on energy and clean technology with links to academic research with commercial expertise designed to create new jobs, attract new investment and support businesses growth.
- 7.3. The zone of influence of the EIP is expected to extend beyond the Island, particularly into the northern area of Gwynedd and neighbouring Conwy Borough, thus having a positive impact upon skilled employment and training opportunities, and encouraging further investment within these outlying catchment areas. The Councils have also confirmed that extensive dialogue has taken place with Snowdonia National Park Authority during the course of the Plan preparation process, specifically regarding the influence of the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone on the Plan area. The Snowdonia Enterprise Zone, which includes the former nuclear power station site at Trawsfynydd and the former airfield site at Llanbedr, has the potential to create new skilled job opportunities.

### *Employment Land Provision*

- 7.4. The primary evidence that informed the employment strategy and the amount of land to be designated over the life of the JLDP is contained within the Isle of Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council Economic and Employment Land Review Study 2012 (ELR). The ELR was undertaken to provide an assessment of the local economic prospects for the joint Anglesey and Gwynedd Area (excluding the Snowdonia National Park area) and the current and future provision of employment land to meet the needs of the area up to 2026.



- 7.5. The ELR is based upon a staged process for the identification of future employment land, including an analysis of market enquiries for land and premises, an assessment of historic floorspace trends, historic employment trends and future employment projections using econometric modelling. The ELR acknowledges that the recession has had a major detrimental impact on North West Wales, with Anglesey in particular seeing major job losses in manufacturing. In terms of Gwynedd, the ELR notes that the impact of public sector budget cuts and redundancies has had a significant negative impact on economic activity in the Authority area.
- 7.6. Based primarily on historic land take up rates and stakeholder consultation the ELR identifies that each Authority area should provide 6 hectares (ha) per annum (p.a.) of employment land over the Plan period, equating to 12ha p.a. of employment land being provided within the Plan area. This 12ha p.a. requirement includes a 50% buffer measure to provide an enhanced offer<sup>56</sup>. This provides for 180 ha of allocated employment land over the Plan period for each Authority area. The ELR also recommends that a 5-year supply of 30ha (which includes a 50% buffer) of genuinely deliverable land is provided that is immediately available.
- 7.7. Policy CYF 1: ‘Safeguarding, Allocating and Reserving Land and Units for Employment Use’ provides a framework for safeguarding and allocating employment land within the Plan area. The policy lists existing employment areas, which are designated as ‘safeguarded sites’ (land which has already been developed, as well as vacant land within the identified employment sites) throughout the Plan area amounting to 642.9ha. These have been identified due to their existing function and the valuable contribution they make to the overall provision of employment opportunities, and are divided into ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ sites across the Plan area. ‘Primary’ sites are those that are considered to be the most attractive and are most likely to be developed earlier in the Plan period, and ‘Secondary’ sites are those that are viewed as being within less desirable locations in terms of accessibility and market presence but continue to have a role in the EIP and meeting local demand in more rural areas. **NMC147** is recommended as it amends the total amount of land which is safeguarded (642.9ha) to comply with the revised schedule of sites listed within Policies CYF 1 and CYF 1A.
- 7.8. Five new employment sites, amounting to 55.1ha of land, are also allocated within Policy CYF 1, the majority of which are classed as ‘Strategic Regional Sites’, which are sites of regional importance with a critical regional role contributing to national economic development objectives. Land to the North of Lledwigan Farm, Llangefni is considered by the Councils as being a key employment site and a ‘strategic gateway’ to Bryn Cefni and Coleg Menai due to the new Llangefni Link Road currently being constructed. Land in the Creamery, Llangefni is considered by the Councils to have the potential to fulfil a number of purposes in support of the EIP. Given its proximity to the Gambia Cheese factory and the importance of the food sector in Llangefni, such as the creamery, meat wholesalers and the Food Technology Centre at Coleg Menai, the site could be suitable for the Welsh Government supported Food Park

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<sup>56</sup> Submitted Document: DC.004 - ELR Study, paragraph 6.10.1

building and the synergies this may offer. Land for the Menai Science Park, Gaerwen has already been granted planning permission and the first phase is currently under construction, and the Councils believe that this will act as a catalyst for future growth in the settlement. Additional land at Gaerwen Industrial Estate is also allocated due to its historical importance as an employment site on the Island. Due to extensive flooding issues in Porthmadog only a modest amount of land has been allocated (at Y Ffor) to cater for the employment land requirements of the town.

- 7.9. In addition to safeguarding existing sites and allocating new sites, the Plan seeks to allocate 144.1ha of land as ‘Reserve Employment Sites’ for demand arising specifically from the needs of Wylfa Newydd and/or EIP and Enterprise Island developments. The Councils are proposing changes to the wording of Policy CYF 1 through **NMC148** to amend the employment site schedule and to clarify when reserve sites will be released. Reserve sites will only be upgraded to Primary and Secondary employment sites and become available for development once sufficient justification on the need is provided. Proposals on such sites would need to be directly related to Wylfa Newydd and/or the EIP, and show that there is no other suitable safeguarded or allocated employment site available or that the supply is insufficient to meet the need.
- 7.10. In response to our concerns regarding the amount of land that is safeguarded, allocated and reserved, the Councils prepared additional information on the quantitative and qualitative justification for the total amount of land put forward within the Plan. Given the size, complexity and the influence of the Wylfa Newydd development and the commercial decisions that may be taken in relation to the EIP, the Councils acknowledge that it is not possible to predict with certainty the demand for land generated either from the projects themselves or from the supply chains that they may require. Similarly, opportunities identified by inward investors establishing operations to support the many energy-related projects remain difficult to predict. Faced with these uncertainties the Plan seeks to respond by ensuring that a wide choice of sites is available for a range of users with differing requirements. The Councils have developed the employment land strategy to ensure that no opportunities are missed; that provision is made in the most attractive and sustainable locations; opportunities are maintained for existing business to modernise and expand; and that there is flexibility, competition and choice.
- 7.11. It is clear that a key element of the JLDP is the development of an aspirational strategy based upon the Wylfa Newydd development and the EIP. The Wylfa Newydd project undoubtedly provides a unique and unprecedented opportunity to contribute to the socio-economic transformation of Anglesey and the wider North Wales Region. As such, the strategic objectives of the Plan aim to ensure that a network of employment sites and premises of a size and quality is safeguarded and allocated that best meet the needs of existing businesses and are able to support the growing sectors of the local economy. This would attract investment, and retain and increase the number of indigenous jobs and diversify the rural economy. It would also offer local employment opportunities for good quality jobs that are suitable for the local community, thus complying with the Plan’s Strategic Objectives SO9 and SO11.
- 7.12. We are satisfied that there is adequate provision for employment land and that the extent of overprovision has been justified by the local considerations.

Moreover, recent evidence produced by the Councils shows an increased level of enquiry from prospective investors reflective of the spatial distribution of employment land set out within Policy CYF 1. Planning activity and land take up has also increased on Anglesey since the 2012 ELR. For example, the commencement of development at Park Cybi and the re-use of Anglesey Aluminium at Holyhead; the implementation of consents at Penrhos and at Bryn Cefni, as well as high levels of churn on the sites; the commencement of construction of the Menai Science Park at Gaerwen; the implementation of consents at Mona; and some development and churn activity at Amlwch.

- 7.13. The Plan’s strategy is clearly aimed at contributing to economic development by performing a role as an important catalyst for development, by ensuring that a network of employment sites are safeguarded and allocated, and by setting out policies under which proposals for economic uses will be considered. This will provide a framework for increased opportunities for people of all ages to stay in the area thus sustaining rural and urban communities and, in turn, help to retain the younger working population to the benefit of the Welsh language.
- 7.14. Evidence submitted by the Councils to the Examination has studied the factors that influence the Welsh language in the Plan area and the implications these have on the local economy. The Corporate Research and Information Unit at Conwy County Borough Council was instructed by the Councils to explain and analyse the results of the 2008- and 2011-based population and household projections which are published by Welsh Government. With regard to Gwynedd, the study shows that there is a large peak in out-migration in the 20-24 age group, with high levels also amongst 15-19 and 25-29 year olds. The study goes on to state that it is this young adult age group which is also mostly likely to be economically and socially mobile, seeking not just education but work and other social opportunities outside the area<sup>57</sup>.
- 7.15. In terms of Anglesey, the study found that there is a big rise in out-migration in the 15-24 age group. There is limited higher education provision in Anglesey, therefore most young people wanting to go on to university or other higher education at age 18 have to leave the County. The study also found that this is the age group which is mostly likely to be economically and socially mobile, seeking work and other social opportunities outside the area. As a 10 year average, these age groups account for 30% of out-migrants from Anglesey<sup>58</sup>.
- 7.16. A sustainable economic base and the provision of business and employment opportunities are essential in order to create sustainable communities. A prosperous economy encourages people to remain in their communities and, in doing so, contribute to preserving the Welsh language.

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<sup>57</sup> Page 7, Explaining the difference between Welsh Government’s 2008- and 2011-based projections for Gwynedd, the Corporate Research and Information Unit at Conwy County Borough Council, July 2014 (Submitted document: DC.018)

<sup>58</sup> Page 6, Explaining the difference between Welsh Government’s 2008- and 2011-based projections for Gwynedd, the Corporate Research and Information Unit at Conwy County Borough Council, June 2014 (Submitted document: DC.018)

- 7.17. Although the quantum of employment land contained in Policy CYF 1 is significant, the provision is reasonable given the aspirational strategy of the Plan and is consistent with national planning policy by making an appropriate allowance for flexibility, competition and choice<sup>59</sup>, and ensures a varied supply of suitable sites<sup>60</sup>.
- 7.18. The Plan also aims to increase spin-off opportunities from the Menai Hub to Meirionnydd and Dwyfor in Gwynedd by the provision of small and medium scale mixed use B1, B2 and B8 sites, and the re-use of redundant buildings to meet local demand in locations such as Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Penrhyndeudraeth, Tywyn, Barmouth, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Nefyn. The Councils acknowledge that these areas are challenging in terms of creating employment opportunities and that a particular strategy in response to different circumstances is necessary for these areas of Gwynedd. This is especially pertinent following the completion of the first phase of the decommissioning process of the Trawsfynydd Power Station which, allied to public sector cuts, has been a setback for the region's economy.
- 7.19. Due to the rural nature of the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas, and the associated physical constraints such as topography and flooding in some of the main centres in the area, there are obvious limitations in finding land which is suitable for employment. Traditionally the demand in these areas has been for smaller units for craftspeople and light industry. The area is also popular in terms of the tourism sector which offers alternative employment opportunities for the area. Given these factors, the JLDP aims to provide employment land that is dispersed across Gwynedd and includes providing some prime employment sites which are more strategic in size, position and function as well as satisfying the indigenous need on existing employment sites, reusing existing buildings and agricultural diversification. We consider that this approach is sound and will ensure that the more rural areas of the Plan area continue to have the opportunity for growth over the plan period.
- 7.20. The safeguarded Porthmadog Business Park site is located within Zone C1 of the TAN 15 Development Advice Maps (DAMs). Zone C1 are areas of the floodplain which are developed and served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences. TAN 15 sets out a precautionary framework for flood risk which includes justification for development and the acceptability of potential flooding consequences. Commercial development is defined as less vulnerable development in terms of the justification test and the TAN says that development can only be justified in zone C if it can be demonstrated that its location is necessary to assist, or be part of, a local authority regeneration initiative or strategy required to sustain an existing settlement; or its location is necessary to contribute to key employment objectives supported by the LPA and other key partners, to sustain an existing settlement or region. Also, that it concurs with the aims of PPW and meets the definition of previously developed land.

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<sup>59</sup> TAN 23, paragraph 4.5.2

<sup>60</sup> PPW paragraph 7.2.1

- 7.21. TAN 15 also sets out that it should be demonstrated that the potential consequences of a flooding event for the particular type of development have been considered, and in terms of the criteria contained in sections 5 and 7 and Appendix 1, found to be acceptable<sup>61</sup>. The Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) for Porthmadog Business Park presented by the Councils includes an assessment of the site against these criteria and concludes that the site is shown to be outside the modelled fluvial flood extent during all events up to and including the 1 in 1000 annual probability event. The site is shown to be flood free during the defended tidal 1 in 200 annual probability event with climate change up to 2112. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has confirmed that given the limited flood risk to the site it would not oppose the retention of the site for employment use, and we have no reason to disagree with this conclusion.
- 7.22. The Councils have not prepared a FCA for the industrial site at Adwy’r Hafan, Pwllheli and NRW has objected to its inclusion as safeguarded industrial land even though it benefits from planning permission for the development of a hotel. As a result of further discussions with NRW, the Councils propose to delete reference to the site within Policy CYF 1, and include a new policy (CYF1 A) and explanatory paragraph dedicated to future development proposals on the Adwy’r Hafan Industrial Estate through **NMC154** and **NMC155**. The resulting changes to the Proposals Map are made through **NMC MAP362**. It is clear that this employment site plays a very important economic role for the town and the surrounding areas, and we recognise the need to protect it to sustain the surrounding community and to ensure that it continues to provide employment opportunities into the future. This new bespoke policy is an interim response to address the flooding issue on the site whilst also meeting a very particular need, and is necessary to ensure consistency with the overall strategy of the Plan.
- 7.23. With regard to the proposed safeguarded site at Griffin Industrial Estate, Penrhyndeudraeth, the Councils propose to remove that part of the Industrial Estate which is located within the C2 flood zone from the Proposals Map through **NMC MAP367** following discussions with NRW. This will give rise to consequential changes to other elements of the Plan, including details of the site area within Policy CYF 1 and a reduction in the total amount of safeguarded land referenced within criterion 1 of Policy PS 10. We consider this change to be necessary given the conflict with national planning policy contained within TAN 15. The Councils position is that a planning permission granted on the site has lapsed. Whilst this is disputed by an objector the planning status of the site does not alter our findings that the proposed deletion of part of this allocation is necessary, in line with national policy on flooding.
- 7.24. In terms of the ability of the employment sites listed in CYF 1 to come forward for development within the Plan period, the Councils have provided information on the infrastructure requirements and funding mechanisms currently being sought for many of the sites that will aid delivery. The Welsh Government has already made significant investment in the Plan area through the Welsh Government programme Vibrant & Viable Places, by installing roads and other

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<sup>61</sup> TAN15, paragraph 6.2

services on employment sites such as Parc Cybi, Holyhead to make the sites more attractive to potential investors and employers to occupy. A suite of finance packages may also become available as part of the Enterprise Zone designation which will also assist in kick starting development. However, it is clear that the rate at which sites will come forward will depend on the state of the economy and on the delivery of the Wylfa Newydd development and the success of the EIP. The monitoring framework contains provisions that will enable progress to be tracked and appropriate responses to be made as may be required.

- 7.25. Representations to the Examination have raised issue with the amount of the best and most versatile agricultural land that is allocated in Llangefni as such land is protected by national policy<sup>62</sup>. At the hearing the Councils confirmed that the quality of agricultural land was a consideration taken into account in allocating land for development. However, there was no land of lower agricultural quality that was deemed to be suitable for allocation in the surrounding area.
- 7.26. The Councils propose a number of other changes to Policy CYF 1, the explanatory text (**NMC149–NMC153**) and the proposals map (**NMC MAP359, NMC MAP360, NMC MAP366, NMC MAP368, NMC MAP392**). These changes provide additional information on the ELR and the supply of employment land; correct the amount of vacant land available in Bae Hirael, Bangor; provide a link to Policy GWA 1: ‘Provision of Waste Management and Recycling Infrastructure’; remove repetition within the table; clarify the amount of employment land being safeguarded and allocated in Gaerwen; delete the reference made to ‘vacant land’ within Policy CYF 1 as the amount of vacant land is likely to change during the Plan period; delete certain other paragraphs to aid clarity and avoid repetition; and ensure the correct spatial identification of the allocated sites. We consider the proposed changes to be necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the Plan.
- 7.27. Those sites listed within Policy CYF 1 are protected for employment/business use. However, Policy CYF 2 ‘Ancillary Uses on Employment Sites’ seeks, in exceptional circumstances, to allow uses, such as cafes and crèches, that complement the primary use of the employment site and that are appropriate in meeting the needs of the site and those that travel to work there.
- 7.28. The Plan makes specific provision to cater for large scale companies who may find that the safeguarded and allocated sites are not suitable for their needs. Policy CYF 3: ‘New Large Scale Single User Industrial or Business on Sites Not Safeguarded or Allocated for Employment Purposes’ is aimed at supporting new large scale proposals where they are located in appropriate sustainable locations. We consider that this conforms to the Plan’s strategy of contributing towards economic development and acting as an important catalyst for development by ensuring that the Plan is sufficiently flexible to respond to such employment opportunities.

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<sup>62</sup> PPW Paragraph 4.10.1

- 7.29. Policy CYF 4: ‘Alternative Uses of Existing Employment Sites’ seeks to ensure that the employment sites or plots within them are not lost to other uses unless there is a clear justification for accepting an alternative use. The Councils acknowledge that some of the safeguarded sites within the Plan may become dormant during the Plan period and an alternative use may, therefore, be sought on the site. As such, the Councils propose that policy CYF 4 is amended through **NMC156** to clarify that the policy only relates to existing safeguarded employment sites and to clarify that proposals would only have to comply with one or more of the policy criterion. These changes, along with those put forward by **NMC157-NMC159** to the explanatory text, are necessary to ensure that the Plan is sufficiently clear and flexible.
- 7.30. Policy CYF 5: ‘Reuse and Conversion of Rural Buildings, Use of Residential Properties or New Build Units for Business / Industrial Use’ reflects the rural nature of the Plan area by allowing more opportunities for home working or new start-up businesses in rural communities. Policies CYF 6: ‘Regeneration Sites’ and CYF 7: ‘Holyhead Regeneration Area’ seek to ensure that urban renewal sites, and the redevelopment of redundant land within urban areas is facilitated. The Plan also aims to build on Holyhead’s locational advantages and its role as an international port by encouraging regeneration and employment growth within the town. Taken together, these policies reflect the diverse nature of the Plan area whilst also maximising new job opportunities and economic growth within Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- 7.31. Subject to the foregoing, we find the employment strategy and land provision in the Plan sound and no other allocations are required to make the Plan sound.

*Wylfa Newydd*

- 7.32. The proposed Wylfa Newydd scheme is at the heart of the transformational change to the local economy which forms a critical feature of the Plan’s strategy. As the scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project its consenting regime is provided by the Planning Act 2008. An application is anticipated to be submitted by the developer (Horizon Nuclear Power Wylfa Limited) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) towards the end of 2017 and will be determined by a Secretary of State in the UK Government. The introduction of the Wales Act 2017 has the effect of ensuring that associated development to the power station project can be included within a DCO application. To reflect this change to the statutory provisions the Councils have proposed numerous changes to the Plan.
- 7.33. The policy framework for determining the DCO application is set out in National Policy Statements (NPS), including NPS EN-1 for Energy and EN-6 for Nuclear Power Generation. The JLDP will be used to inform the Council’s Local Impact Report (LIR) which forms part of the DCO process and may be a material consideration in the determination of a DCO application. However, for such an application the Plan would not have the status which is afforded to it for applications determined under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990. To reflect this situation more accurately the Councils have proposed a series of changes to the Plan. These changes are necessary to ensure that the Plan does not wrongly imply that its status is elevated above that which the 2008 Act provides.

- 7.34. Given the importance of the Wylfa Newydd project to the Plan’s strategy it is necessary that the Plan provides a sufficiently supportive and flexible policy framework against which to consider future proposals. Whilst respecting the national significance of the project, it is also appropriate that the Plan identifies a framework of local considerations. For these reasons the Plan’s approach has been the subject of two hearing sessions, the first of which led to the Councils’ initial proposed changes which were refined at the second hearing session. The changes provide a bespoke framework against which to consider proposals that are connected to the project whilst ensuring consistency with the Plan’s strategy. Such policies would form the basis for determining those applications that fall to be considered under the TCPA regime, and would inform the Councils LIR in those cases where the development would form part of the DCO. MACs have been introduced to distinguish between developments considered under the two regimes by referring to the former development as ‘related’ and the latter as ‘associated’.
- 7.35. Proposed changes to Policy TRA 1, supporting text and the Proposals Map (**NMC68 -NMC71**) make specific reference to transport infrastructure improvements that are required to facilitate the project and are recommended to ensure that the Plan facilitates the delivery of necessary infrastructure.
- 7.36. Horizon confirmed at the final hearing session that it anticipates that, other than certain road improvements, most of the other development required to facilitate the delivery of the new nuclear power station would be included in the DCO application. However, it confirmed that it could not discount the possibility that there may be need to submit subsequent applications under the TCPA regime, not least in response to unforeseen changes which may require new sites to be brought forward for related development.
- 7.37. The Councils have presented a series of MACs to deal with Wylfa Newydd which include the introduction of 3 detailed policies (PS 9A, PS 9B and PS 9C) which are intended to complement the more general policy, PS 9. These policies set out specific criteria that will apply in relation to campus style temporary accommodation for construction workers, logistic centres and park and ride facilities. The Councils have confirmed an intention to produce a Wylfa Newydd SPG in Quarter 3 of 2017/18 (NMC343 refers) which will provide additional detail and will replace existing guidance.
- 7.38. The proposed suite of policies provides direction for the decision maker in relation to applications under the 1990 Act and will inform decisions on DCO applications. They provide sufficient flexibility to enable decisions to be made in the light of the particular circumstances at that time. Taken together the changes that are proposed (**NMC22, NMC28, NMC68, NMC70, NMC71, NMC125-NMC145, NMC188, NMC189, NMC397** and **NMC400**) are necessary in order to ensure that the Plan accurately reflects its different roles under the national and local planning regimes, and provides clarity on the local priorities that will influence decision making on the various aspects of the project, including means of minimising any harmful effects and capturing potential benefits.
- 7.39. Policy PS 8 provides a framework for responding to any NSIP projects, other than Wylfa Newydd, that may come forward. **NMC130** clarifies the inter-



relationship of its criteria and deletes a superfluous criterion and is recommended to ensure that the policy is coherent and effective.

### *Retail*

- 7.40. A Strategic objective of the Plan (SO12) is to promote vital and vibrant town centres in Amlwch, Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Holyhead, Caernarfon, Llangefni, Porthmadog and Pwllheli, that have either maintained or rediscovered their purpose as centres for work and services, and that are vibrant and attractive places for residents and visitors.
- 7.41. National policy requires LDPs to establish a hierarchy of retail centres and identify those which fulfil specialist functions and be clear about their future roles<sup>63</sup>. The retail hierarchy put forward within the Plan identifies three levels of retail centre; Sub-regional Retail Centre (Bangor); Urban Retail Centres (Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Holyhead and Llangefni); and a number of Local Retail Centres. Although the hierarchy of retail centres differs to the Plan’s housing settlement hierarchy, it is clear that the retail centres perform a different role and function of meeting the day to day needs of the local community as well as the specific demands within their respective catchment areas. We are satisfied that the Plan’s retail hierarchy is supported by a robust evidence base set out within the Gwynedd and Anglesey Retail Study<sup>64</sup>.
- 7.42. The JLDP spatial strategy sets out the vision for the retail function within the main settlements. The Plan recognises that supporting strong and vibrant retail centres is important to ensure the future vitality of the retail centres and their surrounding communities. The strategy, therefore, seeks to safeguard existing retail uses and protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, as set out in Policy PS 12: ‘Town Centre and Retail Developments’.
- 7.43. The Retail Study analysed existing expenditure flows for various goods type to stores and centres within and beyond the Plan area and assessed each of the larger retail centres (Bangor and those within the Urban Retail Centres) to ascertain how well each meets these demands within the region’s retail hierarchy. The need for additional floorspace requirements to meet the demand was quantified throughout the plan period, and Policy PS 12 and the supporting paragraphs identify a need for some 372m<sup>2</sup> net convenience goods floorspace within Caernarfon and Pwllheli over the plan period and some 9,353m<sup>2</sup> net comparison goods floorspace within Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Llangefni over the Plan period. The level of identified need was not challenged at the hearings and we have no reason to dispute the findings of the retail study. However, the changes put forward by **NMC165-NMC167** are necessary to confirm that the figures are indicative net figures and not total gross figures, and to provide further clarity to the policy, especially with regard to the phasing of the need within the identified settlements throughout the Plan period.

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<sup>63</sup> PPW paragraph 10.2.3

<sup>64</sup> Gwynedd and Anglesey Retail Study, prepared by Applied Planning, Volume 1 2012 and Volume 3 2013 (Submitted Document: DC.006)

- 7.44. In response to the lack of allocated land to cater for the identified need for comparison goods floorspace, the Councils have confirmed that due to the lack of sites identified as being available or likely to be available within the relevant settlements, a criteria based policy would facilitate development to address the need on suitable sites in line with national policy. The Councils also raised concern that allocating specific sites could be counter-productive if those sites were not deemed suitable by the retail market and operators, and could inhibit development being proposed on another site which might be consistent with the Plan’s policies and national policy.
- 7.45. Following discussions at the Examination regarding the implications of Wylfa Newydd on retailing in Anglesey, and given that the retail study was undertaken prior to the latest details of the Wylfa Newydd project being known, the Councils undertook a review of the retail demands over the Plan period. The review notes that around 1,000 permanent (operational) workers will be employed at the Wylfa Newydd development are expected to be in post towards the end of the Plan period. The majority of the construction workforce will essentially be transient with many returning home at the end of their shift patterns. As a result, the spending habits of this population will be different to the resident population and it may be expected that retail expenditure will be on convenience goods rather than comparison goods, and much of the needs of the construction workers will be met by on-site canteens and small temporary convenience facilities providing for day-to-day essentials. These goods will be sourced from a variety of sources including existing local convenience stores.
- 7.46. The review also highlights that most of the permanent demand associated with the Wylfa Newydd project for both convenience and comparison goods will be focused on Holyhead which was identified in the Retail Study as being underperforming in both categories. Whilst this new expenditure will help the overall health of retailing in the town it does not justify any additional floorspace. The review confirms that there is unlikely to be sufficient permanent demand post-construction of Wylfa Newydd to justify wholly new facilities. The monitoring strategy of the Plan will continue to review the situation through the Plan period and this will enable the Councils to react to any unexpected changes on patterns of demand.
- 7.47. Having regard to the up-to-date evidence provided by the Councils including the review of the implications of Wylfa Newydd on the demand for retailing on Anglesey<sup>65</sup> we consider the approach within Policy PS 12 to the quantitative and qualitative provision for both convenience and comparison goods over the Plan period to be soundly based.
- 7.48. The Plan identifies variety and activity as the essential elements of the continued viability of the retail centres. The Plan identifies the boundaries of town centre boundaries and seeks to ensure their continued vitality by protecting the existing retail uses. Policy MAN 1: ‘Proposed Town Centre Developments’ and Policy MAN 2: ‘Primary Retail Areas (Retail Cores)’ seek to prevent the loss of existing retail units, whilst also making sure that any new proposals do not have a detrimental impact on the attractiveness and viability

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<sup>65</sup> Examination Document: Councils’ response to Action Point 6 (S5/PG6)

of the area. Changes put forward by **NMC168** and **NMC169** are considered necessary to provide further clarification on the protection afforded to retail uses within town centres, and to change the reference to Urban ‘Retail’ Centres rather than Urban ‘Regional’ Centres in the supporting paragraphs.

- 7.49. As part of the additional work undertaken by the Councils following the hearings, the town centre boundary of Bangor is proposed to be changed by **NMC MAP358** to include: the Aldi supermarket which was granted permission on the basis that it was in an appropriate edge of town centre location; the Menai multi-storey car park; and land to the rear of the former Debenhams store on the High Street. The Councils consider that this change will be consistent with the principles behind the identification of town centre boundaries in the Plan and would increase the potential for suitable retail sites to come forward.
- 7.50. In response to representations made to the Examination regarding the extent of the town centre boundaries shown on the proposals maps for Abersoch, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Beaumaris, the Councils undertook, at our request, a review of all defined town centre boundaries.
- 7.51. With regard to Beaumaris, the Councils consider that the properties opposite Beaumaris Market Square do form part of the retail/commercial area of the town, and that two retail premises on Castle Street should also be included within the town centre boundary. On this basis the Councils propose to change the town centre boundary for Beaumaris through **NMC MAP365**. Having considered the evidence, we conclude that these changes are necessary as the amended boundary would better reflect the true extent of the retail centre. No other town centre boundaries were amended following the review.
- 7.52. Policy MAN 3: ‘Retailing Outside Defined Town Centres but within Development Boundaries’ seeks to protect retail outlets and shops outside defined town centre boundaries, and to promote new facilities in such locations provided they do not jeopardise the vitality and viability of existing town centres. The Councils propose changes to the policy and explanatory paragraphs, which improve the effectiveness of the policy, especially in terms of the sequential test, and ensure compliance with national policy on the need to submit Retail Impact Assessments. Subject to these changes (**NMC170–NMC172**) we consider this policy to be sound.
- 7.53. Policies MAN 4: ‘Safeguarding Village Shops and Pubs’, MAN 5: ‘New Retailing in Villages’ and MAN 6: ‘Retailing in the Countryside’ protect and enhance retail opportunities within rural communities, whilst also providing important additional job opportunities within these rural locations. Policy MAN 7 identifies criteria against which to assess hot food take-away use. We consider these policies conform to the overall strategy of the Plan by promoting economic activity.
- 7.54. The Plan’s retail policies are soundly based and together afford flexibility to respond to retail development proposals during the plan period in a way which maintains the strength of the retail centres, whilst allowing consideration in appropriate circumstances for retail development outside defined town centres but within development boundaries. Overall, the retail policies and provisions of the Plan are based on robust and up-to-date evidence, identify an

appropriate retail hierarchy and provide an appropriate framework for the determination of retail proposals to ensure the protection and enhancement of the vitality and viability of the retail centres whilst also supporting rural communities.

### *Tourism*

- 7.55. The Plan recognises the importance of the visitor economy with a focus on providing a strong and diverse year-round industry in a quality landscape and environment. The strategic objective of the Plan for tourism (SO13) is to manage the area as an attractive and sustainable destination for tourists by providing facilities of a high standard that meet modern-day needs and offer benefits throughout the year.
- 7.56. Although there are high levels of employment in the visitor economy within the more urban settlements of the Plan area, some rural areas are particularly dependent on the sector as it plays a large role in local economies and communities, enhancing the provision of facilities and amenities that are used by residents as well as visitors. National policy encourages the diversification of the rural economy to provide local employment opportunities and increase local economic prosperity<sup>66</sup>.
- 7.57. In this context, Policy PS 11: ‘The Visitor Economy’ allows development related to the visitor economy within sustainable locations, focussing larger scale developments that contribute to the diversity and quality of accommodation and attractions to the sub-regional centre, urban service centres and, where appropriate, to local service centres. To ensure internal consistency of terminology within the Plan, NMC401 corrects the reference to ‘rural’ service centres by replacing it with ‘local’.
- 7.58. Policies TWR 1 and TWR 2 encourage the development of improved visitor attractions, facilities and high quality holiday accommodation in appropriate and sustainable locations. Changes are proposed by the Councils to Policy TWR1 and the supporting explanation through **NMC160 – NMC162** to provide further clarification on the scope of the policy. We consider these changes to be necessary to reflect national policy and in order to make the policies sound. Supporting paragraph 7.3.59 to the policy highlights the concerns about the oversupply of self-serviced accommodation in some parts of the Plan area, and that future applicants would need to demonstrate viability through a detailed business plan before planning permission for new proposals is given. The amended text in **NMC163** makes clear the public interest considerations that will be relevant in implementing the policy.
- 7.59. Caravan and camping sites provide a significant proportion of the available accommodation for the visitor to the Plan area. However, within certain parts of the Plan area developments are visually intrusive due to the concentration of caravan, chalet and cabin accommodation. This cumulative effect has a detrimental impact on the quality of some parts of the coastal environment and landscape in particular, including within the Anglesey Coast and Llŷn Areas of

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<sup>66</sup> TAN6 paragraph 3.1.2

Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). As such, Policy TWR 3 applies different criteria to proposals for new or extended static caravan and chalet sites and permanent camping accommodation according to whether they are within or outside the AONB and the SLAs. In exceptional circumstances the policy allows the relocation of an existing static or chalet site within an AONB or a SLA to another site provided they meet certain criteria and are located outside the Coastal Change Management Area. The policy also provides for improvements and minor extensions to be made to existing static caravan, chalet and permanent alternative camping sites within or outside an AONB or SLA subject to satisfying specified criteria. Minor increases in the number of units on sites outside an AONB or SLA will also be allowed.

- 7.60. Notwithstanding the economic benefit that such development can bring the extent of the restrictive approach of Policy TWR3 to additional developments of this nature is justified in the interest of protecting the landscape which, in itself, is an important asset for the local tourist industry. This balanced approach is consistent with national policy<sup>67</sup>. However, following representations made to the Examination a change is needed to the explanatory text through **NMC164** to provide greater flexibility and further clarification with regard to the definition of ‘minor’ in terms of the extension of sites and increase in the number of units. This change would make upgrading existing sites a more attractive proposition to existing operators and would be in line with the Plan’s objectives and national planning policy<sup>68</sup>.
- 7.61. As stated above, tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy of the Plan area. As such, the Councils are seeking to extend the holiday season through TWR 4: ‘Holiday Occupancy’ by allowing year round holiday occupancy in appropriate locations. The Plan also recognises, through Policy TWR 5: ‘Touring Caravan, Camping and Temporary Camping Accommodation’, the contribution that touring caravans, traditional camping and alternative forms of camping holiday accommodation, such as pods and yurts, make to the tourism industry, whilst also attempting to protect the landscape.
- 7.62. Taken together the policies for tourism development are clear, reasonable and appropriate.

## **8 Minerals and Waste**

### *Minerals*

- 8.1. The Plan area has significant mineral resources, including slate, igneous rock, sandstone, sand and gravel, and metalliferous deposits. The Plan seeks to ensure an adequate provision of mineral reserves in line with the apportionment set out in the Regional Technical Statement 1<sup>st</sup> Review, 2014.

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<sup>67</sup> PPW paragraph 11.1.6

<sup>68</sup> TAN13 paragraph 14

- 8.2. Policy PS 19: Minerals sets out the Plan’s approach, including the safeguarding reserves and striking a balance between mineral working and environmental interests. **NMC297** makes it clear that the commitment to provide an adequate land bank should be for a minimum of the stated periods and should include the provision of higher quality aggregates. A proposed change to the monitoring framework would ensure that there are triggers that would enable the early identification of a potential shortfall in the land banks, to enable timely intervention to secure adequate provision throughout the lifetime of the Plan. **NMC298** is required to ensure clarity and effectiveness of policy MWYN 1 in line with national policy.
- 8.3. **NMC305** clarifies the approach in Policy MWYN 2: Preferred Areas which aligns with national policy, and other changes (**NMC306** and **NMC307**) ensure a consistent use of this terminology in the supporting text. Given the evidence available to the Councils in terms of identifying mineral resources, the approach taken of identifying preferred areas based on an understanding of the commercial potential of the resource and where planning permission might reasonably be anticipated, accords with national policy<sup>69</sup>.
- 8.4. As the Preferred and Safeguarded Areas are designated by the Plan **NMC MAP399** includes them on the Proposals rather than the Constraints Map, in line with national policy. Changes are also proposed to acknowledge this change in the text of certain policies and supporting text.
- 8.5. NMC 308 confirms that the scope of MWYN 4 includes new mineral working and NMC 309 and NMC 310 update national policy references. To ensure consistency with national policy **NMC311** proposes to delete reference to ‘notional buffer zones’ from Policy MWYN 6.
- 8.6. Other policies on this topic - MWYN 5, MWYN 7, MWYN 8, MWYN 9 and MWYN 10 - deal with various aspects of mineral working: the supply of local building stone; the effect of buffer zones; the safeguarding of railhead and wharf facilities; exploration works; borrow pits; and restoration and after care. A change (NMC312) to the explanatory text to MWYN 9 makes clear that borrow pits would be subject to the restoration and aftercare requirements set out in MWYN 10. The suite of detailed minerals policies add detail to the requirements set out in PS 19 and aid the Plan’s clarity and effectiveness.
- 8.7. Subject to the identified changes the Plan provides a clear and appropriate framework for minerals development which aligns with national policy.

#### *Waste*

- 8.8. Topic Paper 12: Waste records the Councils’ approach to waste matters including the national and regional policy context, and the partnership working projects that are being pursued with other Councils and organisations. Policy PS 18: Waste Management sets out the Plan’s approach and provides a commitment to providing adequate waste management facilities in a manner consistent with the waste hierarchy. Policy GWA 1 identifies those sites

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<sup>69</sup> PPW, paragraph 14.7.10

allocated for employment use (Policy CYF 1) which are deemed potentially suitable for waste management and recycling facilities, and acknowledges the potential additional capacity available on existing industrial or brownfield sites. To reflect the advice in TAN 21: Waste, **NMC290** identifies sites that are suitable as urban quarries. For the same reason **NMC290-NMC292** introduce references to a Waste Planning Agreement.

- 8.9. As originally drafted Policy GWA 2 was permissive of waste management schemes on land not allocated by GWA 1 provided it was outside development boundaries. As there was no basis for favouring sites that lie outside development boundaries, the Councils have proposed **NMC292**, which is necessary to ensure that the Plan will facilitate the development waste management schemes on all potentially suitable sites. The change also introduces other considerations that would be taken into account in determining the acceptability of a planning application. Changes proposed by **NMC293** ensure that matters relating to biodiversity and landscape interests are dealt with in a way that is consistent with other parts of the Plan and national policy.
- 8.10. Proposed changes to Policy GWA 3: Radioactive Waste Management (**NMC294–NMC296**) provide greater internal consistency and clarity, as well as confining the scope of the policy to the Wylfa/Wylfa Newydd licenced area. The changes ensure that the policy aligns with the National Radioactive Waste Strategy.
- 8.11. Subject to the inclusion of these changes, the Plan’s approach to waste matters is soundly based.

## 9 Climate Change and Renewable Energy

- 9.1. Chapter 7.2 of the JLDP contains a suite of policies aimed at promoting sustainable patterns of development, good standards of design and alleviating climate change. The Plan requires all new development to make the best use of development land through Policies PS 5: ‘Sustainable Development’ and PCYFF 1: ‘Development Criteria’. These policies also encourage, amongst other things, appropriate redevelopment of land and buildings and the use of previously developed land within development boundaries, whilst also supporting communities and promoting and protecting the Welsh language. In addition, the policies advocate that development should make the most efficient use of land by achieving minimum dwelling densities of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) where this is compatible with site constraints. Policy PS 6: ‘Alleviating and Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change’ seeks to ensure that development proposals reduce energy demand and promote energy saving technologies.
- 9.2. The aim of these policies reflect the sustainability objectives of national policy which seek to promote resource-efficient and climate change resilient settlement patterns that minimise land-take, especially through preference for previously-developed land and buildings, wherever possible avoiding development on greenfield sites<sup>70</sup>. The Councils propose changes to the

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<sup>70</sup> PPW, paragraph 4.4.3

wording of Policies PS 5 and PS 6, (**NMC81** and **NMC82**) to aid clarity and to avoid repetition with other policies in the Plan (in particular PCYFF 1 and PCYFF 4). Changes are also proposed to Policy PCYFF 1 through **NMC87** to avoid repetition with the new policy on ‘Development Boundaries’ (NMC83) and with other policies in the Plan (in particular Policies PCYFF 2, TRA 4 and PS 6). These changes are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the Plan.

- 9.3. PPW promotes good design as a way of achieving sustainable development and ensuring that development contributes to tackling the causes of climate change. In line with national policy, the Plan seeks to ensure that all development is able to adapt to the likely effects of climate change. It acknowledges that responding to this challenge will have significant implications on the way buildings are designed and constructed as well as how they are heated and lit, and in respect of their location and orientation.
- 9.4. Policy PCYFF 2: ‘Design and Place Shaping’ requires development proposals to complement and enhance the character and appearance of a site, respect its context and allow access for all through inclusive design. Policy PCYFF 3: ‘Design and Landscaping’ ensures that both soft and hard landscaping is designed into development. These policies are consistent with national policy and provide an effective basis for assessing the design and layout of development, subject to the changes proposed by the Councils through **NMC88** and **NMC89** which ensure internal consistency of the Plan and avoid repetition with other policies.
- 9.5. In response to representations made in relation to Policy PCYFF 4: ‘Carbon Management’ the Councils propose a complete revision to the policy through **NMC90** and to the supporting explanatory paragraphs through **NMC91-NMC93**. These changes are necessary to ensure that the policy provides appropriate detail as to the supporting information required at the planning application stage.
- 9.6. In line with TAN 15<sup>71</sup> Policy PCYFF 5: ‘Water Conservation’ provides an effective policy for seeking to encourage the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems within development where practicable, and to mitigate any changes to natural surface water run-off and ground permeability caused by new development.
- 9.7. Policy ARNA 1 sets out criteria for development within a Coastal Change Management Area (which are listed in Appendix 6 of the Plan). The proposed changes (**NMC124**) to the Plan clarify its approach to flood risk thereby aligning with national policy.

#### *Renewable Energy*

- 9.8. The WSP recognises the importance of the energy sector, including renewable energy, to the area’s future. The Plan recognises the emphasis placed on increasing renewable energy generation by both UK and Welsh Governments and the role that the Plan area has in this respect. At a local level The Anglesey

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<sup>71</sup> TAN 15: ‘Development and Flood Risk’ paragraphs 8.1, 8.2 and 8.5.



Energy Island Programme and the Green Gwynedd Project seek to realise the potential arising from energy projects including from renewable sources.

- 9.9. Policy PS 7 seeks to ensure that the Plan area’s potential as a leading area for renewable and low carbon technologies is promoted. Proposed change **NMC100** is recommended to ensure that its criteria are consistent with policy PS 16. To ensure that its detailed policies are more closely aligned with the ambition of PS 7 the Councils have sought to refine the Plan’s approach to this topic during the examination process in light of additional evidence<sup>72</sup>. In line with latest Welsh Government advice<sup>73</sup> it has explored the potential capacity of the Plan area to further contribute to renewable energy production, specifically in relation to wind and solar power generation. This work built on earlier work that had studied landscape capacity and the potential for renewable energy developments<sup>74</sup>. It considered the potential of the area to accommodate new county scale developments (5MW or more in size), in the context of a range of technical and environmental constraints. This work was completed shortly before the matter was considered at a hearing session.
- 9.10. In relation to wind turbines it concluded that taking into account constraints including landscape character and proximity to nationally designated landscapes and the capacity constraints within the local electricity grid that there were no opportunities for wind turbine clusters. MACs are proposed to ensure the clarity of policy ADN 1 and to ensure that, in line with national policy, it is not unduly restrictive in relation to the setting of local landscape designations (**NMC101-NMC104**). Other proposed changes (**NMC105-NMC109**) ensure the effectiveness of the policy and ensure alignment with national policy in relation to community benefits.
- 9.11. The additional evidence presented by the Councils identifies a potential for solar pv arrays of 5MW or more within the Plan area. In line with the Welsh Government toolkit in terms of focussing on county scale projects, 11 potential Opportunity Areas which could accommodate at least one 5MW scheme have been identified. As a consequence the Councils have suggested a new policy (ADN 1A) and supporting text that would deal specifically with solar pv farms, including identifying the 11 opportunity areas. These changes would improve the Plan’s coherence and its alignment with national policy (**NMC110-NMC114**). It follows that the associated changes to the Proposals Map introduced by **NMC MAP361**, **NMC MAP369**, **NMC MAP389**, **NMC MAP393**, **NMC MAP395**, and **NMC MAP396** which identify the spatial extent of the opportunity areas are also necessary.
- 9.12. There is local concern, partly in response to schemes that have already been developed, in particular wind turbines, that the character of some of the area’s valued landscapes would be unacceptably damaged by renewable energy projects. The criteria of the specific policies provide appropriate safeguards, including affording suitable protection to nationally designated landscapes of

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<sup>72</sup> Examination Documents: DA020, DA020a, DA020b, DA020c, DA020ch

<sup>73</sup> Practice Guidance: Planning for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy – A toolkit for Planners’ (Sept 2015)

<sup>74</sup> Submitted Documents:DC.012, DC.013 & DC.020

the National Park and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their setting and to the locally designated Special Landscape Areas. Subject to the proposed changes we find that the Plan’s approach is robustly supported by the Councils’ evidence base. The Plan strikes an appropriate balance between serving the wider public interest by facilitating the generation of renewable energy and protecting local visual and amenity interests<sup>75</sup>.

- 9.13. Changes proposed to policy ADN 2 and supporting text (**NMC115-NMC123**), which deals with other renewable energy and low carbon technologies, are necessary to achieve consistency with the changes to the other renewable energy policies and to ensure that it is sufficiently supportive of such schemes in accord with national policy.
- 9.14. The Councils propose changes to the introductory paragraphs to the renewable energy section of the Plan (**NMC 94-NMC 99**) which includes updates to the approach taken following additional evidence and identifies the potential renewable energy generated over the Plan period in the context of the Plan area’s anticipated consumption of energy. It is estimated that the Plan will facilitate renewable energy development that would generate the equivalent of 271% of the area’s electricity needs and 8.1% of its heating needs. The anticipated large biomass project (the Orthios scheme) accounts for the majority of the identified electricity potential. Whilst these estimated contributions do not represent targets for the Plan, they provide a useful context. The monitoring framework, as revised by **NMC323**, sets targets for renewable energy production as a proportion of the identified potential.
- 9.15. The suggested changes would provide greater coherence in terms of ensuring that the detailed policies are sufficiently supportive to align with strategic policy PS 7 of the Plan and national policy as set out in Chapter 12.8 of PPW and TAN 8: Planning for Renewable Energy.

## 10 Natural and Built Environment

- 10.1. The Plan acknowledges that the quality of the landscapes and natural environment contributes significantly to the Plan area’s identity, character and distinctiveness. It also places significant emphasis on environmental sustainability, alongside the economic and social sustainability considerations which comprise the other dimensions of its development strategy. The Plan as a whole aims to protect the rural landscape by directing development to existing settlements through its allocations and criteria-based policies. This approach is consistent with PPW<sup>76</sup>.
- 10.2. Policy PS 16 ‘Conserving or Enhancing the Natural Environment’ provides a strategic and overarching policy for the protection of the Plan area’s distinctive landscape and habitats. The proposed changes to the supporting explanation to the policy now makes clear, in line with national policy, the greater environmental significance of international and national designations compared

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<sup>75</sup> Minister for Natural Resources, letter dated 15 March 2016

<sup>76</sup> PPW, paragraph 4.7.8

to local (**NMC272**). This change along with **NMC271** confirms the extent to which policy PS 16 should be used to complement national policy guidance at the local level and ensures consistency in terminology in describing the degree of impact. NMC271 also makes it clear that the policy seeks to conserve ‘or’ enhance the natural environment rather than seeking both. This change is also included in the title of the policy.

- 10.3. The rich variation and quality in the coastal landscape of the Plan area is reflected in the designation of the Anglesey Coast AONB and the Llŷn AONB. The New Policy<sup>77</sup> provides stronger protection to the AONBs, reflecting their status as a national statutory designation which is afforded the highest level of landscape protection<sup>78</sup>, by requiring proposals to have regard to the relevant AONB management Plan.
- 10.4. The whole of Anglesey is designated by UNESCO as a Global Geopark in recognition of the outstanding geology to be found on the Island, and representations at the Examination suggested that the Plan should acknowledge this. Although this is a non-statutory designation, the introductory paragraphs and supporting explanation to Policy PS 16, Table 23 and Appendix 7 now make reference to it in recognition of its importance through changes **NMC269**, **NMC270**, **NMC273**, **NMC274** and **NMC341**. The designation will also be included within the schedule of protected sites or areas in Appendix 7 of the Plan.
- 10.5. Policy AMG 1: ‘Special Landscape Areas’ is aimed at ensuring that development should aim to maintain, enhance or restore the recognised character and qualities of the sixteen Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) within the Plan area (10 in Gwynedd and 6 in Anglesey). The mechanism for their protection, as set out in the policy, is to only permit development that would not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape, and to seek that development should aim to maintain, enhance or restore the character and qualities of the designated SLAs. The Statements of Value and Significance prepared for each SLA clearly set out how each area meets the criteria for designation, and include a set of ‘special qualities’ that underpin the designation. Any development proposals within the SLA will need to take account of its special qualities.
- 10.6. Although the Plan shows a reduction in the area of land designated as SLA in Anglesey from that shown in the Local Plan, it emphasises which parts of the Island’s landscape are now worthy of the extra level of protection afforded by the designation. The changes proposed by **NMC275** provide further clarity on the aims of the policy, and when Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments may be required to accompany development proposals within SLAs. **NMC MAP398** is a necessary change that identifies the spatial extent of the SLAs on the Proposals Map.
- 10.7. **NMC276** proposes a change to the supporting explanation to Policy AMG1 which provides further clarification on the use of the ‘Statements of Value and

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<sup>77</sup> This policy was introduced as a Focussed Change but does not have a number reference. As explained earlier in this report it is assumed that the Councils will provide a unique number for the ‘new’ policies in the adopted version of the Plan

<sup>78</sup> PPW, paragraph 5.3.6

Significance’, which have been prepared for each SLA, and how development proposals will need to demonstrate how consideration has been given to these individual statements. The Plan as amended also allows for additional flexibility, especially for proposals related to the tourism industry which are usually located along the coast, and for those relating to mineral extraction sites.

- 10.8. PPW states that non-statutory designations should be soundly based on a formal scientific assessment of the nature conservation, landscape or geological value of the site<sup>79</sup>. The SLAs have been designated on the basis of the LANDMAP assessment process as recognised by PPW, and extensive analysis and survey work<sup>80</sup>. Subject to the proposed changes, which add greater clarity to the policy and supporting explanation, its provisions are soundly based and supported by a robust and credible evidence base.
- 10.9. The Plan puts forward an additional level of landscape protection by conserving and enhancing local features which have been recognised as valuable within the ‘Landscape Character Areas’ (LCAs) and identified within the Landscape Strategies for each Authority area. Although LCAs are non-statutory designations, it is clear that they are based on up to date information and robust evidence<sup>81</sup>, as such the Plan is sound as regards Policy AMG 2: ‘Protecting and Enhancing Features and Qualities that are Distinctive to the Local Landscape Character’. This Policy, along with Policy AMG 3: ‘Coastal Protection’, will protect a range of landscape features including the Plan area’s unique coastline which are important environmental, social and economic resources for the region.
- 10.10. Policy AMG 4: ‘Local Biodiversity Conservation’ would provide specific protection for the Plan area’s species and habitats<sup>82</sup> which are not located on internationally or nationally designated sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserves) or locally designated sites (Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Sites). The changes proposed by **NMC277** and **NMC279** provide the necessary clarity on the scope and aims of the policy. However, NMC278 does not reflect the latest statutory provisions. To address this we shall impose **INMC1** to ensure that the Plan reflects the duties arising from the Environment (Wales) Act 2016<sup>83</sup>.
- 10.11. Sites such as Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Sites are protected by Policy AMG 5: ‘Protecting Sites of Regional or Local Significance’, and would be identified on the Constraints Map, along with higher level nature conservation designations (**NMC281**). A further change is put forward to the wording of Policy AMG 5 (NMC280) and the supporting text (NMC282) to aid clarity. Following representations submitted to the Examination, **NMC341** adds clarity

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<sup>79</sup> PPW paragraph 5.3.11

<sup>80</sup> LUC Review of Special Landscape Areas in Gwynedd and Anglesey, 2012

<sup>81</sup> Anglesey Landscape Strategy Update, 2011; Gwynedd Landscape Strategy Update 2012 (Submitted Documents DC.010 and DC.011)

<sup>82</sup> Sites identified within the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Biodiversity Action Plans

<sup>83</sup> The duties under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 referred to in NMC278 have been superseded by Section 6, Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

to the Plan’s proposals by ensuring that all Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Sites covered by Policy AMG 5 are listed in the Plan’s appendices.

10.12. Therefore, subject to the recommended changes, and on the basis that the Plan should be read as a whole and alongside national policy and legislation, the approach to the natural environment satisfies the tests of soundness.

10.13. Policy PS 17: ‘Preserving or Enhancing Heritage Assets’ seeks to preserve or, where appropriate, enhance the Plan area’s heritage assets. Subject to the proposed change to the policy wording and to the supporting explanatory paragraphs through **NMC283-285**, to ensure that the policy aligns with statutory duties it provides a suitable high level framework for the delivery of the Plan’s aims and objectives in respect of heritage assets. NMC283 also makes it clear that the policy seeks to conserve ‘or’ enhance the heritage assets rather than seeking both. This change is also included in the title of the policy.

10.14. Policies AT 1: ‘Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites and Registered Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens’ and AT 2: ‘Enabling Development’ provide more detailed development management policies in respect of the Plan area’s nationally protected built and landscape heritage assets. Policy AT 3: ‘Locally or Regionally Significant Non-Designated Heritage Assets’ and AT 4 ‘Protection of Non-designated Archaeological Sites and Their Setting’ contribute to the Plan’s framework of policies that seeks to protect the area’s historic assets and sites.

10.15. The Plan provides more detailed development management policies in respect of the Plan area’s built heritage assets. We consider these policies, subject to the various proposed changes put forward by **NMC286-NMC288** to aid clarity and consistency, and to better reflect national policy, specifically the use of detailed assessments and SPG<sup>84</sup>, to be consistent with the statutory duties<sup>85</sup> and are soundly based.

10.16. The Councils have also made a commitment during the Examination to ensure that the boundaries of the identified areas of protection are up-to-date on the Constraints Map at the time of adoption of the Plan and, whilst this lies outside of the scope of the JLDP Examination, such an assurance is welcomed.

10.17. Accordingly, the Plan’s approach to the historic environment is soundly based.

## **11 Infrastructure**

### *Sustainable Transport*

11.1. The generally dispersed settlement pattern of the Plan area has a major influence on sustainability and the ability of the local population to use sustainable modes of transport. Outside the city of Bangor and the Urban Service Centres, the majority of the Plan area is not well served by public transport. Access to train stations and regular bus services is limited and

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<sup>84</sup> PPW, chapter 6

<sup>85</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

walking and cycling are not always feasible options for everyday activities. Therefore, the Plan area is particularly dependent on private vehicle transport for residents, visitors and for work-related journeys both within and across the Plan area boundary.

- 11.2. The Plan aims to promote development that minimises the need to travel and reduces the reliance on private motor vehicles, and support improvements that maximise accessibility for all modes of transport. In deciding where to allocate new housing, the Plan takes into account access to public transport as well as availability of services in the settlement hierarchy. The majority of new development will be located within the Sub Regional Centre of Bangor, and the Urban/Local Service Centres. Development in the rural areas will be located in those settlements which have relatively good accessibility by non-car modes when compared to the rural area as a whole<sup>86</sup>.
- 11.3. PPW aims to extend transport choice, encourage a more efficient and effective transport system and to minimise the need to travel. It expects this to be achieved through improving accessibility, promoting walking, cycling and supporting public transport, traffic management and infrastructure improvements<sup>87</sup>. TAN 18: ‘Transport’ refers to the link between land use planning and transport and the need to devise integrated strategies and policies at the national, regional and local level. It reinforces the need to ensure that development plans are consistent with these and other relevant strategies<sup>88</sup>.
- 11.4. Consistent with this national policy context the Plan seeks to develop a sustainable transport strategy with strategic Policy PS 4: ‘Sustainable Transport, Development and Accessibility’ which sets out the principles for the delivery of a sustainable integrated transport system and to improve accessibility to public transport.
- 11.5. The majority of the Plan area is included within the Joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2015, which has been jointly produced by the six North Wales Local Authorities of Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Gwynedd Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council. The Plan covers only the northern parts of Gwynedd as Meirionnydd is included within the LTP for Mid Wales. The LTP identifies issues and opportunities for all aspects of transport, but interventions and schemes are limited to those that are within a local transport authority’s remit and do not include schemes relating to the rail or trunk road networks.
- 11.6. Policy TRA 1: ‘Transport Network Developments’ aims to improve existing transport related infrastructure, including specific highway schemes identified on the Proposals Map, improvements to rail and bus interchanges; improvements to the cycle ways, park and ride schemes; overnight lorry parking and freight transfer; roadside service areas; and improvements to interchanges with water-based transport. The Councils propose to include reference to the North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan and the identified

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<sup>86</sup> PPW paragraph 4.7.7

<sup>87</sup> PPW paragraphs 8.1.1 and 8.1.5

<sup>88</sup> TAN 18 paragraph 2.5

improvements to the Menai Crossing through **NMC69**, the A5025 Valley to Wylfa highway improvements through **NMC68** and **NMC70** and **NMC71**, and the specific locations along this route which require significant works are proposed to be shown on the Proposals Map through **NMC MAP397**.

- 11.7. The Llangefni Link Road and the improvements to the A5025 from Valley are identified in the LTP. The highway scheme to improve the A487 from Caernarfon to Bontnewydd and the improvements to the A55 crossing of the Menai, are both included within the National Transport Finance Plan 2015 as schemes to be constructed.
- 11.8. The Plan does not require that any of the transport schemes are implemented alongside specific developments such as housing allocations. Rather it facilitates the progression of these transport projects by making specific policy provision for their delivery.
- 11.9. Policy TRA 2: ‘Parking Standards’ is aimed at ensuring that developments provide parking for all modes of transport in line with the Parking Standards of the Councils. The Councils have now introduced the word ‘exceptionally’ within the policy through **NMC74** to clarify that commuted payments may offset parking in exceptional circumstances. **NMC75** is required to make clear that, in accordance with national policy, maximum parking standards will be applied throughout the Plan area, and **NMC76** provides further clarification on instances where adequate on-site parking facilities cannot be provided.
- 11.10. Policies TRA 3: ‘Safeguarding Disused Railway Lines’ and TRA 4: ‘Managing Transport Impacts’ are consistent with national planning policy and the Plan’s overall approach to addressing the travel patterns of the local population, aiming to reduce reliance on the private car and provide better access to public transport, cycling and walking. We consider these policies, subject to **NMC77** to aid clarity, are soundly based.
- 11.11. The combination of improvements to existing infrastructure, improvements to transfer between modes of transport, and the specific highway schemes put forward, provide a comprehensive package of improvements that will promote sustainable travel patterns and ensure greater accessibility for local residents travelling within the Plan area. As such, we consider the Plan to be sound in this respect.

*Infrastructure, Developer Contributions and Community Facilities*

- 11.12. Strategic Policy PS 2: ‘Infrastructure and Developer Contributions’ and Policy ISA 1: ‘Infrastructure Provision’ provide a framework that will enable contributions to be sought from developments to secure new or improved infrastructure, services or facilities that are necessary.
- 11.13. The supporting paragraphs to the Policies clarify that contributions would be sought where they are necessary, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and in kind to the development, in line with

national policy<sup>89</sup>. The supporting paragraphs also make it clear that the possibility of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule could be introduced during the lifetime of the Plan.

- 11.14. The ability of LPAs to secure infrastructure through planning obligations has become more limited, and the Councils are examining how the CIL would be applied, but it was confirmed at the Examination that this work is still at an early stage. However, the Councils intend to continue to seek necessary infrastructure as part of the development process via S106 agreements, where appropriate and subject to viability, rather than relying solely on the CIL mechanism. Subject to the limitation on the number of pooled contributions that can be sought<sup>90</sup>, the use of S106 contributions would allow for required infrastructure to be delivered in line with appropriate phases of development via triggered thresholds, and this would help to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place when required.
- 11.15. Changes proposed by **NMC59** and **NMC60** will avoid unnecessary repetition of information within the supporting explanation to the Policies, and **NMC61**, **NMC62** and **NMC63** are put forward by the Councils to ensure that there is sufficient clarity in respect of the delivery of necessary infrastructure.
- 11.16. With the proposed changes, we conclude that Policies PS 2 and ISA 1 are consistent with national policy, provide a sound framework for the effective protection of existing infrastructure, and secure the provision of new infrastructure such as open space and recreation facilities, community and environmental improvements, schools and training facilities, and public transport infrastructure as well as affordable housing over the plan period.
- 11.17. During the Examination, the Councils confirmed that they have engaged with relevant Council departments as providers of education and various community services. This has informed the Plan strategy and relevant site allocations. The Councils have also worked with others, most notably DCWW, to ensure that improvements to infrastructure capacity are identified and prioritised where necessary in order to enable delivery during the plan period.
- 11.18. The policies balance the need for infrastructure and facilities in association with new development, against existing capacity and viability considerations. The contributions that may be necessary to make a development acceptable are not prioritised in Policy ISA 1. In considering priorities, the assessment of existing provision and the need generated by the scheme will be factors in determining the amount and type of infrastructure provision that should be made.
- 11.19. If the required standard of infrastructure improvements cannot be met on-site then, where appropriate, suitable off site provision should be provided, or where this is not possible due to viability issues, then financial contributions would be sought towards new infrastructure. In addition, the Councils have made a commitment to prepare SPG which will provide more detailed

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<sup>89</sup> Circular 13/97 ‘Planning Obligations’ and the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

<sup>90</sup> Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)



information regarding what obligations the relevant LPA will seek from certain types of development, and this is identified in the JLDP.

11.20. The Plan recognises that community facilities are essential to community cohesion and to the health, social, educational, linguistic and cultural needs of the Plan area. Policy ISA 2: ‘Community Facilities’ and ISA 3: ‘Further and Higher Education Development’ provide the policy context for new and enhanced community facilities, resisting the loss of existing facilities and enhancing and developing new further and higher education provision within the Plan area. A change in the wording to Policy ISA 3 through **NMC64** is put forward by the Councils to expand the scope and flexibility of the policy to accommodate new training opportunities. It is recommended to ensure consistency with the Plan objectives.

11.21. Based on the foregoing we are satisfied that the Plan is sound and adequately anticipates the infrastructure and community service provision requirements associated with its delivery and that there are no obstacles in these terms that would significantly hinder its implementation.

#### *Open Space*

11.22. The Plan acknowledges the benefits provided by open space and that it plays an important part in satisfying the recreational needs of local communities and is an invaluable resource. Its policies seek to protect and enhance existing open space (Policy ISA 4: ‘Safeguarding Existing Open Space’) and to make provision for new open space. Policy ISA 5: ‘Provision of Open Spaces in New Housing Developments’ requires all new residential developments of 10 or more units, in areas where existing open space cannot meet the needs of the proposed development, to provide on-site open space in accordance with the Fields in Trust (FIT) benchmark standards of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. If these standards cannot be met on-site then suitable off site provision should be provided, or where this is not feasible or practical, then financial contributions would be sought towards new facilities and improving existing sites. In addition, the Councils have made a commitment to prepare SPG and this is identified in the JLDP and monitoring framework.

11.23. TAN 16: ‘Sport, Recreation and Open Space’ refers to the FIT ‘Benchmark Standards’ for outdoor sport and play to replace the “Six Acre Standard.” The new ‘Benchmark Standards’ recommend that overall there should be 1.2 hectares of land for playing pitches per 1000 population, with variations between recommendations for urban and rural areas. It also recommends that there should be 1.6 hectares of land for all outdoor sports per 1000 population, also with urban and rural differences<sup>91</sup>.

11.24. Whilst the Plan’s requirement for 2.4 ha per 1000 population would fall short of the total 2.8 hectares recommended in the TAN 16 guidelines, PPW does not prescribe particular standards of provision. Instead, the TAN says that these should be based on the results of the Open Space Assessment process<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> TAN 16 paragraph 2.9 and 2.10

<sup>92</sup> TAN 16 paragraph 2.7

11.25. The Open Space Assessment jointly prepared by Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils<sup>93</sup> provided an audit of public open space within the 14 settlements identified as Main and Secondary Centres in the stopped Anglesey UDP (2005), and the 13 settlements identified as a Sub-regional Centre, Urban Centres and Local Centres in the Gwynedd UDP (2009). The smaller settlements identified in the development plans were not covered by the assessment as the standards of provision were difficult to apply meaningfully in areas where there is a low density of population. All of the types of open space identified within TAN 16 were included in the assessment but were grouped into five categories of open space; Formal Recreation Space; Informal Recreation Space; Equipped Play Areas; Amenity Open Space; and Educational Land.

11.26. The Plan’s open space requirements have been informed by national standards and guidance as well as local evidence. This locally distinctive evidence has informed the Plan’s policies through auditing current provision, considering accessibility and open space type. Accordingly, we consider the approach to be robust and will provide adequate protection for all types of open space, and with the changes proposed by **NMC65**, will be a sound basis for the provision of additional facilities as new residential development comes forward.

#### *Information and Communications Technology*

11.27. Policy PS 3: ‘Information and Communications Technology’ is supportive of developments that will extend or improve connectivity, and seeks to ensure that cabling is placed underground especially in sensitive areas. NMC66 makes clear the Plan’s relationship with national policy on this topic.

## **12 Plan Monitoring, Implementation and Review**

12.1. The Councils accepted during the examination that Section 8 of the Plan, as submitted, did not set out a sufficiently clear and effective monitoring framework. In particular it lacked targets that would effectively measure the performance of the Plan and trigger points that would spur timely intervention where necessary.

12.2. Changes to the introductory passages to the framework have been suggested which better explains the Councils’ approach to monitoring the Plan, including identifying a range of actions that will be considered in response to the outcome of the annual assessment of the plan. These changes (**NMC313-NMC319**) ensure a robust methodology to monitor the implementation of the Plan. The Councils have also introduced a replacement framework with a range of measures to effectively monitor progress and enable necessary action to ensure delivery of the Plan’s stated aims. It provides targets and trigger points for each of the core indicators and also includes an extensive range of local indicators. The framework, as proposed to be amended by **NMC320-NMC336**, provides a flexible and robust mechanism to ensure that the delivery of the Plan can be assessed and will enable early intervention to ensure that action can be undertaken to meet the identified targets.

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<sup>93</sup> Open Space Assessment, February 2015 (Topic Paper 14) (Submitted Document: PT.025)

12.3. Appendix 9 of the Plan contains a list of the proposed SPGs to support the Plan. Proposed changes include an additional SPG on Parking Standards and sets out a timescale to adoption (**NMC343**). With these changes the Plan provides a robust mechanism for implementation, monitoring delivery, and to establish when the Plan or individual policies need to be reviewed. It is also sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances. The changes would ensure that the Plan will deliver and is thus sound.

### **13 Overall Conclusions**

13.1. We conclude that, with the binding recommended changes identified in this report and set out in Appendix A and B, the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 satisfies the requirements of section 64(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the tests of soundness set out in PPW.

*H W Jones*

INSPECTOR

*R Duggan*

INSPECTOR